

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF CONTINUING AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

**BRILLIANT MINDS**

Course No: LITR1-CE9305, Fall 2013

Tuesdays, Sept. 24 – Dec. 10, 10:00 –11:40 a.m.

Instructor: Peter Arcese (646-261-1200 / [peter.arcese@nyu.edu](mailto:peter.arcese@nyu.edu))

Office hours by appointment

**Course Description.** Literary genius, the burden of greatness, takes innumerable shapes and forms. From book to play to poetry, brilliant minds use their extraordinary gifts to entertain, inspire, enrage, and enlighten us of philosophical and artistic concerns, social trappings, and human conceit, among others. Topics to be discussed include point of view, allusion, symbolism, and theme in poetry, drama, and the novel; literary periods and movements including the Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, Enlightenment, Romantic, Modernist and Postmodern; and studies of specific genres, such as epic, drama, poetry, and the novel. The course will teach students the value of close reading and the necessity of textual evidence in discussion and debate. No prior knowledge or experience is required for this course.

**Objectives.** Students will be encouraged to analyze the structure and content of the literary work under discussion and to speculate about its author's motivation in including and excluding various techniques. As a result of having taken this course, students will have the skills and confidence to navigate comparably sophisticated and challenging works of literature.

**Requirements, Grading, & Policies.** Students will be expected to read (and, ideally, reread) the assigned selections prior to the class period when those works will be studied, and to contribute to the discussion thereon. No tests or quizzes will be given, nor will written work of any kind be assigned. No grades will be given for this class. Students are required to respect one another by attending regularly, arriving on time, and engaging courteously with one another in class discussions.

**Required Texts (available at the NYU bookstore, 726 Broadway)**

*The Epic of Gilgamesh*, trans. Mitchell (Atria)

*The Book of Job*, trans. Mitchell (HarperPerennial)

Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, trans. Lombardo (Hackett)

Murasaki Sikibu's *Tale of Genji*, trans. Tyler (Penguin)

William Shakespeare's *Richard III*, ed. Holland (Pelican)

Jane Austen's *Emma*, ed. Stafford (Penguin)

Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales*, ed. Van Leer (Oxford Classics)

Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* (Mariner)

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (Anchor)

Jose Saramago's *Blindness* (Harvest)

## Reading Schedule

### Section 1

Week 1	9/24	<i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i> , trans. Mitchell (Atria)
Week 2	10/1	<i>The Book of Job</i> , trans. Mitchell (HarperPerennial)
Week 3	10/8	Ovid: <i>Metamorphoses</i> , trans. Lombardo (Hackett)
Week 4	10/15	Ovid: <i>Metamorphoses</i> , trans. Lombardo (Hackett)
Week 5	10/22	Murasaki: <i>The Tale of Genji</i> , trans. Tyler (Penguin)
Week 6	10/29	Shakespeare: <i>Richard III</i> , ed. Holland (Penguin/Pelican)
Week 7	11/5	Shakespeare: <i>Richard III</i> , ed. Holland (Penguin/Pelican)
Week 8	11/12	Austen: <i>Emma</i> , ed. Stafford (Penguin)
Week 9	11/19	Poe: <i>Selected Talse</i> , ed. Van Leer (Oxford)
Week 10	11/26	Woolf: <i>To the Lighthouse</i> (Mariner)
Week 11	12/3	Achebe: <i>Things Fall Apart</i> (Anchor)
Week 12	12/10	Saramago: <i>Blindness</i> , trans. Pontiero (Harvest)