CLIT 240 C Spring 2019 Instructor: Jingsi Shen

Class Time: MW 12:30-2:20 Office Location: PDL B-534

Classroom: THO 335 Office Hours: W 10-12

Course Website: https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1289693 Contact: shenjs@uw.edu

**CLIT 240: Recognition and Catastrophe**

Moments of recognition are central in narrative works, often followed by “twists” of plot taking the form of a reversed fortune of the protagonist. The motif of recognition is certainly all over the place in literary history, from Oedipus’ tragic self-recognition to Hamlet’s discovery of the truth of his father’s death. Even in today’s world, this theme is still very much alive in our cultural imagination. Take, for instance, Skywalker’s discovery of Darth Vader’s true identity. Some people said that recognition is a scandal, in its most literal sense: in literary works, it is often accompanied by violence, adultery, and weird familial relations. It’s a kind of recovery of knowledge, but very likely of disturbing knowledge. Such events take place in daily life too. Although the everyday scenes of recognition might seem trivial compared to those experienced by great heroes in books and films, they can be equally difficult, and even traumatic.

How do we deal with disturbing knowledge in life? How does recognition take place? Can we locate the exact moment of recognition? How does the burden of knowledge impact different people differently? Who has to bear the outcome of recognition? To try to answer these intertwined questions, we’ll investigate and experiment with texts from various historical and social contexts. In their own ways, they all present dramas of recognition that lead to perplexing, if not catastrophic, endings. We’ll look at works of different genres, including epic, tragedy, comedy, and prose narrative. Since this is also a class on writing, we’ll approach these questions by practicing close reading, comparative analysis, and writing analytical papers. You’re required to write three essays throughout the quarter, each about 1200 words in length. Apart from these, you’ll also be asked to post on-line discussions every week when there is no paper due.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

- excerpts from the *Odyssey* (translation by Emily Wilson);

- *Frankenstein* (the1818 text);

- *King Oidipous* (translation by Ruby Blondell);

- Other readings will be available on canvas, including Kleist’s *Amphitryon*

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

* Three essays (20%\*3): 1000-1500 words
* Reading quizzes (10%)
* Participation (30%): including on-line posts and leading-a-discussion assignment;

Notes:

1. You’ll have the chance to revise one of the three papers by the end of the quarter.
2. There will be four reading quizzes throughout the quarter, based on the materials you’ve read and/or discussed in class.
3. Participation includes day-to-day attendance, participation in class activities (10%), online discussion posts (10%); and a leading-discussion assignment (circa 15 minutes of class discussion, 10%).

##### LEAD A DISCUSSION AS A GROUP:

##### Throughout the quarter, you will be asked to lead one class discussion (of about 15 minutes) as a group. You will be asked to find external materials that are related to a key topic or piece of text discussed in class. You will bring those materials to class and then prepare questions for the class to discuss. This means you should be able to make an argument for why something is interesting and relevant to our class. Types of materials you can consider bringing in: film clips, music videos, paintings, posters and other images, poetry, novel, etc.

**ATTENDANCE**

You are expected to be an active participant in class, so come prepared to contribute to the discussion and participate in activities. When you miss a class, you miss the opportunity to be a member of the class community. If you are absent, come to my office hours to see what you missed and/or ask another class member for notes. Make up all missed work in a timely manner. You will not be penalized for up to 4 hours of missed class, but beyond that one point will be marked off of the participation grade for every missed hour. In addition, **three lates count as one absence**.

**WRITING RESOURCES**

I encourage you to take advantage of the following writing resources available to you at no charge!

**The CLUE Writing Center** in Mary Gates Hall (141 suite, CUADSS lobby) is open Sunday to Thursday from 7pm to midnight. The graduate tutors can help you with your claims, organization, and grammar. You do not need to make an appointment, so arrive early and be prepared to wait.

**The Odegaard Writing and Research Center** is open in Odegaard Library Monday - Thursday 9am to 9pm, Friday 9am to 4:30pm, and Sunday 12pm to 9pm. This writing center provides a research-integrated approach to writing instruction. Find more information and/or make an appointment on the website: [www.depts.washington.edu/owrc](http://www.depts.washington.edu/owrc).

##### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing--as long as you cite them. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class will be immediately reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review.

##### ACCOMODATIONS

##### If you need accommodation of any sort, please let me know so that I can work with the UW Disability Resources for Students Office (DRS) to provide what you require. This syllabus is available in large print, as are other class materials. More information about accommodation may be found at <http://www.washington.edu/students/drs/>.

##### CAMPUS SAFETY

Preventing violence is everyone's responsibility. If you're concerned, tell someone.

* Always call 911 if you or others may be in danger.
* Call 206-685-SAFE (7233) to report non-urgent threats of violence and for referrals to UW counseling and/or safety resources. TTY or VP callers, please call through your preferred relay service.
* Don't walk alone. Campus safety guards can walk with you on campus after dark. Call Husky NightWalk 206-685-WALK (9255).
* Stay connected in an emergency with UW Alert. Register your mobile number to receive instant notification of campus emergencies via text and voice messaging.

Sign up online at www.washington.edu/alert.

For more information visit the SafeCampus website at [www.washington.edu/safecampus](http://www.washington.edu/safecampus)

### **Q Center clause**

The University of Washington Q Center builds and facilitates queer (gay, lesbian, bisexual, two-spirit, trans, intersex, questioning, same-gender-loving, allies) academic and social community through education, advocacy, and support services to achieve a socially-just campus in which all people are valued. For more information, visit <http://depts.washington.edu/qcenter/>.

**TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR**

This is a rough outline of the quarter which contains some of the key dates to remember (holidays, major assignments, etc.) This calendar is subject to change. ***Note that additional homework will be assigned in class*** that is not detailed on the syllabus. Remember, it is your responsibility to ask me or another member of the class about missed assignments if you are absent.

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| **WEEK 1** | **in-class activities** | **homework** |
| Mon 4/1 | **Course introduction, syllabus** | Read: *Odyssey* Book 1 and introduction pp.1-13, 48-53 |
| Wed 4/3 | Epic genre; afterlife of Odysseus; book 1 | Read: *Odyssey* Books 19, 21, and introduction pp.23-48;e-post 1 |
| **WEEK 2** |  |  |
| Mon 4/8 | The Penelope Question;  | Read: *Odyssey* Books 21, 23 |
| Wed 4/10 | The Odyssean self; Quiz 1; Complex argument; | Read: *Odyssey* Books 24, and introduction pp.65-74; e-post 2 |
| **WEEK 3** |  |  |
| Mon 4/15 | The Odyssey ending, ethics; introduce paper 1 |  |
| Wed 4/17 | Rhetorical analysis, citation, paper 1 | Paper 1 due on Saturday;  |
| **WEEK 4** |  |  |
| Mon 4/22 | Peer review session | Read: *Frankenstein* preface, letters, volume I (chapters 1-7 or pages 47-110) |
| Wed 4/24 | *Frankenstein*; technology; quiz 2 | Read: *Frankenstein* volume II (9 chapters, or pages 111-160); e-post 3 |
| **WEEK 5** |  |  |
| Mon 4/29 | *Frankenstein;* nature and recognition | Read *Frankenstein* volume III (pages 161-221) |
| Wed 5/1 | *Bildung* and monstrosity; concision | Read: introduction to Oedipus;e-post 4 |
| **WEEK 6** |  |  |
| Mon 5/6 | Attic tragedy; introduce paper 2 | Read: *Oedipus* lines 1-862 |
| Wed 5/8 | *Oedipus King*; quiz 3; outline and organization | Read: *Oedipus* lines 862-1530Paper 2 due on Saturday;  |
| **WEEK 7** |  |  |
| Mon 5/13 | Tragedy of knowledge and fate | Read: *Amphitryon* Act 1 |
| Wed 5/15 | Group paper conferences (groups 1&2) | Peer comments on essay 2 |
| **WEEK 8** |  |  |
| Mon 5/20 | Group paper conferences (groups 3&4) | Peer comments on essay 2 |
| Wed 5/22 | *Amphitryon*—comedy or tragedy? | Read: *Amphitryon* Act 2; e-post 5 |
| **WEEK 9** | *wrap up second sequence* |  |
| Mon 5/27 | Memorial Day; No class | Read: *Amphitryon* Act 3 |
| Wed 5/29 | *Amphitryon*, stolen identities, quiz 4 |  |
| **WEEK 10** | *don’t forget to give course evaluations* |  |
| Mon 6/3 | Workshop on paper 3 |  |
| Wed 6/5 | Paper 3, revision and wrap up  | Paper 3 and revised paper |