Administrative Unit: Humanities Department

Course Prefix and Number: ENGL 331

Course Title: Ethical Issues in Literature

Number of: Credit Hours: 3  Lecture Hours: 3  Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: The analysis and evaluation of ethical issues and concerns depicted in the literary works of major international authors. Departmental policy requires students write a minimum of 6000 words of graded writing to include at least one research paper for the course.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): ENGL 112; junior standing or instructor's permission.


The literary readings should achieve a rough balance between the canonical and the contemporary and be as culturally diverse as possible. The following authors have written outstanding examples of works the instructor should consider.

Novels: Austen, Camus, Cervantes, Conrad, Defoe, Dickens, Dostoevsky, Durenmmatt, Shusaku Endo, Gide, Mary Gordon, Greene, Morrison, Mukherjee, Rushdie, Twain, Vargas Llosa, Wu Ch’eng-En.


Drama: Aristophanes, Beckett, Chekhov, Frisch, Goethe, Hansberry, Ibsen, Ionesco, Mamet, Miller, Molière, Shakespeare.
Course Objectives:

- To understand and apply a wide range of central ethical approaches to a wide body of literature.
- To appreciate and evaluate major systems of ethics by considering their demonstration through a broad range of literary works.

Measurable Learning Outcomes:

- Describe and distinguish between the major traditional philosophical systems of ethics.
- Apply major ethical systems in philosophy to a wide range of problems identified in imaginative literature.
- Gain familiarity with significant works by major authors.
- Analyze and evaluate the presentation of issues and expression of authors’ views.
- Conduct reasoned, well-organized, documented analyses, in speech and writing, of major ethical dilemmas.

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):

- Departmental policy requires students write a minimum of 6000 words of graded writing to include at least one research paper for the course.
- Reading and discuss a minimum of 3-4 novels, 25-30 poems, 2 plays, and 15-20 short stories.
- Write 2 to 3 short essays.
- Daily performance through oral presentations and regular quizzes on reading.
- Write a Research paper.
- Write at least one essay exam.
- Repeated integration of theories of ethics and application of these to literature through discussion.

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 30

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Prepared by: Dr. Danny Campbell
Date: January 18, 2005

NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.