

LITR 202: The European Novel

John Felice Rome Center

Spring 2025

Wednesday | 2:30-5pm

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Office Hours: By Appointment, Wed./Th.

Course Description

The central theme of this course on the European novel is nature. The books we will read address, although in different ways, the theme of the relationship between human beings and the natural world. Some of the themes we will encounter are the sublimity of nature, its terrifying aspects for humans who may feel overwhelmed by its unpredictability and power; the concern for the changes brought about by humans to the environment; the desire to return to a more authentic way of life; the mysticism and spirituality attributed to the natural environment, perceived as a teacher of life and wisdom.

Through the selected texts, students will analyze the role of nature as a central theme, considering its impact on characters, plot, and philosophical inquiries. Additionally, ecocritical readings will provide theoretical frameworks to enhance understanding and discussion.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Know major literary works and key authors of European literature.
- Analyze how nature is represented in selected European novels.
- Engage with ecocritical theories that enhance understanding of literature's relationship with the environment.
- Foster critical thinking and discussion about ecological themes in literature and their relevance to contemporary environmental issues.
- Develop critical reading, thinking, and writing skills through composing an academic essay and other written assignments.
- Develop analytical skills and argue interpretations through class discussions.
- Identify different issues, authors, and works of art from a comparative perspective.

Required Texts / Materials

Assigned readings and films posted in Sakai/Panopto.

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation, and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one absence.

This course meets once a week, thus a total of one absence will be permitted. **Absences beyond this will result in a 1% lowering of the final course grade.**

The collective health of the JFRC is everyone's responsibility. Do not attend class if you are ill.

Assessment Components:

Participation and Reader Responses	20%
Individual Presentation	20%
Team Presentation	20%
Reflective Paper	15%
Final Paper	25%

The course will fulfill its learning outcomes if you comply with the following requirements:

Participation and Reader Responses (20%): This course relies largely on class discussion, and the success of discussions depends upon your *active* presence, thus your presence and contributions are crucial - both to me and to your classmates. To help stimulate class discussions, you should come to class prepared on the assigned readings and participate actively through your Reader Responses: to enhance both your reading and class discussion, for each class you will find a handout in Sakai with a list of topics/questions that we will discuss. Choose one or two questions that interest you and address them by compiling a list of important quotes (at least, two or three quotes per question). Through the quotes, you will also elaborate on an answer to the topic/question discussed. These meditations allow you to consider the readings *before* coming to class. As the semester progresses, your responses should become more analytical and offer connections between the works, the authors, and the literary theories. **Please, note that I will ask you to discuss your quotes and responses in class. Occasionally, I will ask that you submit your Responses to Sakai. I will evaluate your Responses in your final Participation grade. To receive a high participation grade, you should participate in class discussion at least once every class. Failure to complete the Responses accurately will impact negatively your final Participation grade. Please, see me at the beginning of the course if you struggle with speaking publicly in class.**

The participation grade also includes a degree of ‘professionalism’: punctuality to all classes; no breaks out of class other than during the collective break; limiting the use of personal laptops only to take notes and for our class-related matters; and turning off cell phones. **Failure to adhere to the above class policies will negatively affect your participation grade.**

Presentations (40% or 20% of each presentation): Each student will prepare two presentations on two different literary texts. The first presentation will be individual and centered on one text chosen from the course readings. The second presentation will be in teams: each team will present a new literary work on one of the five social themes discussed in the course. See Assignments in Sakai for detailed instructions on the two presentations.

Reflective Paper (15%): The reflective paper (3-4 pages, double-spaced) will be a short critical reflection, comparative in nature, on a specific course theme assigned by the instructor. See Assignments in Sakai for detailed instructions.

Final Paper (25%): The paper (5-6 pages, double-spaced) will be the analysis of a literary text of your choice. The paper will show your ability to choose a focused question and thesis to guide your discussion and to follow the conventions for writing about literature. See Assignments in Sakai for detailed instructions on the final paper.

Sakai: This course will use Sakai. You are required to check the course site regularly for announcements, readings, and assignments.

General advice: The kind of reading we will practice requires marking up a text and reading passages during all class discussions. **If it is a PDF file posted to Sakai, you can download it and save it on your device, highlight the important quotes in yellow, and/or take notes of the page numbers and your comments.**

Grading

94-100: A	87-89: B+	77-79: C+	67-69: D+
90-93: A-	84-86: B	74-76: C	60-66: D
	80-83: B-	70-73: C-	59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

I expect that all work you produce for this course will be your own and that you will not submit work you have already completed for other courses. **Submitting the same Responses of another student will be considered plagiarism. Paraphrasing or otherwise copying the work of another person without citing the source of the words and ideas will be considered plagiarism.**

Using AI for writing the final paper or for any of the assignments will result in an F in the assignment or even an F in the course and might jeopardize the rest of your studies at Loyola.

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. *As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.*

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, during the first week of classes.

And finally... Welcome to this class! I find the study of literature both intellectually and emotionally fascinating (as well as a lot of fun), and I look forward to exploring it together. Please do not hesitate to converse with me about the course or the readings throughout the semester. As far as possible, I want to make sure the class meets your own academic goals as well as those I have outlined in this syllabus.

Course Schedule

Friday Class Day: Friday, February 7

Date Topic

Week 1

W 1/22 Introduction to the course.



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Week 2

W 1/29 Mary Shelley – *Frankenstein* (1818)

Week 3

W 2/5 **Papal audience: no class on Wednesday**

F 2/7

Make-up Class. Mary Shelley – *Frankenstein* (1818)

Week 4

W 2/12 Joseph Conrad - *Heart of Darkness* (1899)

Week 5

W 2/19 Hermann Hesse – *Siddhartha* (1922)

Week 6

W 2/26 Virginia Woolf – *To the Lighthouse* (1927)

Week 7

W 3/5 **Reflective papers due.** Virginia Woolf – *To the Lighthouse* (1927)

Week 8

Spring Break (March 7-16): no class on Wednesday, March 12

Week 9

W 3/19 René Daumal – *The Mount Analogue* (1952)

Week 10

W 3/26 **Topic for team presentation due.** Jean Giono – *The Man Who Planted Trees* (1953)

Week 11

W 4/2 Italo Calvino – *The Baron in the Trees* (1957)

Week 12

W 4/9 Italo Calvino – *The Baron in the Trees* (1957)

Week 13

W 4/16 **Team Presentations.**

Week 14

W 4/23 Conclusions. **Final papers due.** Conference on the final papers.

Week 15

4/28-5/1 **Final exam week.**