

LIT350 British Literature

3rd and 4th quarters, Junior

Instructor	KIHARA YASUKI
Style of Class	Lecture
Number of Credits	2
Day and Period	To be advised

Course Description

In this course we will look mainly at early modern British literature. We will take a broadly-based view and begin by understanding the historical and cultural background in which each author was born and each literary work was created. Learning to understand literary English is another important goal of this class. The first half will deal with a Victorian author, Charles Dickens, and we will read one of his early works, *Oliver Twist*, and one of his later works, *Great Expectations*. The key concepts for the former novel are the class-ridden society, the lower classes, and the workhouse system, while the key concepts for the latter are the class-ridden society, the gentlemen, and the *Bildungsroman*, and we will read those novels while learning about the historical background of each. Next, we will deal with Graham Greene, one of the major British authors of the twentieth century. We will read his short stories “*I Spy*,” “*The Innocent*,” “*The Hint of an Explanation*,” and “*Special Duties*,” as well as his novel *The End of the Affair*. In both his short stories and his novels, we will find such key concepts as the two World Wars that colored his world, Catholicism, innocence and experience, and suspense. These concepts will be the keys to a complex set of works and a complex era. We will also consider the entertaining nature of literature, which is a theme for both authors.

Course Objectives

- (1) Understanding the history of early modern and modern British literature
- (2) Understanding and considering the Victorian era, especially its class system
- (3) Understanding and considering the twentieth century and the two World Wars
- (4) Understanding the basics of the literariness of Dickens and researching and considering further knowledge
- (5) Understanding the basics of the literariness of Greene and researching and considering further knowledge
- (6) Improving your ability to read literary English

Expected Outcomes

- (1) Understanding early modern and modern British and European culture will be of benefit in carrying out present-day international cultural exchanges.
- (2) It is expected that practice in reading literary English will contribute to the development of overall English skills.

Prerequisites

None in particular

Class Materials

I will inform at the beginning of the course.

Course Methods

This course will be conducted mostly as a lecture course. At each session, the students will be required to summarize the content of the lecture on a worksheet and hand it in. In addition, each student must investigate and make a presentation on at least one issue covered in the course

Evaluation/Assessment

Students will be evaluated in a comprehensive manner, based on the worksheets handed in at each session, their presentation (including the materials used for the presentation), and the final exam.

Grading

- 20% Worksheets
- 30% Presentation
- 50% Exam

Course Schedule

Week 1: Overview of British Literature

This lecture will be an overview of British literature, especially the emergence and history of the genre known as the novel.

Week 2: Overview of the Victorian Era and Victorian Literature

This lecture will be an overview of Victorian society and Victorian literature, with special attention to the close connection between the two.

Week 3: Overview of Charles Dickens

This lecture will trace the life and literary world of Charles Dickens, one of the principal writers of the Victorian era.

Week 4: *Oliver Twist* and the Lower Classes in the Victorian Era

We will read Dickens' early novel, *Oliver Twist*, focusing on the parts that describe the condition of the lower classes.

Week 5: *Oliver Twist* and the Workhouse System

Continuing from the previous Session, we will read more from *Oliver Twist*, focusing on scenes in the workhouse, and we will learn about the workhouse system.

Week 6: *Great Expectations* and the Gentry Class

We will read Dickens' late masterpiece, *Great Expectations*, focusing on the parts that deal with the gentry, one of the themes of this novel.

Week 7: *Great Expectations* and the *Bildungsroman*

Continuing from the previous Session, we will read more from *Great Expectations*, focusing on the parts that make this a *Bildungsroman* and learning what a *Bildungsroman* is.

Week 8: First Student Presentations

The students will make presentations that incorporate analyses of one of Dickens' work other than the two novels described above.

Week 9: History of Britain in the Twentieth Century and Literature during that Period

This lecture will be an overview of twentieth century British society and literature, with special attention to the close connection between the two.

Week 10: Overview of Graham Greene

This lecture will trace the life and literary world of Graham Greene, one of the principal writers of the twentieth century.

Week 11: Initiation and War: "*I Spy*" and "*The Innocent*."

We will read two of Greene's short stories, focusing particularly on youth living in wartime and their initiation into the realities of life.

Week 12: "*The Hint of an Explanation*," "*Special Duties*," Catholicism, and War

We will continue reading Greene's short stories, focusing particularly on stories that deal with war and religion (Catholicism).

Week 13: *The End of the Affair*, Catholicism, and War

We will continue to focus on works that deal with war and Catholicism, including his novel, *The End of the Affair*, which incorporates both themes.

Week 14: Second Student Presentations

The students will read one of Greene's work other than those discussed in class and make a presentation that incorporates their analyses of this work.

Week 15: About Dickens and Greene

In discussing Dickens and Greene, we will refer to Green's own thoughts about Dickens, "The Young Dickens," as a starting point for comparing both writers.

Preparation and Follow-up

[1] At the end of each class, students will be told what to prepare for the next class. They should prepare for the next class in response to that. (Preparation)

[2] After each class, the students should use the texts, the handouts, and the worksheets (other than the ones to be handed in) to further their understanding of the content of the class (follow-up).