

ENG 181: Class and Literary Texts

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(3 credits)

Class Size: 15-25

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[Please read this memo regarding recommended sequencing for WRT and ENG courses](#)

Course Catalog Description

Construction and representation of “class,” especially as it affects the production and reception of literary and other cultural texts

Course Overview

ENG 181: Class & Literary Texts is a regularly-offered 3-credit course on the Syracuse University campus. A university-designated writing-intensive course, it fulfills the College of Arts & Sciences Liberal Arts core curriculum and skills requirement, and thus familiarizes students with the thought processes, structures, and styles associated with writing in the liberal arts.

ENG 181 explores the construction and representation of social class, especially as it affects the production and reception of literary and other cultural texts. As with race and gender, class is a social construction that is imposed on, and

performed by, all of us as a way of stratifying and defining who we are. Concepts such as social stratification, inequality, and the relationship between wealth, privilege and power provide critical lenses through which to read texts.

While fostering a richer understanding of their own implication within these systems of power, this course helps students become better writers and stronger interpretive readers by practicing close reading, evidence-based analysis and argumentation, and independent-inquiry skills. By raising awareness of how meanings are created through acts of critical reading, students learn to analyze the ways texts construct categories of difference, including differences of race, gender, and class. Thus through interpretive practice they develop a basic understanding of core concepts of social class, including stratification, inequality, privilege, capitalism and labor.

To encourage the development of reading skills of short and long texts, teachers are encouraged, but not required, to incorporate at least one full-length novel or play into the syllabus. The anchor texts for each unit are required. There are two kinds of writing assignments in this class: shorter, prompt-driven reading responses and four major writing assignments. Grades will be based on three things: participation (contributing respectfully and productively to in-class discussion), reading responses, and major assignments.

Pre- / Co-requisite

N/A

Course Objectives

This class is “writing intensive,” which means that the writing assignments will help familiarize students with the thought processes, structures, and styles associated with

writing in the liberal arts. Thus, the assignments in this class are designed to do several things at once.

They are designed to:

- Get you thinking more deeply, and thus more meaningfully, about the texts we read
- Emphasize the import of close reading, rereading, and fully-engaged reading of texts Help foster a more explicit and clear sense of your own writing process
- Allow personal choice of topics and concepts to help you find your own path through the issues of social class

Beyond this, students will learn the following reading, writing and speaking skills:

- Organize ideas in writing
- Write clear and appropriate prose
- Express ideas and information orally
- Engage in analytical and critical dialogue orally
- Evaluate arguments
- Identify and question assumptions

Laboratory

Respective laboratories are included within the 101 and 102 courses.

Required Materials

SUGGESTED SUPPLEMENTARY READERS (Anthologies) Beyond anchor texts that instructors provide for students, wide latitude is given for choosing the other texts students will read. If instructors intend to use a “reader,” the titles below have been approved for use in course:

Literature, Class, and Culture: An Anthology, 1st Edition; Lauter and Fitzgerald, eds. 2000. ISBN: 0321011635 (if buying only text through Amazon, new or used) ISBN: 0321117115 (if purchased as part of a package with Analyzing Literature: A Guide for Students through Pearson, 800-848-9500)

American Working-Class Literature, 1st edition; Coles and Zandy, eds. 2006.

ISBN: 9780195144567 (Oxford University Press, 800-280-0280)

Instructor Recommendations

N/A