

LAW AND LITERATURE

Syllabus for Fall 2005

Mary Ann McGrail

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Office Hours will be held each week after class, or by appointment.

DESCRIPTION: This course will examine portrayals of law and justice in literature from classical antiquity to the present. Aside from offering perspectives on law and the practice of it, the course is designed to encourage law students to become both better readers and writers. Since this is a seminar a premium will be placed on class preparation and written papers.

REQUIREMENTS: One seminar-length final paper (20-25 pp.); one short (5 page) paper and one review (2-3 pages).

ASSESSMENT: You will be assessed on your written work: 1 short (5 page) paper; 1 review (2-3 pages); and one seminar length paper (20-25 pages) as well as your preparation for and participation in class discussion.

September 1 Introduction: Approaches to law and literature
Packet of Materials – Selections from:
Holmes *The Common Law*
Posner *Law and Literature*
Dissents by Holmes and Frankfurter

PART I: THE LIMITS OF JUSTICE

September 8 Sophocles – *Antigone*

September 15 Plato *Apology*

September 22 The Bible – Selections from *Exodus, Kings I and II-*

Part II: LIBERTY AND LICENSE

September 29 More *Utopia*

October 6 Shakespeare *Measure for Measure*

October 13 Milton *Areopagitica*
Short Paper Due #1 (5 pages)

Part III: TRIALS AND ORDEALS

October 20 Twain *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

October 27 Melville *Billy Budd*

November 3 Selection from Dostoievsky *The Brothers Karamazov*
Kafka, *In the Penal Colony* from *Collected Stories*

Part IV: PERFORMANCE AND WITNESS

November 10 Bertolt Brecht *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*
(Methuen Student Ed.)
Susan Glaspell *Jury of Her Peers*

November 17 Rebecca West, *A Train of Powder*
Harriet Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
(selections)

November 24 – THANKSGIVING

PART V: LITERATURE AND LEGAL CHANGE

December 1 Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart*

December 8 Selections from Packet of Reading Materials
Review of Selected Book Due (2-3 pp.)
Seminar Paper Due (20-25 pp.)

Choose one of the following to read over the course of the semester and write a short (2-3 page) review of the book, placing it in the context of our class discussions and other reading. This paper is due on the last day of class. If you discover another work during the semester which you think engages with the course material and would prefer to review it, please speak to me about it.

Additional Reading: Jack Henry Abbott *In the Belly of the Beast*
Martin Amis *Night Train*
Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid's Tale*
Anthony Burgess *A Clockwork Orange*
Truman Capote *In Cold Blood*
J.M. Coetzee *Disgrace*
Theodore Dreiser *An American Tragedy*
Umberto Eco *The Name of the Rose*
P.D. James *Shroud for a Nightingale*
A Taste for Death
Harper Lee *To Kill A Mockingbird*
Norman Mailer *The Executioner's Song*
David Mamet *Oleanna*
George Orwell *1984/Animal Farm*
Walker Percy *The Thanatos Syndrome*
Philip Roth *The Plot Against America*
Scott Turow *Presumed Innocent*
Burden of Proof