Morse Academic Plan
Conversations of the West
Topics: Recognition in Literature—V55.0400

Professor Philip Kennedy (philip.kennedy@nyu.edu)
Office Hours: Friday 10:30am-1pm
Preceptor: Chris Apap (ccapap@hotmail.com)
Recitations: Fridays 9:30-10:45 & 11-12:15
Office Hours: T. 3:30-4:30pm & W. 1:30-3pm in Dept. of Comp. Lit., 19 University Place

Examination and grading: this will be based on four five-page (printed & double-spaced) written responses to each of the Four Parts of the course. These assignments should be engaged and analytical reviews-cum-responses to some or all of the readings from the relevant “Part”; 3 topics questions will be provided for each assignment due and these topics will be handed out at the beginning of each “Part” (e.g. Ancient Greek materials) so that students can be thinking about the materials during their readings and through class and recitation discussion. Each assignment will be worth 20% of final grade, with a further 20% for attendance in class and at recitation session. Attendance is mandatory; absence from more than five classes and/or recitations will incur an automatic drop in grade (A \rightarrow B+, etc.).

CP indicates materials available in a course packet at Advanced Copy Center on La Guardia Place (opposite Citibank); other readings are available from the NYU Bookstore

INTRODUCTION

Week 1: Jan. 21 & 23: Definition of Recognition and Introduction to “Epistemology of Narrative”: cognitive and moral issues of disclosure and recognition in narrative; introductory case study: Carol Reid’s *The Third Man* (1949), to be viewed in class in two parts, with introductory discussion and commentary at end of viewing.

PART I—CLASSICAL GREEK MATERIALS (poetics, tragedy and epic)

Week 2b: Jan. 30: Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*

Week 3: Feb. 4 & 6: Homer’s *Odyssey*; readings: Books 8 & 16-23

Film viewing-discussion: Woody Allen’s *Mighty Aphrodite* (evening session; time and location to be announced)

1st five-page written response due in on following Tuesday (Feb. 11)

PART II—SCRIPTURE

Week 4: Genesis
Feb. 11: Genesis 1-36: Abraham at Mamre; Jacob & picaresque elements in biblical narrative
Feb 13: Genesis 37-50: Judah and Tamar; The Joseph Romance; the transformation of
Joseph through the ages

Week 5: The Qur’an,
Feb. 18: Suras 81 (The Overturing), 12 (Joseph) & 2 (The Cow) (CP)
Feb. 20: Recognition and disclosure in the Life of Muhammad (CP)

Week 6: The Christian Gospels
Feb. 27: Gospel of John

Film viewing/discussion: Babette’s Feast (evening session; time & location TBA)

Week 7: Dante’s Inferno
March 4: Canto XV and T.S. Eliot’s Little Gidding (CP)
March 6: The Muslim Sources of Dante

2nd written response due for March 11

PART III—ROMANCE

Week 8: Shakespeare (recognition in Romance and Tragedy)
March 11: Pericles
March 13: King Lear

—SPRING BREAK (start reading Dickens’ Great Expectations)—

Week 9: The Arabian Nights
March 25 & 27 Readings from Haddawy’s translation: pp. 1-206

Week 10: “Oriental Stories” in the West: reading, romance and the picaresque
April 1: Voltaire’s Zadig (CP) (a philosophical tale from the Enlightenment)
April 3: Short tales from Borges’ Universal History of Infamy (CP) & Islamic Picaresque narratives (CP)

3rd written response due April 8

PART IV—MODERNITY, THE NOVEL & POSTMODERNITY

Week 11: April 8 & 10 Charles Dickens’ Great Expectations

Week 12: April 15 Gosford Park (w/ evening viewing session; time and location TBA)
April 17 Paul Auster’s City of Glass

Week 13: April 22 Christopher Nolan’s Memento
April 24: film viewing Memento (evening session; time and location TBA)

Week 14: April 29 Naguib Mahfouz’s The Search
May 1: Mahfouz (Nobel Laureate) & the Trajectory from Modernity to Postmodernity

4th written response due May 8