Course Policies and Requirements for The Fiction of Joseph Conrad

Professor: Jack Peters

Texts:
- Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad (Cambridge)
- Heart of Darkness (Norton 5th edition)
- The Secret Agent (Norton)
- The Secret Sharer and Other Stories (Norton)
- Lord Jim (Broadview)
- Nostromo (Broadview)
- Under Western Eyes (Broadview)
- Almayer’s Folly (Modern Library)

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Course Requirements:
The requirements for this course are as follows: the completion of 1 term paper, a mid-term exam, a final exam, and reading quizzes. The mid-term exam and final exam will each be worth 30% of your final grade for the class. The term paper will be worth 25% of your final grade. There will also be a number of reading quizzes worth 15% of the final grade for the class. If you fail to turn in the term paper or take an exam, you will likely fail for the course. There will be 1 make-up quiz for those who miss a quiz as a result of excused absences. I will drop the lowest quiz score.

Course Subject Matter:
This course will be an in-depth investigation into the writings of Joseph Conrad. We will begin with an overview and background on Conrad’s life and writing career as well as the historical, cultural, and literary environment in which he wrote. We will then consider a selection of his fiction, beginning with his first novel and ending with one of his later novels. I assume that we will spend roughly a week and a half to two weeks per each longer work and less on shorter works, but we may choose to linger over some works or move past others more quickly than originally expected.

Course Policies:
Attendance/Promptness: You are allowed 3 unexcused absences without penalty. You can use these absences for any reason, but use them wisely. Their purpose is to allow you to miss class if something important comes up that does not constitute an excused absence. Illness, family emergency (e.g., death in the family, etc.), observance of religious holidays, and university-excused absences (i.e., participation in intercollegiate athletic events, etc.) are the only reasons for excused absences; all excused absences are subject to my judgment and require documentation on your part. You also must attend at least 75% of a class to get credit for attending that day. If you have 4 unexcused absences, I will drop your final grade for the class by 3%, and I will drop your final grade for the class by an additional 2% for every unexcused absence after that. If you miss more than 9 classes, depending upon the circumstances, I may ask you either to drop the class or take an incomplete (this latter only in the case of excused absences). There will be a roll for you to sign. It is your responsibility to sign the roll. If you don’t sign the roll and I don’t remember that you were in class, then I will assume you were absent on that day. Do not sign the roll for anyone but yourself. If you do, you will be counted absent as well as the person in whose name you sign the roll. Even though you have 3 unexcused absences to work with, you should try not to miss class except when necessary, because it will be to your benefit to attend class, since much of the material appearing on the exams will be covered in class. As a result, students who chronically miss class generally don’t do very well in the course. Although I have no standard tardiness policy, if you are chronically late for class, you will be counted absent and may have your excused absences deducted.
(in my judgment), I may count a certain number of tardy days as an unexcused absence. Also, reading quizzes are usually given during the first 10 minutes of class, and so if you arrive late you may miss a quiz. Quizzes missed because of tardiness cannot be made up unless the tardiness is a result of a good, documented reason (essentially that same as those that constitute an excused absence). In addition, whether you're present or absent, you're responsible for all material we cover in class, including any changes in due dates, policies, or reading assignments. So make sure you check the notes of other students for any classes you miss.

**Late Term Papers:** I expect term papers to be turned in on the day they are due; nevertheless, you have a grace period for the term paper. The date is in the Daily Schedule. If you turn in the paper before the end of the grace period, there is no penalty. If for any reason it comes in any time after the grace period ends by my watch (even a minute or two), I'll deduct 6% off the grade for the term paper. In addition, I'll deduct 6% for each day thereafter that your paper is not turned in. If you're out of town, and you want to turn in a late term paper to avoid further penalty and you don't have access to e-mail, you can always mail me the term paper, and I'll consider it turned in as of the postmark date. The only exception to this late term paper policy is in the extremely rare case when it is impossible, because of excused absences, to turn in the term paper on the due date or during the grace period. Otherwise, there are no extensions beyond the grace period. If your term paper is late for an extended period, I may limit the penalty somewhat.

**Mid-Term and Final Exams:** The mid-term exam will likely be made up of 10 short-answer questions that will demonstrate your understanding of the material we have covered to that point. The final exam will also likely be made up of 10 short-answer questions, as well as 1 essay question that you will choose from a number of alternatives. The essay is intended to demonstrate your ability to apply what you have learned in somewhat different contexts from those we discussed in class. You will need a blue book for the final exam. If necessary, I scale mid-term and/or final exam grades. I do not give early or late mid-term or final exams except in extremely unusual circumstances.

**Final Grades:** Your final class grade will be calculated based on the percentages noted earlier. I use standard percentages for grades (0% - 59.4% = F; 59.5% - 69.4% = D; 69.5% - 79.4% = C; 79.5% - 89.4% = B; 89.5% - 100% = A). If necessary, I scale final grades. There are no extra credit assignments in this course.

**Reading Quizzes:** The purpose of reading quizzes is to determine whether you have read the material, not necessarily whether you have understood the material. As a result, if you have read the material carefully, you should do well on the quizzes, even if you have not fully understood it, but if you have not read you will probably not do well. Quizzes will usually be given during the first 10 minutes of the class and must be turned in when the 10 minutes is up. I do not scale quiz scores.

**Grading Criteria for Term Papers:** The primary criteria for grading term papers will be content and presentation. I weigh the content somewhat more heavily than the presentation, but both are important, and I will expect you to be responsible for the rules of grammar, punctuation, and usage you learned in Freshman English. The term papers should be about 7-8 pages long, but a little more or less doesn't matter to me. Just make sure you adequately cover the material if it's short or that there isn't unnecessary information if it's long. I will hand out an assignment sheet for the paper early in the semester. I do not scale paper grades.

**Accommodations:** In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for you if you qualify as a student with disabilities. Please register with ODA, and present your written request to me by the 2nd class day.

**Texts and Readings:**

**Texts and Readings:** The texts should be on sale at the student bookstore and elsewhere. You are welcome to use other editions of the books, although the page numbering will likely differ and some of the material may also be
different. I have placed a copy of the books (though sometimes other editions) on two-hour reserve in the library in case you don’t have immediate access to the books. You should read ahead for any heavier reading periods.

Plagiarism and Cheating:
Finally, if you plagiarize the term paper or cheat on an exam or quiz, you will receive the maximum penalty allowed to me, and I'll report you to university standards for disciplinary action, regardless of your past performance or class standing.

Daily Schedule (Tentative)

January 17: Introduction to course.
January 19: The Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad, chaps. 1 and 2, pp. 1-36; “Preface,” The Secret Sharer and Other Stories, pp. 139-142; A l'mayer’s Folly, chapter 1, pp. 3-16.
January 26: A l'mayer’s Folly, chapters 9-12, pp. 100-164; “A uthor’s N ote,” pp. xxvii-xxviii.
January 31: H eart of D arkness, part one, pp. 3-31.
February 2: H eart of D arkness, part two, pp. 31-54.
February 7: H eart of D arkness, part three, pp. 54-77; “P reface to Y outh,” pp. 264-266.
February 9: L ord J im, chapters 1-11, pp. 37-142.
February 14: L ord J im, chapters 12-20, pp. 143-211.
February 28: Mid-T erm Exam.
March 2: N ostromo, part one, pp. 51-154.
March 7: N ostromo, part two, pp. 157-291.
March 14: N o C lass; Spring Break
March 28: T he S ecret A gent, chapters 1-5, pp. 5-69.
March 30: T he S ecret A gent, chapters 6-9, pp. 69-138; F irst C all f or I nformal P roposal, A pril 4:
T he S ecret A gent, chapters 10-13, pp. 138-199; “A uthor’s N ote,” pp. 233-238.
A pril 6: T he S ecret A gent, continued.
A pril 11: U nder W estern E yes, part one, pp. 49-119.
A pril 13: U nder W estern E yes, part two, pp. 120-190.
A pril 18: U nder W estern E yes, part three, pp. 191-260.
A pril 20: U nder W estern E yes, part four, pp. 261-325; “A uthor’s N ote,” pp. 44-46.
A pril 25: “T he S ecret S harer,” T he S ecret S harer and O ther S tories, pp. 7-42; “A uthor’s N ote” to T wixt L and and S ea, T he S ecret S harer and O ther S tories, pp. 3-5; L ast D ay t o T urn in I nformal P roposal, A pril 27:
May 4: T he S hadow-L ine, continued; C ourse conclusion; E ssay D ue, M ay 9: Grace Period for E ssay E nds a t 10:30 a.m. Sharp b y M y W atch; F inal E xam, 10:30-12:30.