

**Professor Stephen Cope**

**Ithaca College**

**Fall 2009**

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**Office: Mueller 311 (Fall Hours: M-W 3:00-4:00, or by appointment)**

### **Introduction to Literature: Literary Transformations.**

The phenomenon – some would say *problem*, some would say *blessing*, some would say *curse*, many would say something else entirely – of transformation, broadly construed, has been a central preoccupation of Western civilization almost since its inception. (The pre-Socratic thinker Thales (ca.620-540 BC) regarded philosophy and science as nothing more nor less than attempts to explain *why* and *how* things change.) Yet transformation is also familiar to each of us: we are transformed from organic matter into sentient beings (and back again), from children into adults, from doubters into believers (sometimes) and from believers into doubters (sometimes), from high school students into college students, from sons and daughters into parents (sometimes). Spring turns into summer, which turns into fall. Trees change from lush and green to barren. Temperatures change. Presidents change. Nations come and go....

In this course, we will look at a number of different literary conceptions of and responses to transformation (again, broadly construed) that emerged or are emergent in both Western and non-Western contexts. Among other things, we will read about young men turned into bugs, children turned into adults, women turned into trees, and women turned into men (and vice-versa); we will examine the ways in which words transform the things they describe, how thought becomes language, how language is transformed into literature, how myths become novels and poems, how the meanings of myths, novels and poems can change over time, and how readers can change the texts they read. We will read writings that engage the issue of transformation as a problem to be overcome, as well as texts that celebrate change in all of its mercurial splendor. We will look closely at our own writing (well, your writing, more than mine), and see what kinds of transformations they may undergo over the course of a semester.

It is my hope that we will evolve a centrifugal classroom environment, both thematically and formally. In other words, I need not be the center of attention nor the focal point (although I will occasionally give a lecture if necessary or appropriate). Rather, my hope is that we will be discussing our texts and the issues they raise in a collective and collegial manner, raising unforeseen and unexpected issues and concerns. I will provide prompts and introduce historical, biographical, and cultural material when relevant to the readings, but this class works best if we are all equally committed to and involved in and engaged with the texts and our discussions thereof.

**Required Texts (at the Ithaca College Bookstore):**

You are welcome to purchase your texts elsewhere, but you must purchase the correct edition.

Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando* (ed. Mark Hussey)  
Harvest, annotated ed. (2006)  
978-0156031516

Ovid. *Metamorphoses* (tr. Charles Martin)  
Norton (2005)  
978-0393326420

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*  
Penguin (2006)  
978-0143104919

Kafka, Franz. *Complete Stories* (ed. Nashum N. Glatzer)  
Schocken (1995)  
978-0805210552

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea* (ed. Hilary Jenkins)  
Penguin, Student Edition (2001)  
978-0140818031

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein* (ed. J. Paul Hunter)  
Norton, Critical Edition (1995)  
978-2266003544

Eliot, T. S. *The Wasteland and Other Poems*  
Modern Library (2002)  
978-0375759345

Soyinka, Wole. *Ake: Years of Childhood*.  
Vintage (1989)  
978-0679725404

Hamilton, Sharon. *Essential Literary Terms*.  
Norton, brief ed. (2006)  
978-0393928372

**Recommended Texts:**

Brown, Sarah Annes. *The Metamorphoses of Ovid: From Chaucer to Ted Hughes*.  
Duckowrth (2002)  
978-0715631775

Chakvin, ed. *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: A Casebook*.  
Oxford UP (2002)  
978-0195142846

### **Requirements:**

Students wishing to receive credit for this course will do each of the following: 1) complete all required reading on time, and come to each class prepared to query, discuss, and debate relevant issues raised by and in the texts; 2) complete all written assignments — short essays, term papers, and in-class writings – in a manner that demonstrates the kind of committed intellectual engagement expected of college-level writers and thinkers; 3) complete and pass all quizzes and exams; 4) participate fully and enthusiastically in any and all group activities that take place during the semester (in-class group workshops, in-class group discussions, out of class research projects, etc.); 5) contribute to a vibrant and collegial classroom environment.

### **Breakdown of Grading:**

Class participation and attendance account for **20%** of final grade (see below for details)

Short papers, exercises, and quizzes account for **20%** of grade.

Mid-term paper (4-5 pages) accounts for **20%** of grade.

Final paper (7-10 pages) accounts for **20%** of grade.

Final exam accounts for **20%** of grade.

A+ =	99-100%	
A	94-98%	
A-	90-93%	
B+	87-89%	B 83-86%
B-	80-82%	
C+	77-79%	
C	73-76%	
C-	69-72%	
D	62-68%	(no plus or minus)

62% and below = F.

### **Attendance Policy:**

After two unexcused absences, each additional unexcused absence drops your grade 5 percentage points. So, after four unexcused absences, the highest grade you can receive in the course is a B- (assuming you receive 100% credit in all other areas). ***The fifth unexcused absence will cause you to fail the course.*** In other words; you get two freebies, but after that, there will be consequences. Occasional tardiness is understandable; frequent or chronic lateness will drop your grade at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Policy on Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism is grounds for immediate and non-negotiable failure of and removal from the course. I will also notify the chair of the English department, the dean of college, and your

advisor, with the recommendation that you be asked to leave Ithaca College. This is a serious violation. Don't do it. For more details, please visit the IC Policies Manual at: <http://www.ithaca.edu/library/research/plagiarism.htm>.

### **Schedule of Readings and Assignments:**

\*\*\*Readings are to be completed before the class meeting on the day they are listed.

\*\*\*Papers are due at the beginning of class on the date listed.

### **MAJOR DUE DATES:**

**Monday, October 19: Mid term paper due at beginning of class.**

**Tuesday, December 15: Final Paper due in my office by 5PM.**

**Final Exam Time and Date TBA.**

### **Week One:**

Wednesday, August 26: Introduction, Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" reading and exercise.

### **Week Two:**

Monday, August 31: Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown"  
(<http://www.online-literature.com/hawthorne/158>)

Wednesday, September 2: Ovid, Book I from *Metamorphosis*, pp. 13-47.

### **Week Three:**

Monday, September 7: Labor Day

Wednesday, September 9: Kafka, "The Metamorphosis," from *Complete Stories*, pp. 89-139. (Additional texts by Nabokov and Kafka distributed as handouts).

### **Week Four:**

Monday, September 14: Ovid, Book II-V from *Metamorphosis*, pp. 39-185.

Wednesday, September 16: Eliot, from *The Wasteland and Other Poems* ("The Waste Land," "Gerontion," "The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock," and "Portrait of a Lady." Recommended: "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Pages TBA).

### **Week Five:**

Monday, September 21: Ovid, Book VI - IX from *Metamorphosis*, pp. 186-338.  
Wednesday, September 23: Ovid, Book X from *Metamorphosis*, pp. 339-367.

**Week Six:**

Monday, September 28: Yom Kippur (No Class)  
Wednesday, September 30: Shelley, *Frankenstein*, (Volume I pp. 1-58)

**Week Seven:**

Monday, October 5: Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Volume II, pp. 59-101)  
Wednesday, October 7: Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Volume III, pp. 103-156)

**Week Eight:**

Monday, October 12: Sheaf of poems (Blake, Olson, Keats, Shelley, H.D. Rich and others).  
Wednesday, October 14: Workshop on mid-term papers.

**Week Nine:**

Monday, October 19: Brontë, from "Jane Erye," (pp. 119-132) and "Preface" and "Introduction" (pp. ix - 7) in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.  
Wednesday, October 20: Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Part One, pp. 9-37)  
\*\*\*\*\*Monday, October 19: Mid term paper due\*\*\*\*\*

**Week Ten:**

Monday, October 26: Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Part Two, pp. 38-104)  
Wednesday, October 28: Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Part Three, pp. 105-112)

**Week Eleven:**

Monday, November 2: Ovid, Book XI-IV from *Metamorphosis* (pp. 367-518).  
Wednesday, November 4: Ovid, Book XV: from *Metamorphosis* (pp. 519-554).

**Week Twelve:**

Monday, November 9: Soyinka, *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, I-V (pp. 1-76).  
Wednesday, November 11: Soyinka, *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, VI-X (pp. 77-160)

**Week Thirteen:**

Monday, November 16: Soyinka, *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, XI-XV (pp. 161-230)  
Wednesday, November 18: TBA (Catch up)

**Week Fourteen:**

Thanksgiving Break

**Week Fifteen:**

Monday, November 30: Silko, *Ceremony*, pages TBA  
Wednesday, December 2: Silko, *Ceremony*, pages TBA

**Week Sixteen:**

Monday, December 7: Woolf, *Orlando*, pages TBA.  
Wednesday, December 9: Woolf, *Orlando*, pages TBA.

**\*\*\*\*\*FINAL EXAM DATE and TIME TBA\*\*\*\*\***