

Some works of literature, e.g., Fyodor Dostoevsky's **The Brothers Karamazov**, Joseph Conrad's **Lord Jim**, and the works of the Latin American writer Jorge Luis Borges have been described as "philosophical." What does such description mean? Is it justified? In this course, we will explore these and related questions while reading primarily works of narrative by such authors as Borges, and Dostoevsky, as well as a few published or award-winning pieces by the teacher of this course.

In the process, we will address such topics as the nature of literature; its relation to art; the differences between poetry, narrative, and such forms of drama as **comedy** and **tragedy**; the relations of these to life; the nature and grounds of philosophical ideas involved in literary works; the role of criticism in literature; the nature of literary understanding; the locus of interpretation in literature (text, author, critics, reader); and the identity of a work of literature.

We will also compare, contrast and evaluate various conceptions of the relations between literature and philosophy, among them, **literature in philosophy**, i.e., the inquiry aimed at placing literature in the context of a given philosophy; **philosophy in literature**, i.e., the study of ideas of philosophical interest found in literary works; **philosophy through literature**, i.e., philosophical inquiry pursued through literary works; and **philosophy and literature**, i.e., an inquiry in which philosophy and literature are taken to be distinct and self-guided activities that, nonetheless, relate to each other in various ways.

These conceptions involve differing relations between philosophical and literary discourse which prompt philosophical as well as literary inquiry about additional topics we will explore: the role of fiction in exploring fact; the place, if any, of truth in fiction; and the tensions between fiction, memory, and personal and cultural identity especially as these manifest themselves in the literature of exile.

Carrying out the preceding tasks calls for intelligent experience, careful discussion and research, and hard thinking. We will try to do all these things. There will be readings of works of narrative, class discussion of these readings, and critical examination of hypotheses for resolving the literary and philosophical problems posed the readings.

Each student will be required to take a midterm and a final, and to write a paper to be submitted towards the end of the course.

The Midterm: This will take place soon after the sixth week of classes. It will emphasize the topics discussed in class up to that point. Students will have one class period to write it. Each student will be required to answer two essay questions out of a choice of four.

The Paper: This will be a piece of work reflecting the student's careful research and independent thinking. *(Make sure you are aware of the university's policies on plagiarism). In order for the paper to receive a passing grade, the student submitting it must have submitted a first draft and a final version of the paper proposal by the proposal's deadlines stated below, and the final version of the proposal must have been approved in writing—it should say "go ahead and be signed—by the instructor.*

The Proposal: Preparing a proposal involves the following four main steps:

- first, choose a topic that is philosophically relevant and that also interests you. You may use the materials in the philosophy books for the course to select one;
- second, to make sure you are on the right track, check with your instructor before proceeding;
- third, after your instructor approves your topic, use the **Selected Bibliography** at the end of the book, or any resources your instructor may suggest, to prepare a short list of philosophical readings that you intend to use in writing your paper;
- fourth, read these materials and, on the basis of the information thus acquired, write a proposal.

Proposals should be one to two pages long and include the following five items:

- first, a **topic**, that is, what the paper will be about;
- then, the main **question(s)** the student intends to address about this topic;
next, any hunch(es) or definite view(s) the student may have about what the paper's **conclusion** will turn out to be;
- also, a rough **abstract** of the reasoning leading to this conclusion.
finally, a list of readings you intend to use in writing the paper

Developing a paper proposal usually takes a great deal of work and various meetings with the instructor to take care of a variety of details affecting the viability of the proposed paper. It is accordingly best for students to start working on a proposal for their paper as soon as possible. This way, there will be no surprises at proposal submission time and students will be able to meet the paper submission deadline.

The Final: This will emphasize the topics discussed in class. Each student will be required to answer two essay questions out of a choice of four.

TEXTS:

- Required:**
1. Borges, Jorge Luis, **Labyrinths** (New York: New Directions, 1964)
 2. Kleiman, Lowel and Stephen Lewis, **Philosophy: An Introduction through Literature** (New York: Paragon House, 1992)
- Optional:**
3. Iannone, A. Pablo, **Through Time and Culture: Introductor Readings in Philosophy** (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994)
 4. Iannone, A. Pablo, **The Room with Closets: Tales of a Life Divided** (Austin, TX: Vagabond Press, 2006)

Note 1: Students will be required to read selections from all these books. Since two of the books **Through Time and Culture** and **The Room with Closets** (both published by the course's instructor), are listed as optional (i.e., students are not required to purchase them), copies of them are available for student use in the Reserve Room at CCSU's library.

Reserve Room Materials Information:

Professor [Iannone, Pablo \[ccsu\]](#)
Course [PHIL 121 \[ccsu\]](#)
[Introduction to Philosophy Through Literature \[ccsu\]](#)

Materials for this course

The room with closets : tales of a life divided / A. Pablo Iannone	Iannone, A. Pablo	CCSU—PQ7798.1 R66 2006— Available on Reserve-24 hours.
Through time and culture : introductory readings in philosophy / A. Pablo Iannone	Iannone, A. Pablo	CCSU—BD21 I26 1994—Available on Reserve-24 hours. Most sections of this book which are relevant to the course can also be retrieved through <i>online course reserves</i> .

Also, other works authored by the course's instructor have been found useful by students taking the course in the past, and are available at the

CCSU bookstore; but *they are not required by the instructor, nor are they crucial to do well in the course.* They include **Dictionary of World Philosophy** (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), **Philosophical Ecologies** (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1999) and **Philosophy as Diplomacy** (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1994).

**WORK SUBMISSION
SCHEDULE:**

Midterm:	Thursday, October 18
First draft of paper proposal:	Thursday, November 1st
Final draft of paper proposal (for grading purposes):	Thursday, November 15
Paper:	Thursday, December 6
Final examination:	To be announced.

GRADING:

Midterm:	30%
Proposal:	5%
Paper:	15%
Final examination:	30% (It will be comprehensive and students will have to pass it in order to pass the course)
Concept:	20% (It will be based on participation and trends on the other four grades)

ATTENDANCE:

Regular attendance is required

CONSULTATION HOURS:

T 3:15-4:50
TH 3:15-4:50
W 10:50-1:50

OFFICE:

317 Marcus White Hall.

PHONE NUMBERS:

832-2919/2915