

11th Literature Text List

This course begins with the plays of William Shakespeare and traces the development of the Western canon into the 20th century.

The **literary keel** for **11th Literature** is ***disenchantment***, as many (but not all) of the works in **11th Literature** involve the idea of *disenchantment*, the noticeable move away from a world that seemed full of vitality, hope, and wonder to a world marked by pessimism, cynicism, and ennui.

The medieval world was not necessarily an ideal, but the people who lived in it believed that the world possessed an inherent order and stability to it. They believed that this world had a *telos*, a final, fixed purpose that imparted the hope that life would become better, not worse, in this world or the next.

Such a worldview is expressed in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* in Dante the pilgrim's journey through the Inferno, Purgatorio, and the Paradiso, and in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, with the pilgrims' destination being that of Canterbury Cathedral and the miracles associated with that location.

In contrast, the modern era is characterized by a notable aura of *disenchantment*, in that the order and harmony once self-evident in the world has been replaced by materialism and industrialization, suppressed by the tragedy of human suffering evident, or overwhelmed in the growing fear of nihilism, in that nothing truly matters except the authenticity of the choices we make and the identity we forge for ourselves.

Such a mindset is reflected in works such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, whose anti-hero Satan embodies nihilism, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in that we may have been abandoned by our Creator to a life of misery and alienation; and Albert Camus' *The Plague*, in that suffering, comes upon a random and chaotic world and human beings have little to do except endure that suffering.

As literature teachers at a Classical school, we should strive to bring out all the elements that the author wanted to bring out in their work.

At times, these texts may bring out elements that do not always seem in accordance with

an education-oriented towards what is good, what is true, and what is beautiful.

Subsequently, our conversations in class about these texts should steer students towards a sense of hope and optimism, truth and goodness--the transcendentals of a Classical education--even while we acknowledge that the world we live in at times seems to be a very *disenchanted* one.

Integrated Thales Outcomes: Truth Seeker, Gratitude, Healthy Mind, Body, and Spirit, Dreams and Aspirations to Change the World, Virtuous Leader, and Unfailing Integrity.

Priority Text List
<p>1st Quarter: Shakespeare's <i>Othello</i> OR <i>Hamlet</i></p> <p>2nd Quarter: Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i></p> <p>3rd Quarter: Goethe's <i>Faust</i> (selections)</p> <p>4th Quarter: Charles Dickens' <i>Tale of Two Cities</i> OR Jonathan Swift's <i>Gulliver's Travels</i></p>
Preferred Text List
<p>I. Survey of Elizabethan Drama and Restoration Poetry</p> <p>A. Edmund Spenser's <i>The Fairy Queen</i> (excerpts)¹</p> <p>B. Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i>, <i>King Lear</i>, <i>Twelfth Night</i>, <i>The Tempest</i></p> <p>C. Christopher Marlowe's <i>Faust</i></p> <p>II. Survey of English Poetry from the Civil War to Romanticism</p> <p>A. Andrew Marvell, "To my Coy Mistress"</p> <p>B. John Donne (selections)</p> <p>III. Enlightenment and Enlightenment-Era Satire</p> <p>A. Moliere, <i>Tartuffe</i></p> <p>B. Survey of Alexander Pope</p> <p>C. Voltaire, <i>Candide</i></p>

¹ Philip Sydney's essay *The Defence of Poesy* serves as a good way to introduce the English Renaissance.

IV. Romanticism

A. Survey of English Romantic Poetry:

1. Selections from William Wordsworth (notably *The Prelude* and other poems)
2. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (including *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*)
3. Survey of John Keats (notably the Odes to Grecian Urn and a Nightingale)
4. Percy Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind"

B. Romantic Novels

1. *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
2. Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*

V. Victorian England

- A. *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen
- B. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- C. Survey of Alfred Lord Tennyson (notably *Ulysses*)

VI. Russian Literature

- A. *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy
- B. *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- C. *Notes from Underground* by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- D. *The Death of Ivan Illych* by Leo Tolstoy
- E. *One Day in the life of Ivan Denisovich* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn

VII. Modern & 20th c. Literature

- A. Selected poems of W.B. Yeats
- B. James Joyce—*Ulysses* (selections) and "The Dead"
- C. Survey of T.S. Eliot, including *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* and *The Wasteland*
- D. *The Plague* by Albert Camus
- E. *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque
- F. *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding

Optional Reading List
<p><i>Samson Agonistes</i> by John Milton</p> <p><i>The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia</i> by Samuel Johnson</p> <p><i>Murder in the Cathedral</i> by T.S. Eliot</p> <p><i>The Metamorphosis</i> by Franz Kafka</p> <p><i>Don Quixote</i> by Miguel Cervantes</p>