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**ENGLISH 283**

**THEMES IN BRITISH WRITING**

**BULLETIN INFORMATION**

ENGL 283 - Themes in British Writing (3 credit hours)  
**Course Description:**  
Reading a variety of British texts that exemplify persistent themes of British culture.  
Prerequisites: ENGL 101 and 102 or equivalent

**SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW**

"I am not what I am":  (Re)presenting the Individual

This course will examine a range of texts from the British Renaissance to the 20th century which engage in the representation of selfhood and self-understanding.  The attempt to present "individuals" on stage or on the page has taken many forms--from the apparent introspection of the Shakespearean soliloquy to modernist stream-of-consciousness narrative.  We will look at representative texts and study how various writers at various historical moments have dealt with the problem of the literary representation of personhood.

We begin with Shakespeare because characters in his plays—and particularly in the tragedies—have often been seen as representations of modern selves in their introspection and apparent inner conflicts.  We will then move to the nineteenth century and to more recent works to explore various techniques of self-presentation in prose fiction.  We will generally follow chronological order with a couple of minor exceptions.

**ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Upon successful completion of English 283, students will be able to:**

1. Articulate careful and close interpretations of literature
2. Identify important thematic features across a series of British texts
3. Demonstrate an understanding of and apply an analytical vocabulary to literature.
4. Demonstrate through discussion and written work an awareness of major contexts for understanding British literature
5. Write effective analytical essays interpreting literary texts.

**SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS**

1. William Shakespeare, *Norton Shakespeare:  Tragedies* (we will read *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear,* and *Macbeth*).
2. Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*
3. James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
4. Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*
5. Nick Hornby, *High Fidelity*
6. Iain M. Banks, *Use of Weapons*

**SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAM Three essays of 4-5 pages**

1. **Final exam**
2. **Daily reading quizzes:** Quizzes will be given daily (i.e. there will be 27 all together), and, in general, no makeups will be allowed.

**SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS**

**Week 1:** Introduction

Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (1600)

**Week 2:** *Hamlet*

**Week 3:** *Hamlet*

*Othello* (1604)

**Week 4:** *Othello*

**Week 5:** *King Lear* (1605)

PAPER 1 DUE

**Week 6:** *Lear*

*Macbeth* (1606)

**Week 7:** *Macbeth*

**Week 8:** Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1861)

**Week 9:** *Great Expectations*

PAPER 2 DUE

**Week 10:** James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)

**Week 11:** *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography* (1928)

**Week 12:** *Orlando*

**Week 13:** Nick Hornby, *High Fidelity* (1995)

PAPER 3 DUE

**Week 14:** Iain M. Banks, *Use of Weapons* (1990)

**FINAL EXAM:  According to University Final Exam Schedule**