COURSE DESCRIPTION: This core course will focus on the understanding, appreciation, and criticism of prose fiction. In particular, the class will explore works set in Italy and the Mediterranean, narratives of foreigners and expatriates “abroad” that grapple with issues such as love, war, race, class, gender, identity, and migration. Through the examination of superlative examples of literature, students will hone their oral and written critical thinking skills and better understand fiction. Through close readings of the texts, the class will emphasize the complexities of narrative language and the diverse points of view and traditions that inspire literary fiction.

Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of prose fiction as a means of exploring the human experience and be able to use the technical vocabulary necessary for understanding fiction.

Knowledge Area(s) satisfied: Literary Knowledge and Experience
Skill(s) Developed: Critical Thinking and Reading
Communication Skills – Written & Oral

TEXTBOOKS:
Giovanni’s Room, James Baldwin (1956)
The Sun Also Rises, Ernest Hemingway (1926)
The Talented Mr. Ripley, Patricia Highsmith (1955)
Daisy Miller, Henry James (1879)
Beautiful Animals, Lawrence Osborne (2017)
Selected Stories (TBA; to be posted on Sakai)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Through the careful analysis of representative texts, this class will deepen student knowledge of fiction and increase understanding of the human experience reflected in literature.
— Students will practice thinking and reading critically and improve critical skills by analyzing varied interpretations and assumptions connected to the texts. The course will encourage students to develop their own hypotheses, theories, and interpretations of the literature covered.
— Students will acquire the technical vocabulary for understanding works of fiction (plot, theme, etc.) and practice their descriptive, analytical, and argumentative skills in orally and in formal, written analyses. They will improve their ability to frame questions, present background information, analyze specific images, symbols, or passages and to present interpretations of literary work in both oral and written form.
— The course will improve student ability to understand how multiple interpretations of literary works are possible, and how differing interpretations reflect particular cultural and historical conditions that change over time. They will improve their ability to understand meaning in a historical context and to develop a facility for using different critical approaches to produce different interpretations of the texts.

SKILLS — CRITICAL THINKING /READING, WRITING & ORAL COMMUNICATION: Through in-class discussions, writing assignments and oral presentations, students will learn to understand, paraphrase, summarize, and contextualize the meaning of assigned texts and develop their own ideas, hypotheses, theories, questions, and proposals about the works in question, synthesizing ideas to support their own arguments and analyses of the text(s).
LEARNING ACTIVITIES: Readings and discussions will provide information regarding the texts, placing them in an historical context and providing avenues for critical analysis. Student(s) will be expected to read the materials in advance and be prepared to both ask and answer questions about the reading assignments. Discussion, homework assignments, written responses (of varied lengths), a midterm, an oral presentation, and a final paper will be used to assess literary knowledge, as well as writing and critical thinking and communication skills.

EVALUATION & GRADE BREAKDOWN:
- Participation & Attendance: 10%
- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Response Papers/Homework: 15%
- Oral Presentation: 25%
- Final Research Paper: 25%

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Since our discussions (and your participation in them) are such a large component of this course, and we have fewer meetings than most courses, your attendance is mandatory. Two (2) unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final grade by one complete grade. For example, a student with an A will drop to a B, a student with an A- will drop to a B- and so on. More than three (3) unexcused absences may result in failure for the course. Absences (medical or otherwise) should be cleared with the JFRC Dean’s office.

DISABILITY POLICY: If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me within the first week of classes

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Plagiarism is considered a serious offense, will be reported to the Dean of the Loyola Rome program, and could result in expulsion. Please see me if you have questions about how to do research, document and cite sources, or with any other questions you may have about papers and assignments.

COURSE CALENDAR: This is an overview; exact dates will be provided the first week of class

Week 1  Class Overview & Introduction
Week 2  The Innocent Abroad (in Italy): Henry James’s Daisy Miller
Week 3  Post WWI Europe, Intro to Modernism & Hemingway & The Sun Also Rises
Week 4  Secular France & Catholic Spain in The Sun Also Rises
Week 5  Post WWII France + James Baldwin, Identity, Race & Sexuality in Giovanni’s Room
Week 6  James Baldwin, continued + Midterm Review
Week 7  Midterm Essay Exam
Fall Break
Week 8  The Not-So-Innocent Abroad in Patricia Highsmith’s The Talented Mr. Ripley
Week 9  Sexual confusion and fetishizing class in Ripley, continued
Week 10  Oral Presentations
Week 11  Selected Stories (TBA – available on Sakai)
Week 12  Migration meets Privilege in Lawrence Osborne’s Beautiful Animals
Week 13  Altruism or Malicious intent? Beautiful Animals continued
Week 14  (Exam Week) Final Papers Due

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