

**World Literature and Language Course Description**  
**(Revised Jan. 2010)**  
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**Scope:** World Literature and Language is a course designed to expose students to literature from around the world, but it begins with the origins of rhetoric and drama, ancient Greece. Many students do not have exposure to the writing that heralded the dawn of western civilization, so we begin here, to help foster understanding and knowledge behind much of our western literature. We will begin the semester reading aloud Sophocles' *Antigone* and Euripides' *Medea*. One change last year was the incorporation of a contemporary novel, *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, which takes place in Afghanistan. This novel was added because of the emphasis on the current state of the geographical region where Western civilization began. We will also watch the movie of this novel (the first time I have done so in this course), because it is very well done. This year I am in the process of acquiring our first non-fiction book titled *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson. The book is the story of the author's journey to Pakistan to climb K2 where he almost loses his life because he got lost on the mountain. He ends up in the village of Korphe, Pakistan, where he is nursed back to health by the local people. He promises to return to build a school for girls.

This course is both historical and contemporary; students will know about literature from around the world but at different time periods. The course will also focus on different genres as well. For instance, when we discuss European writers, we will read others beyond British authors, i.e. Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and "A Hunger Artist", Anton Chekhov's "The Bet", and excerpts from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground*. We will also read essays by British and German writers and poetry by British and Spanish. Many are familiar with the writings of Chinese-American writer, Amy Tan, but this course will also focus on other Asian countries besides China. *A Step From Heaven* by An Na (Korean) is a young adult novel and another genre for students to consider. *Words of Farewell: Stories by Korean Women Writers* will be a nice supplement to Miss Na's novel. At the end of the semester, we will close out the semester by reading short fiction by African and South American writers. Throughout this course we will explore the political, psychological and sociological impact that these writers have had on their time period and culture. Students should consider just what it is that each author had to say about his or her culture. We will examine the writers but also place them in the context of their existence.

**Organization:** The classroom will be focused around the reading of each piece with discussion questions, quizzes, literature circles, carousel brainstorming, and small group discussions. The classroom activities will also include timed writing assignments and peer response groups where a student can get feedback on his or her writing.

**Student expectations:** Students will be expected to read four major works throughout this semester: *The Kite Runner*, *Three Cups of Tea*, *The Metamorphosis*, and *A Step from Heaven*. They will also read other short works of fiction, poetry, essays, and plays. Students are expected to react to each of these assigned readings in a critical manner—

either through classroom discussion or through reaction papers. Each week students will be expected to write one short essay. Students will have a final essay exam. Students will create a multi-genre research paper as their final project. Just what is a multi-genre research paper? According to Tom Romano, author of *Writing with Passion: Life Stories, Multiple Genres*, a multi-genre research paper "recognizes that there are many ways to see the world, many ways to show others what we see" (1995, p. 130). Each of you is required to select one author--it may be an author from our readings in World Literature and Language or a well known author you have read previously as part of your reading history. A separate assignment sheet will be given to you outlining the work of the multi-genre project.