



CIEE Warsaw, Poland

Course Name:	The Search for Self: Identity in Post-War Polish Literature
Course number:	LITT 3001 WRSW
Programs offering course:	Central European Studies
Language of Instruction:	English
Contact Hours:	45
Credits:	3
Term:	Fall 2019

Course Description

This is study of central issues in Polish literature and culture in their historical context. These issues include: Poland between the spheres of Western and Eastern cultures, concepts of personal and national selfhood (i.e. Individualism vs. civic values, universal vs. local values, traditional vs. modern – and “postmodern” – values), Interactions between art and literature or philosophy and literature.

Learning Objectives

- to explore the variety of cultural patterns created within Polish literature
- to interpret Polish literature and culture within its European context
- to find out which historical ideas, themes and styles seem to remain attractive for the contemporary culture

Course Prerequisites:

Interest in literature

Methods of Instruction:

Lectures and discussions

Assessment and Final Grade:

The final course grade will be determined based on the following distribution:

- Active participation in class (15%)
- Mid-term essay (20%)
- Final essay (30%)
- Presentation (20%)
- Quizzes (15%)



Course Requirements

Participation in class:

Students are expected to actively take part in class discussions and present their familiarity with the readings and well as their individual interpretations of the works of literature.

Mid-term essay:

In the middle of the term students will be required to write an essay on one of the topics covered in the first part of the course. All the papers will be passed through the antiplagiarism system.

Final Essay:

Each student is required to write an extended essay (around 10 000 words) on one of the topics related to the course. All the papers will be passed through the antiplagiarism system.

Presentation:

Each student will present a chosen topic and discuss it during the class

Quizzes:

During the course there will be two 15-minute quizzes checking the knowledge of the topics and readings covered in the course so far.

Course Syllabus:

Week 1

1.1.Topic of Class: Introduction

Description of content: Conceptual framework and historical contexts

1.2.Topic of Class: Middle Ages

Description of content: Middle Ages.

Required Readings: *Birth-Giver of God*; *Lament of a Dying Man*; *Deeds of the Princes of the Poles* (excerpt)

Week 2



2.1.Topic of Class: Jan Kochanowski

Description of content: Renaissance.

Required Readings: Jan Kochanowski, selected Songs, Trifles and Laments

2.2.Topic of Class: Jan Chryzostom Pasek,

Description of content: Baroque and Sarmatism.

Required Readings: Jan Chryzostom Pasek, *Memoirs* (selection)

Week 3

3.1.Topic of Class: Ignacy Krasicki

Description of content: Enlightenment and Partitions.

Required Readings: Ignacy Krasicki, selected *Fables and Parables*

3.2.Topic of Class: Adam Mickiewicz

Description of content: Romanticism.

Required Readings: Adam Mickiewicz, *Ode to Youth*; selected *Ballads*; *The Great Improvisation*

Week 4

4.1.Topic of Class: Pan Tadeusz

Description of content: The wane of Polish Nobility - Movie *Pan Tadeusz* (dir. Andrzej Wajda), based on Adam Mickiewicz's epic poem - DVD Film

Class Presentation due on this date

4.2.Topic of Class: Pan Tadeusz II

Description of content: Class discussion on the movie *Pan Tadeusz*

Week 5

5.1.Topic of Class: Ziemia Obiecana

Description of content: Rise of the modern civilization – Movie *Ziemia Obiecana* (dir A. Wajda), based on Władysław Reymont's novel - DVD Film

5.2.Topic of Class: Ziemia Obiecana II

Description of content: Class discussion on the movie *Ziemia Obiecana*
Quiz



Week 6

6.1. Topic of Class: Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz

Description of content: Psychology in literature.

Required Readings: Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, *The Wilko Girls*

6.2. Topic of Class: Bruno Schulz

Description of content: Experiments, surrealism, and private mythologies.

Required Readings: Bruno Schulz, *The Street of Crocodiles* (selected stories)

Week 7

7.1. Topic of Class: Witold Gombrowicz

Description of content: Stereotypes, irony, parody. Required Readings: Witold Gombrowicz, *Bacacy* (selected stories)

7.2. Topic of Class: Holocaust

Description of content: The Nazi occupation and the Holocaust.

Required Readings: Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen; A Day in Harmenza*

Mid-term essay due on this date

Week 8

8.1. Topic of Class: Popiół i diament

Description of content: The experience of communism – Movie *Popiół i diament* (dir. A. Wajda), Based on Jerzy Andrzejewski's novel - DVD Film Class Presentation

8.2. Topic of Class: Popiół i diament II

Description of content: Class discussion about the movie *Popiół i Diament*

Week 9

9.1. Topic of Class: Czesław Miłosz

Description of content: Post-war poetry – tradition and modernity.

Required Readings: Czesław Miłosz, selected poems; *Native Realm* (excerpt)

9.2. Topic of Class: Sławomir Mrożek

Description of content: Satire, absurd, black humor.

Required Readings: Sławomir Mrożek, selected short stories
Quiz



Week 10

10.1. Topic of Class: Ryszard Kapuściński

Description of content: Non-fiction writing – memoir, travelogue, reportage.

Required Readings: Ryszard Kapuściński, *Imperium* (excerpts)

10.2. Topic of Class: Stanisław Lem

Description of content: Science-fiction and futuristic technologies. Required

Readings: Stanisław Lem, *Tales of Pirx the Pilot* (selected stories)

Final essay due on this date

Week 11

11.1. Topic of Class: Andrzej Stasiuk

Description of content: “Little homelands” - nostalgia and regional communities after 1989
Required Readings: Andrzej Stasiuk, *Tales of Galicia* (selected stories)

11.2. Topic of Class: Final Class

Description of content: **Final Essays’ discussions**

Recommended Readings

Handbook Czesław Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, University of California Press, 1983.

Recommended Essays On Polish Literature

- Grażyna Borkowska, *Polish Women Writers*
- Przemysław Czapliński, *Beauty and the Novel*
- Paweł Dybel, *The Roots of Polish Identity* Tadeusz
- Komendant, *Local Patriotism*
- Alina Kowalczykova, *The Heritage of Romanticism and Tradition*
- Jacek Leociak, *In the Shadows of Destruction*