

Multicultural Literature

QI Study Guide:

Stories and Storytellers



“Language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture.”

—Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o

Overview

Writers across the world use literary techniques not simply to tell a story, but to reveal the complex meanings of the “human condition.” Whether good or bad, hopeful or tragic, bitter or sweet or bittersweet, these meanings often go ignored in our daily lives. In this course, we will analyze, interpret, and reflect on works of literature from a variety of cultural perspectives. By doing so, we will come to understand and appreciate the background stories, hidden relationships, painful conflicts, unresolved longings, overwhelming moments of beauty, and very real life lessons that humans have experienced through their own ethnic, religious, regional, political, and historical perspectives.

So...Does literature from different cultural backgrounds shed light on your own lives? Yes. On the language you use in social media posts? Yes. On the geopolitical crises unfolding in our newsfeeds? Yes. On the forms of injustice visible in our community? On communities and experiences you’ve never really thought about before? Yes and yes. On those fleeting moments of indescribable wonder, happiness, and freedom that you wish could last forever? Of course. On those bouts of boredom and endless daily drama? Well, yes. On your dreams for the future? Yes, I say. Yes! to all of the above...

But *how*?

1. Read the study guide with your table members and mark it up.

2. Vocabulary* (In writer’s notebook):

Literary terms: narrative, narrator, unreliable narrator, frame story, foreshadowing, flashback, dramatic visualization, embedded narrative

Culture: myth, symbol, culture, value, norm, authenticity, appropriation, absolutism, universalism, relativism, individualism, collectivism,

*There will also be short vocabulary lists (5 words) for individual readings & quizzes on those terms.

3. Individual Work:

___ “My” Culture Reflection (Due 9/3 or 9/5)

___ Summer Reading: Book Review (Due 9/9 or 10)

___ *A Thousand and One Nights* Story “Blurb” (Due 9/19 or 20)

___ Writer's Notebook: SAT Warmups / Quick Writes / Apprentice Sentences / Vocabulary / Writing About Reading Strategies / Drafts and Writing Exercises (collected periodically)
 ___ Graphic Organizers (With in-class readings)

3. Group Work:

___ *A Thousand and One Nights* Group Presentation (Due 9/16 or 17)
 ___ "Modernized Myth" Project (Due 10/17 or 18)

4. Assessments:

___ *Final Essay*: Cultural Analysis (Due 10/28 or 29)
 ___ Socratic Seminars (9/5 or 6, 10/21 or 10/22)
 ___ Vocab Assessments (In-class, dates will be posted on Google Classroom and announced in class)
 ___ **Honors**: *Invisible Cities*: "Cityscape" Project (Due 10/ or 18)

Lessons

- *Respect Agreements (8/26-37)
- *The Concept of Culture (8/29-30)
- **They Say / I Say* Intro (9/3-5)
- *Narrative Devices (9/9-10)
- *Book Blurbs (9/9-10)
- *Apprentice Sentences (9/12-13)
- *Types of Paragraphs & Paragraph Development (9/23-24)
- *Thesis Statements (9/30-10/1)
- *Quotation, Citation, and Editing (10/7-8)

Readings

Guiding Question I: How does the art of storytelling (i.e. using narrative "devices") express cultural lessons/values? How are these devices unique to certain cultures, or shared across cultures?

A Thousand and One Nights (Read only **the one story assigned to your table group** from the list below):

"The Three Apples" (foreshadowing, dramatic visualization, unreliable narrator, embedded narrative)

"The Second Shaykh's Story" (repetition, thematic patterns)

"The Bull and the Ass" (frame story, animal fable)

"The Hunchback's Tale" (unreliable narrator, suspense)

"The Man Who Became Rich Through a Dream" (foreshadowing, self-fulfilling prophecy/dream)

Guiding Question II: What elements of ancient myths are universal? What aspects of these myths are relevant to our contemporary world?

B. "Modernizing Myth"

Internet Sacred Text Archive (Database of world myths, folklore, religion, and other sources for

“Modernized Myth” Project) www.sacred-texts.com

“[Dancing](#)” by Robert Hass (A contemporary version of the Prometheus myth)

Guiding Question III: In what ways do short stories represent cultural conflicts?

C. Short Stories:

“[Half a Day](#)” by Naguib Mahfouz (Egypt)

“[The Upright Revolution: Or Why Humans Walk Upright](#)” by Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Kenya)

Honors Readings:

“[The Gospel According to García](#)” by Ariel Dorfmann (Chile)

“Angel Levine” by Bernard Malamud (USA)

“The Forgotten Children” by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (India/USA)

Calendar

Blue= Sections 5 & 8 Silver = Sections 6 & 7

Aug 26 27, 29 30	Respect Agreements / Course Guidelines & SG / The Concept of “Culture” (Lesson and Activity) & My Culture Assignment
Sep 3, 5 6	My Culture Assignment due 9/3-5 / Summer Reading Socratic / Lesson: They Say / I Say Overview & Summer Book Review / IW
Sep 9 10, 12 13	IW: Summer Reading Book Review due 9/9-10 / Lesson: A Thousand and One Nights and Narrative Devices / Lesson: Apprentice Sentence / IW & GW
Sep 16 17, 19 20	Group Presentations on 9/16-9/17 / Lesson: Intro to “Modernized Myth” Project (Prometheus & the Riddle of the Sphinx) / “Half a Day” (Mahfouz) / A Thousand and One Nights Blurb due 9/19-20
Sep 23 24, 26 27	Lesson: Types of Paragraphs / “The Upright Revolution” (Thiong’o) / GW / Apprentice Sentence
Sep 30 Oct 1, 3 4	Lesson: Thesis Statements / GW / Apprentice Sentence
Oct 7 8, 10 11	Lesson: Quotation, Citation, and Editing Review / Cultural Analysis Essay / GW / Apprentice Sentence
Oct 15, 17 18	Writing Workshops / “ Modernized Myth ” Group Work Due 10/17-18
Oct 21 22, 24 25	Writing Workshops / Socratic Seminar
Oct 28 29	Cultural Analysis Essay Due 10/28-29

Tutoring / Extensions &/ Resubmission Policy

This course expects juniors and seniors to be able to manage their time and academic work responsibly so that you turn in your *best* work at the assigned due date. If you need extra time and support for any of our work, please communicate this need *ahead of the due date* with me, Ms. Deb, Ms. Ta, and/or Ms. Vanderberg. Extensions will only be given to students who fill out and turn in an **Extension Request Form** one class period before the due date. Without any communication from you, grade percentage points (A to A-) will be taken off for each class period an assignment has not been turned in. For all vocabulary quizzes, graded graphic organizers, and in-class assignments, I will accept resubmitted work/quiz corrections **only during tutoring hours** after going over the assignments one-on-one, or in small groups. My tutoring hours are **Monday and Thursday from 4-4:30 in Room C10**.

Links

[Cross-Cultural Terminology](#) (A useful glossary of terms about Cultural Comparison)

Internet Sacred Text Archive www.sacred-texts.com

[Myths From Around the World](#) (TedED Youtube Channel)

SKILLS ADDRESSED IN THIS COURSE:

READING: Analyze the narrative techniques and style of a text

Apply your analysis of one text to other texts, and to cultural concepts

Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources

Annotate a text at different levels of significance (Using Notice/Note bookmarks and Graphic Organizers)

WRITING: Practice the skills of summary, paraphrase, quotation, commentary, and interpretation

Draft and revise a story “blurb” that vividly summarizes a story and shows cultural understanding and persuasive techniques

Construct a multiple-paragraph essay that demonstrates analysis of evidence and synthesis of ideas about a short story or novel

Develop creative responses to texts from different cultures; experiment with and explore different genres (short story, poetry, drama, nonfiction, professional writing, etc)

Develop your own voice as a writer by mastering the elements of academic writing (grammar, punctuation, tone, concision, clarity, flow)

SPEAKING: Presentations for Group Work and Socratic seminars will help students practice public speaking and active listening skills in responding to their peers with grace, courtesy, and engaged critical thinking.

Students will become confident speakers, successful collaborators, and effective leaders.