

## Portuguese Literature in Translation

### Course Description

This course offers a broad overview of Portuguese literature, in English translation, from the Middle Ages to the contemporary period, placing literary movements and major authors in their historical and aesthetic context.

The course begins with a survey of Medieval Galician-Portuguese lyric, a literary tradition influenced by Iberian oral culture, Provençal poetry of courtly love, and Medieval Catholicism, and sometimes characterized by satire. Students will then analyze Luís Vaz de Camões's *The Lusiads* (1572), the national epic that celebrates Vasco da Gama's discovery of the sea route to India in 1498, while criticizing aspects of Portugal's overseas colonial empire. The course will further examine Eça de Queirós's *Cousin Basilio* (1878), a realist-naturalist novel of female adultery and social criticism that investigates the relationship between literature and society. Students will also read poems and some poetic prose by Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), one of the greatest poets of modernism, concentrating on the major heteronyms (fictional authors) created by Pessoa and their different literary styles and traditions, while also considering the anti-modernist, nationalistic, streak in some of the works signed by Pessoa himself. The course will conclude with an exploration of *Blindness* (1995; trans. 1997), an allegorical, dystopian novel by José Saramago—the 1998 Nobel Laureate for Literature—that strips human experience to its bare and powerful elements.

### Learning Outcomes:

*By the end of the course students will be able to:*

1. demonstrate a general understanding of cultural, social, and historical realities of Portugal;
2. identify and describe a range of artistic forms, styles, and themes that characterize the Portuguese literary tradition;
3. apply critical reading skills in analyzing and debating meanings conveyed in Portuguese literary texts;
4. relate forms, themes, and meanings of Portuguese literature to culturally and historically situated forms of human and social experience;
5. convey their understanding of course content in a clear and effective manner through both oral and written communication;
6. articulate how literature both reflects and helps shape culture, society and history.

### Required Readings

Camões, Luiz Vaz de. *The Lusiads*. Trans. William C. Atkinson. London: Penguin Classics, 1975. Print.

Pessoa, Fernando. *A Little Larger than the Entire Universe. Selected Poems*. Ed. and Trans. Richard Zenith. London: Penguin, 2006. Print. [Photocopied selections.]

---. *The Book of Disquiet*. Trans. Richard Zenith. London: Penguin Classics, 2002. [selections]

Queirós, Eça de. *Cousin Basilio: A Domestic Episode*. Trans. Margaret Jull Costa. London, Dedalus, 2004. Print.

Saraiva, José Hermano. *Portugal: A Companion History*. London: Carcanet, 1997. Print.

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- Saramago, José. *Blindness*. Trans. Giovanni Pontiero. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997. Print.
- Zenith, Richard, ed. and trans. *113 Galician-Portuguese Troubadour Poems*. Manchester: Carcanet, 1996. Print. (Photocopied selections)

### Other Readings, corresponding to the chronological order of the Required Readings:

- Cohen, Rip and Stephen Parkinson. "The Medieval Galician-Portuguese Lyric." *Companion to Portuguese Literature*. Eds. Stephen Parkinson, Claudia Pazos Alonso and T. F. Earl. Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2009. 25-44. Print.
- Willis, Clive. "The *Lusiads* and the literature of Portuguese Overseas Expansion." *Companion to Portuguese Literature*. 72- 84. Print.
- Coleman, Alexander. *Eça de Queirós and European Realism*. New York: New York UP, 1980. 70-83, 113-32. Print.
- Castro, Mariana Gray. "Fernando Pessoa and the Modernist Generation." *Companion to Portuguese Literature*. 144-156. Print.
- Nashef, Hania A. M. "Becomings in J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and José Saramago's *Blindness*." *Comparative Literature Studies* 47.1 (2010): 21-41. Print.
- Vieira, Patricia I. "The Reason of Vision: Variations on Subjectivity in José Saramago's *Ensaio sobre a cegueira*." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 46.2 (2009): 1-21. Print.

### Requirements of the Course/Grading

**Attendance and Participation:** Regular attendance is expected. You will be participating in discussions, which implies that you will have read the assignments before each class. To be assured of an A in this category, you must attend every class, come to class prepared and participate in the discussions.

**Homework.** You will be required to respond in writing to discussion questions for each class based on the readings. These questions will be distributed in class and by email.

**Quizzes:** Unannounced quizzes may be given at the beginning of class.

**Exams and Critical Essays:** There will be three midterm short answer and/or critical essay examinations: the first will be taken in class and the others will be take-home critical essays. The final, also a take-home essay/short paper, will concentrate on one of the periods or works read in the course. The topics for the exams and essays will come directly from class discussions, making attendance and participation all the more important.

### Evaluation

Attendance and Class Participation	15%
Homework	15%
Midterm Exams/Critical Essays and Unannounced Quizzes	50%
Final Exam/Critical Essay	<u>20%</u>

TOTAL

100%

**Grading scale:**

A	100-94	B+	89-87	C+	79-77	D+	69-66	F	59-
A-	93.-90	B	86-83	C	76-73	D	65-60		
		B-	82-80	C-	72-70				

**Policy on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism in written assignments is defined as submitting work that contains another author's words and/or ideas without proper acknowledgment (i.e. specific and complete bibliographic references for all direct quotes and paraphrased statements derived from outside sources). Students who hand in written work containing plagiarized material will be penalized by receiving a failing grade (zero points on a 100 point scale) for the assignment. Student may also be subject to administrative dismissal. For more information, visit <http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Undergraduate/Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx>.

**Students with disabilities**

In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please meet with the instructor at the beginning of the semester and provide appropriate paperwork from Student Disability Services, <http://uml.edu/student-services/Disability/>, 978-934-4574.

**Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. Every absence, excused or unexcused, will count against your final grade. The only advantage to an excused absence is that it allows you to make up work missed. Upon the fourth absence (excused or not), the student's grade will be lowered a notch: from an A to an A-, from A- to a B+, and so on. An absence may be considered excused if proper written documentation is provided that justifies the absence. Examples of excused absences include doctor's appointments, jury duty, court appearance, military obligations, funerals. Cases of minor illnesses (for which one will not see a doctor) or other minor crises (such as car problems) are not considered excused absences.

**Syllabus**

(Please note that course schedule is subject to change.)

Portuguese Literature in Translation is comprised of five units:

**UNIT 1: The Medieval Galician-Portuguese Lyric: Students will study and be able to identify the forms and themes of the major genres of Galician-Portuguese lyric, namely the *cantiga de amigo*, *cantiga de amor*, *cantiga de escárnio e maldizer*, and *cantiga de Santa Maria*. Further, students will be able to discuss possible origins of the lyric and compare and contrast the different genres.**

### Week 1

Introduction to the course  
Introduction to medieval Galician-Portuguese lyric

Homework: Read Saraiva, pp. 1-24; write answers to homework questions distributed in class. (photocopies).  
Read “The Medieval Galician-Portuguese Lyric,” *A Companion to Portuguese Literature*, pp. 25-44.  
From Reader: read the poems “Mother, it was here that I met a young lord” and “Song of the flower of the green pine” and come prepared to class to discuss what makes these two poems *cantigas de amigo*.

### Week 2

Discuss:  
“In Vigo by the belfry,” by Martin Codax, 118-19  
“Since our mothers are going to St Simon's,” Pero Viviaez, pp. 144-45  
Topic: music of the *cantigas de amigo*

“Praying at St. Simon's chapel, alone,” by Meendinho, pp. 122-23  
“O sea waves of Vigo,” by Martin Codax, pp. 108-09  
“Rise up, beloved, who on cold mornings sleeps,” by Nuno Fernandez Torneol, pp. 34-35  
“In the woods outside Crecente,” by Joam Airas de Santiago, pp. 132-33

“In Provençal Style I'd like,” by Dinis, King of Portugal, pp. 222-23  
“Like one who died because he never,” Pai Soarez de Taveirós, pp. 4-5  
“When Joam Garcia inquired,” by Roi Queimado, pp. 172-73  
“If I could only learn to hate,” by Pero da Ponte, pp. 44-45  
“Whenever I look at the waves,” by Roi Fernandes, pp. 152-53

### Week 3

Discussion of *cantigas de amor*  
Introduction to *cantigas de escárnio e maldizer* (Songs of Mock and Slander)  
Introduction to *cantigas de Santa Maria* (Songs in Praise of Holy Mary)

“Roi Queimado has died of love,” Pero Garcia Burgalês, pp. 176-77

“—Joam Vasquiz, I'm dying to know,” by Lourenço and Joam Vasquiz, pp. 138-39

“I saw a rich man being auctioned,” by Pero da Ponte, pp. 50-51

“This is in praise of Holy Mary, telling how,” by Alfonso X, King of Castile and León, pp. 96-97

“This is in praise of Holy Mary, telling the,” by Alfonso X, King of Castile and León, pp. 98-99

“How Holy Mary made a monk sit still,” by Alfonso I, King of Castile and León, pp. 101-03

Discussion of *cantigas de escárnio e maldizer* and *cantigas de Santa Maria*

The music of the *cantigas*

Homework: Prepare for Midterm I on medieval Galician-Portuguese Lyric

#### **Week 4**

Midterm on the Cantigas d'Amigo, Cantigas d'Amor, Cantigas de Escárnio e Maldizer, Cantigas de Santa Maria

Homework: Read William C. Atkinson's "Introduction" to *The Lusiads*, pp. 7-30 and Canto I, pp. 39-56.

**UNIT 2: Selections from *The Lusiads* by Luís Vaz de Camões, the first modern epic and a rewriting of Homer and, in particular, Virgil, infused with elements from Christianity, Portuguese history and nationalism, and an early modern European worldview.**

Discussion of Canto I in the context of epic models from antiquity and the Italian Renaissance.

#### **Week 5**

Discussion Canto III and Canto IV: Portuguese history and nationalism, the notion the wise ruler and just war, and questioning of the Portuguese ideology of empire in the East.

Discussion of early modern science, the poet as the true hero of the epic, pastoral vs epic, and the myth of Adamastor.

#### **Week 6**

Discussion of Portugal meets India; *The Lusiads* as an epic of trade and commerce; desire and men-women relations; romance and pastoral vs epic.

Discussion of sixteenth-century Portugal and the empires of antiquity sung by Homer and Virgil; Portugal viewed as decadent and at the end of empire.

**UNIT 3: The Nineteenth-Century Novel. Discussion will focus on *Cousin Bazilio* as a novel of social criticism, following the objectives of the so-called Generation of 1870. Further, we**

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will examine issues of genre as Eça incorporates three different literary movements—Romanticism, Realism and Naturalism—into one work. Finally, we will explore issues of sexuality, gender and class in this major European novel of female adultery.

**Week 7**

Student submits Take-Home Essay Midterm

Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Romanticism, Realism/Naturalism and Portugal's Generation of 1870

Discussion of *Cousin Bazilio*

**Week 8**

Discussion of *Cousin Bazilio*

Discussion of *Cousin Bazilio*

**Week 9**

Discussion of *Cousin Bazilio*

Discussion of *Cousin Bazilio*

Homework: Take-Home Exam-Essay on *Cousin Bazilio*

**UNIT 4: Fernando Pessoa and European Modernism.** We will examine the major heteronyms (poetic personae) under whose names and biographies Fernando Pessoa wrote poetry and prose, including those poems signed by Pessoa himself, focusing on the different aesthetics and literary traditions therein as being complementary and interrelated.

**Week 10**

Discussion of the poetry of Fernando Pessoa

**Week 11**

Discuss Pessoa

**UNIT 5: José Saramago's *Blindness*.** We will explore the use of allegory in *Blindness* and the search for those elements of the human personality and experience that define us as a species, including our innate conscience and the persistence of the transcendent as a concern. We will also explore issues of sexuality and gender in this novel by the 1998 Nobel Laureate for Literature.

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**Week 12**

Discuss *Blindness*

**Week 13**

Discuss *Blindness*

**Week 14**

Discuss *Blindness*

**Week 15**

**FINAL, TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE, VIA EMAIL:  
On Saramago's *Blindness***