Master Syllabus
Course: POR 214, Portuguese Literature in Translation
Cluster Requirement: 3A

Course Overview:
This course offers an introductory critical overview of major works of Portuguese literature in English translation. It focuses on promoting a basic level of cultural literacy about Portugal through representative literary readings drawn from the last seven centuries of the country’s history and situated in their social, cultural, and historical contexts. Course assignments lead students to develop skills in textual interpretation, critical thinking, and academic writing, including norms of structure and citation. The course can thereby serve as an introduction for the further study of literature, history, and culture, whether in the Portuguese language or any other national literary tradition.

Learning Outcomes:
Course-Specific 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 specific to 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.

University Studies Learning Outcomes (Cluster 3A):
After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. articulate how literature (fiction, poetry, drama and literary nonfiction) both reflects and helps shape culture, society and history;
2. explain how a text’s literary form, style and content express its meanings using appropriate disciplinary terminology;
3. evaluate the rhetorical and contextual elements of ideas presented by literary texts and respond to them critically and analytically;
4. explain the ways in which literature expresses the values that humans attach to their experiences.

POR 214 Rationale Statement
This course offers an introductory critical overview of major works of Portuguese literature in English translation that aims to impart a degree of cultural literacy about Portugal. The course content consists of representative literary readings drawn from the last seven centuries of the country’s history, which are examined critically in their respective social and cultural contexts. It thereby aligns with Outcome 1 of the University Studies cluster 3A, in that it seeks to “articulate how literature (fiction, poetry, drama and literary nonfiction) both reflects and helps shape culture, society and history.” For example, students reading a novel such as The Maias by Eça de Queirós, Portugal’s most celebrated nineteenth-century author, will examine the author’s
withering criticism of his contemporary Portuguese society while at the same time exploring the effects of Eça’s literary imagination on the representations of Portugal as weak and decadent by the country’s intellectual elites from Eça’s own time to the present. Viewing the text through the prism of such broadly contextual perspectives will be predicated, however, on in-depth textual exploration, thus enabling precise and focused understanding of “how the text’s literary form, style and content express its meanings” (Outcome 2). In order to promote such understanding, “appropriate disciplinary terminology” (Outcome 2) will be introduced; for example, students may discuss how in another of Eça’s novels, The City and the Mountains, the text’s unreliable homodiegetic narrator produces distinct meaning effects from those associated with the heterodiegetic, omniscient narrator of earlier Realist fiction. The above-described directions of contextualizing (Outcome 1) and formal (Outcome 2) analysis will be accompanied by an ethico-political reflection on “the ways in which literature expresses the values that humans attach to their experiences” (Outcome 4). Thus, for example, a twentieth-century lyric by Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, Portugal’s most acclaimed female poet, may be read as a subtle philosophical inquiry into the effectively gendered nature of human values held to be universal (and thus gender-neutral) by male-dominated Western cultural tradition.

Through targeted course assignments, students will learn to “evaluate the rhetorical and contextual elements of ideas presented by literary texts and respond to them critically and analytically” (Outcome 3). In order to achieve such actively constructive approach to literary readings, assignments are based on the principle of engaged learning, which requires students to make informed connections and hypothesize critically about the meanings embedded in literary texts instead of passively absorbing and reproducing the information conveyed by the instructor. For instance, the lists of questions addressing key points of the week’s readings (which the students answer individually in writing and which also provide the springboard for classroom discussion) offer varied opportunities for such critical engagement with course material. The longer written assignments (take-home exams and essays) incorporate all of Cluster 3A outcomes, in that they require incorporating formal (rhetorical) and contextualizing (sociocultural and historical) elements of analysis in an extended, multi-paragraph format that calls for formulating and sustaining a logically developed argument based on an autonomous understanding of the literary texts explored in the course.

Examples of Texts and/or Assigned Readings

Background/critical readings:
A. H. Oliveira Marques, History of Portugal and/or David Birmingham, A Concise History of Portugal
Stephen Parkinson, Claudia Pazos Alonso and T. F. Earle, eds., A Companion to Portuguese Literature
Dictionary of Literary Biography: Portuguese Writers (Gale)

Literary readings
Selections from 113 Galician-Portuguese Troubadour Poems
Gil Vicente, The Soul’s Journey and/or selections from Three Discovery Plays (Auto da Barca do Inferno, Auto da Índia, Exortação da Guerra)
Luís de Camões, selections from The Lusiads and/or Sonnets and Other Poems
Antonio Vieira, selections from The Sermon of Saint Anthony to the Fish and Other Texts
Almeida Garrett, Travels in My Homeland
Eça de Queirós, The Crime of Father Amaro, The Maias, Cousin Bazilio and/or The City and the Mountains
Cesário Verde, “The Feeling of a Westerner”
Fernando Pessoa, selections from *Fernando Pessoa & Co.: Selected Poems* and *The Book of Disquiet*
Sophia de Melo Breyner Andresen, selections from *Log Book: Selected Poems*
Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa, selections from *New Portuguese Letters*
José Saramago, *The Stone Raft*
Lídia Jorge, *The Murmuring Coast* and/or short-story selections

**Example Assignments**

*Questions on Current Readings:* Each student will be required to respond in writing to a set number of weekly discussion questions based on current readings. These assignments will be posted on the course’s online learning platform (if the course is taught in a web-enhanced or blended format) or distributed in class and/or by email. They will be graded on a scale determined by the individual instructor; the sample grading rubric below assumes that each completed assignment can earn from 1 to 10 points. [Addresses Learning Outcomes #2 and #3 from Cluster 3A.]

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<th>1-6 points</th>
<th>7-8 points</th>
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<td>Assignment not turned in.</td>
<td>Assignment completed with minimal effort; some points not addressed at all, others addressed superficially. Does not demonstrate basic-level understanding of the text. Appropriate disciplinary terminology (if required) not used or applied haphazardly. Writing abounds in errors, lacks coherence, and is difficult to follow.</td>
<td>Assignment addresses most or all points, but in little depth. Basic-level understanding of the text evidenced. Some use of appropriate terminology present. Writing mostly error-free in spelling and syntax, but expression poorly developed (some lack of clarity and/or coherence). Overall satisfactory but could be strengthened with greater effort.</td>
<td>Assignment addresses most or all points with well-developed and insightful analysis. Writing is nearly or completely error-free, fully comprehensible, and stylistically elaborate. Appropriate terminology is used. Ideas are presented clearly and their expression is logically developed and connected.</td>
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**Critical Essays.** Students will write two or three (depending on instructor) short papers in the course of the semester. The papers will discuss one or more literary texts studied in the course from a focused perspective, which will incorporate a combination of rhetorical/formal and contextual approaches, although any given individual paper may be predominantly formal or predominantly contextual in its direction. [Addresses Learning Outcomes #1-4 from Cluster 3A.]

**Exams.** Students’ learning will be tested in this course, with the precise number, format and timing of the tests to be determined by individual instructors. Testing assessment instruments may include short (unannounced) quizzes, non-cumulative tests given during the semesters (e.g., a midterm), and a cumulative final exam. Tests will typically require short-paragraph answers, but may incorporate other assessment techniques, such as multiple-choice questions or essays. Regardless of their precise number and format, overall the tests given in the course will require students to demonstrate their ability to interpret literary texts from the multiple perspectives
described above in the POR 214 Course Rationale Statement and summarized in the list of Cluster 3A Learning Outcomes. [Addresses Learning Outcomes #1-4 from Cluster 3A.]

**Course Artifacts for Assessment:**
1. Discussion Questions
2. Critical Essays
3. Exams

**Sample Course Outline**

**Week One**
Introduction to seven centuries of Portuguese literature
In-class reading of fragments of sample literary texts from various historical periods; identification of main literary genres (prose, poetry, drama); discussion of diverse interpretive perspectives.

**Week Two**
*Selections from 113 Galician-Portuguese Troubadour Poems*
Galician-Portuguese language and literary culture; predominance of oral culture in the Middle Ages; courtly love; gendered lyric voice and authorship; satire as a mode of literary expression (compare to contemporary popular culture).

**Week Three**
Gil Vicente, *Auto da Barca do Inferno*
Religious literary expression in the Middle Ages/early Renaissance; satirical panorama of the Portuguese society; historically and socially situated moral value systems; the meaning and consequences of the Crusades.

**Week Four**
Luís de Camões, *The Lusiads* (selections)
The epic tradition in European literature; European representations of Africa and India at the outset of colonial expansion; cultural, political and ethical aspects of nascent imperialism; the history of the Portuguese Empire.

**Week Five**
Antonio Vieira, “Sermon of Saint Anthony to the Fish”
Rhetoric of persuasion; uses of animals in literature; Portuguese colonization of Brazil and its contemporary criticisms; Baroque style and imaginary.

**First term test**

**Week Six**
Selections from Almeida Garrett, *Travels in My Homeland*
Portugal’s passage into modernity; European Romanticism and the development of national literary narratives in the nineteenth century; the figure of the Romantic/national hero and anti-hero; gendering of the national subject as male.
Weeks Seven-Eight
Eça de Queirós, *The Crime of Father Amaro*
Literary Realism and social satire; a critical view of nineteenth-century Portugal; anticlericalism (compare to medieval satire); scientific worldview contrasted with religious faith; representation and subversion of traditional gender roles.

Week Nine
Fernando Pessoa, selections from *Fernando Pessoa & Co.: Selected Poems*
Literary Modernism and the modern subject; variety of styles and forms of modern poetry; the crisis of the self and subjectivity in literature; political and cultural history of early twentieth-century Portugal (founding of the Portuguese Republic in 1910, imposition of military dictatorship in 1926).

Week Ten
Sophia de Melo Breyner Andresen, selections from *Log Book: Selected Poems*
Gendered engagement with the literary tradition; the emergence of female authorship in Portuguese literature; the myth of ancient Greece in modern West; dialogues with the writings and fame of Fernando Pessoa in contemporary Portuguese literature.

Week Eleven
Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa, selections from *New Portuguese Letters*
The final years and the overthrow of Portuguese dictatorship; women in Portuguese history and in modern Portugal; multi-voiced narrative; political literature; feminism in literature.

Second term test

Weeks Twelve-Fourteen
José Saramago, *The Stone Raft*
Debates over Portugal’s relationship to Europe and accession to the European Union; relationship between Portugal and Spain; allegorical narrative; speculative fiction; magical realism; the future of Portuguese national identity.