

Humanities University

Study Guide

LIT 535 Middle Eastern Literature

Bedford Anthology of World Literature, Books 1-6. Boston: Bedford-St. Martins, 2004.

UNIT	WEEKS	TOPICS	READINGS
I		Ancient Middle East	
	1	Mesopotamia: Earliest Literatures The Descent of Inanna The Epic of Creation	Book 1, pp. 15-22 Book 1, pp. 23-39 Book 1, pp. 40-54
		Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of key stories and include any ideas and themes.
		Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms: myth
		Essay Topics	E1: Describe Inana's journey to the underworld. Discuss the descent and ascent of Inana in relation to human fertility and the fertility of earth and seasons. E2: Describe the Epic of Creation. Discuss the intergenerational conflict of Apsu-Ea and Marduk-Tiamat.
	2-3	Epic of Gilgamesh	Book 1, pp. 55-91
		Author	Please write a brief author biography.
		Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, character analysis of Gilgamesh.
		Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms: cuneiform, hero
		Essay Topics	E1. Discuss the theme of friendship in the case of Gilgamesh and Enkido. E2. Discuss Gilgamesh's journey to quest immortality.
	4	Egypt Hymns Love Poems	Book 1, pp. 93-103 Book 1, pp. 104-117 Book 1, pp. 118-126
		Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms: poetry, hieroglyphics
		Essay Topics	E1. Describe the mythic story of Creation. E2. Describe the mythic story of Osiris and "summarize "Hymn to Osiris." E3. Describe the mythic story of Aten and "summarize "Hymn to Aten." E4. Please answer the following questions for each part of the Love poem (pp. 121-126) : Who is the narrator? What is the poet(s) describing? Discuss the narrator's experience in terms of perceptions and emotions. Can you see any figurative language, ideas and themes in the poems? Please list specific elements of the poem to support your argument.
	5	Ancient Hebrew Literature	Book 1, pp. 127-133

The Song of Songs

Book 1, pp. 208-220

- Literary Terms Please briefly define key literary terms: metaphor
- Essay Topics E1: Please answer the following questions for each part of the poem : Who is the narrator? What is the poet(s) describing? Discuss the narrator's experience in terms of perceptions and emotions. Can you see any figurative language, ideas and themes in the poems? Please list specific elements of the poem to support your argument.

II Middle Period

- 6 Arabia and Persia Book 2, pp. 355-363
 Pre-Islamic Arabic Literature
 Imru Al-Qays Book 2, pp. 364-376

- Author Please write a brief author biography.
- Literary Analysis Please provide a brief description of "The Mu'allaqah" and include any ideas and themes.
- Literary Terms Please briefly define key literary terms: qasida
- Essay Topics E1. Please answer the following questions "The Mu'allaqah" : Who is the narrator? What is the poet(s) describing? Discuss the narrator's experience in terms of perceptions and emotions. Can you see any figurative language, ideas and themes in the poems? Please list specific elements of the poem to support your argument.

- 7 Abu Al-Qasem Ferdowsi Book 2, pp. 377-381
 The Tragedy of Sohrab and Rostam Book 2, pp. 382-400

- Author Please write a brief author biography.
- Literary Analysis Please provide Plot, themes, character analysis of Rostem, conflict, critical scene
- Literary Terms Please briefly define key literary terms: epic, couplet, epic, sufi poetry
- Essay Topics E1. Why is "Shahname" considered a national epic?

- 8 Farid Ud-Din Attar Book 2, 401-405
 The Conference of the Birds Book 2, 406-419

- Literary Analysis Please provide Plot, themes, character analysis of Rostem, conflict, critical scene
- Essay Topics E1. In "The Conference of the Birds," a group of birds (individual human souls) is under the leadership of a hoopoe (spiritual master) who determine to search for the legendary Simurgh bird (God). What significance does the quest have? Who finishes it and how?

- 9 Jalaloddin Rumi Book 2, 420-426
 Selected Poems Book 2, 427-434

- Author Please write a brief author biography.
- Literary Please briefly define key literary terms: mysticism

Terms

Essay Topics	E1: Please answer the following questions for each of the poems in this chapter: Who is the narrator? What is the poet describing? Discuss the narrator's experience in terms of perceptions and emotions. Can you see any ideas and themes in the poems? Please list specific elements of the poem to support your argument.	
10	A Thousand and One Nights From <i>The Arabian Nights</i>	Book 2, 435-440 Book 2, 441-459
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of key narratives and include any ideas and themes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms: story, tale	
Essay Topics	E1: Discuss the growth of Shahrayar from negative, suspicious, fearful, untrusting person to positive, confident, trusting person. Do the stories have the power to transform a person's character, disposition and personality?	
112	Courtly Love Lyrics of Muslim Spain	Book 2, 628-654
Author	Please write a brief biography of the various poets.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms: muwashshah, raqib, zajal	
Essay Topics	E1. Please provide an overview of the life and works of Ibn Faraj, Ibn Zaydun, Wallada, Judah Ha-Levi, Ibn Quzman, Ibn Al-Labbana. E2. Please answer the following questions for each of the poems in this chapter: Who is the narrator? What is the poet describing? Discuss the narrator's experience in terms of perceptions and emotions. Can you see any ideas and themes in the poems? Please list specific elements of the poem to support your argument.	

III Early Modern

12	Celebi Book of Travels	Book 3, pp. 246-247 Book 3, pp. 248-251
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of key narratives and include any ideas and themes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms: travel literature	

IV Modern

134	Tawfiq Al-Hakim The Fate of a Cockroach	Book 6, 586-589 Book 6, 590-647
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of narrative and include any ideas and themes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms:	

Essay Topics	E1: Describe the surrealism found in "The Fate of a Cockroach".	
14	Naguib Mahfouz Zaabalawi	Book 6, 797-802 Book 6, 803-811
Author	Please write a brief author biography for Naguib Mahfouz and Alifa Rifaat.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of key narratives and include any ideas and themes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define key literary terms:	
Essay Topics	E1: How is the narrator's search for Zaabalawi also a quest for his own spiritual roots? Please cite specific passages to support your point.	
15	Alifa Rifaat My World of the Unknown	Book 6, 1127-1129 Book 6, 1130-1140
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of narrative and include any ideas and themes	
Essay Topics	E1. Describe the narrator's love and sexuality with a djinn, in the form of a beautiful female snake. that What are some of the themes in "My World of the Unknown"? What could be a possible interpretation of this event or scene? What types of figurative meanings or interpretations are possible?	

V

Finals

16 Review, Essay, Exam