Please attach/submit additional documents as needed to fully complete each section of the form.

I. COURSE INFORMATION

Department: English
Course Number: LIT 240

Course Title: Genres, Themes, Approaches

Type of Request: New X One-time Only Renew* Change Remove

Rationale: LIT 240 is one of two new 200-level courses that will, along with a slightly revised version of LIT 201 (The Study of Literature), comprise the new lower-division curriculum for English literature. For the department’s justification of these curricular changes, please see the relevant forms submitted to the ASCRC in September 2016.

*If course has not changed since the last review and is taught by the same tenure-track faculty member, you may skip sections III-V.

JUSTIFICATION FOR COURSE LEVEL

Normally, general education courses will not carry pre-requisites, will carry at least 3 credits, and will be numbered at the 100-200 level. If the course has more than one pre-requisite, carries fewer than three credits, or is upper division (numbered at the 300 level or above), provide rationale for exception(s).

N/A

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (FOR OCHE DATABASE):
In which MUS Core Category does this course fit? Humanities/Fine Arts
Does the course include content regarding cultural heritage of American Indians? Individual sections of LIT 240 might include such content.

II. ENDORSEMENT / APPROVALS

* Instructor: Rob Browning
  Phone/Email: 406-210-1358, rob.browning@msu.montana.edu

Program Chair:
Dean:

Signature Date

*Form must be completed by the instructor who will be teaching the course. If the instructor of the course changes before the next review, the new instructor must be provided with a copy of the form prior to teaching the course.

III. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

General Education courses must be introductory and foundational within the offering department or within the General Education Group. They must emphasize breadth, context, and connectedness; and relate course content to students’ future lives; See Preamble
IV. CRITERIA

BRIEFLY EXPLAIN HOW THIS COURSE MEETS THE CRITERIA FOR THE GROUP.

1. Courses cover a number of works in one or more of the various forms of artistic representation: As its title, “Genres, Themes, and Approaches,” indicates, LIT 240 is a course designed to allow for a wide range of possible topics. For the purposes of the present form, I shall describe a section of LIT 240 that focuses on the genre of "epic"; other sections, however, may focus on topics such as tragedy, quest literature, literary perspectives on evil, pictures of the self in the modern novel—so long as the topic enables the section to meet the requirements of a general education course (as articulated in the General Education preamble). The LIT 240 section focusing on epic will introduce students to several representative examples of epic poetry (Homer’s Iliad, Virgil’s Aeneid, John Milton’s Paradise Lost, Derek Walcott’s Omeros, and Sharon Doubiago’s Hard Country) and one example of a novel (Arthur C. Clarke’s 2001: A Space Odyssey) that adheres in various ways to the epic tradition.

2. Courses establish a framework and context for analysis of the structure and significance of these works: Due to the conspicuously referential nature of epic poetry, each epic poem we study shall become meaningful context for the subsequent works we study. In the first several weeks of the semester, the course will introduce students to the classical Greek and Roman conventions of epic poetry through study of Homer’s Iliad and Virgil’s Aeneid, respectively. We will be well prepared, then, for recognizing the various ways Milton, Clarke, Walcott, and Doubiago refer to and engage with classical epic poetry in their own contributions to the tradition. For example: our reading of the Iliad will enable us to make sense of the martial aspects of the opening books of the Christian epic Paradise Lost, where Milton locates traditional military heroism within the fallen domain of Hell. The aesthetics of sea voyages in The Odyssey and The Aeneid and the Copernican-scaled aesthetics of Satan’s space journey in Paradise Lost will enable us to read Clarke’s description of modern space in 2001: A Space Odyssey in rich literary context.

3. Courses provide mechanisms for students:

   1) to receive instruction on the methods of analysis and criticism. One of the major objectives of LIT 240 will be to teach students the fundamentals of literary analysis. Students will learn to recognize and interpret various literary devices (including diction, voice, and figurative language) and they will study the basic elements of prosody (rhythm, meter, rhyme, stanza form). Students will learn the methods of literary analysis and criticism through a combination of lecture and modeling by the instructor, class discussion, small group activities, focused homework assignments, exams, and the composition of analytical essays.

   2) to develop arguments about the works from differing critical perspectives.
Class discussions will be designed to encourage students to express their own perspectives on the literary text at hand; as such, the discussions inevitably will introduce students to critical perspectives beyond their own. In lectures, the instructor will introduce students to ongoing critical debates about each of the epic poems. In the case of Paradise Lost, for instance, students will learn how to approach the poem meaningfully from the different perspectives of genre analysis, rhetorical analysis, theological interpretation, political history, the history of science, ecological criticism, and feminist criticism. Each essay assignment will require students to choose between at least a half dozen topics, each of which will involve investigation of a different critical perspective.

V. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

BRIEFLY EXPLAIN HOW THIS COURSE WILL MEET THE APPLICABLE LEARNING GOALS.

1. Analyze works of art with respect to structure and significance within literary and artistic traditions, including emergent movements and forms. After students have learned the conventions of classical Greek and Roman epic poetry though study of the Iliad and the Aeneid, respectively, they will study how subsequent epics of the early modern, modern, and postmodern periods variously engage with and challenge this ancient tradition. They will learn to recognize and appreciate what is innovative and distinctive about each of the epics we study, and they will learn how particular historical conditions gave rise to (or enabled the development of) particular innovations. In the case of Hard Country, for example, students will examine how Sharon Doubiago—in 1982—references the conventions of epic poetry as part of her feminist critique of this conspicuously masculine literary tradition.
2. Develop coherent arguments that critique these works from a variety of approaches, such as historical, aesthetic, cultural, psychological, political, and philosophical. Class lectures, discussions, and essay assignments will guide students to make sense of each epic from a variety of critical perspectives—including historical, aesthetic, political, philosophical, and sociological. Essay assignments will require students to adopt particular critical approaches to the literary texts and to develop coherent interpretive arguments illuminated by these.

VI. ASSESSMENT

A. HOW ARE THE LEARNING GOALS FOR THE GENERAL EDUCATION GROUP MEASURED?

Describe how you will determine that students have met each of the General Education Learning Goals. This should include specific examples of assignments, rubrics or test questions that directly measure the General Education learning goals. (See Example)

Please attach or provide a web link to relevant assessment materials.

1. Analyze works of art with respect to structure and significance within literary and artistic traditions, including emergent movements and forms. Students’ competence in analyzing the structure and significance of literary texts within the epic tradition (as well as within the cultural context of a specific work’s historical period) will be assessed in two exams, two formal essays (one of which will be revised), and written homework assignments. These tasks will ask the students to analyze particular elements of epic poetry (structural elements, such as narrative shape, the use of invocations, lists, embedded genres; and linguistic elements, such as epic similes, litotes, and elevated register), and to make sense of these elements by comparing and contrasting them to instances of the same elements in earlier works within the genre.

The exams will present students with paired passages from different epic poems and ask them to identify the literary elements necessary to understanding each passage. Secondly, they will be asked to conduct an interpretive comparison of each of the paired passages, paying close attention to how the later text engages with the earlier text. Exams will be assessed according to how successful each student has been in his or her close reading of the texts (as evidenced by recognition of significant literary devices and by awareness of how each creates meaning within the passage) and according to the meaningful connections the student discerns between the texts.

Each of the two essay assignments will offer students a wide range of topics from which to choose. In keeping with the great variety of concerns in epic poetry, the lists of topics will present students with as much variety as possible. Each topic, however, will challenge students to think about a specific aspect of an epic poem (or novel) both locally—that is, in terms of the work itself—and in regard to how that aspect can be interpreted within the tradition of epic poetry (that is, in relation to other works within the genre) or within an historical context of some other sort. In the following example topic, students are asked to make sense of the architecture of the universe Milton constructs in Paradise Lost in regards to the history of astronomy:

"With reference to Timothy Ferris’s chapter ’The Sun-Worshippers’ (on Moodle), describe the architecture of the cosmos Milton reveals to readers in Satan’s journey from Hell to Earth (book 2, lines 872-1055 and book three 418-742). In what ways has Milton created a cosmos that incorporates both ancient and modern models and perspectives? What particular astronomical matters does the text leave ambiguous or otherwise unsettled – and why? What does Satan’s cosmic journey communicate to readers about the nature of outer space? How are we to understand it? How are we to respond to Satan’s journey and the view of the universe it reveals?"

2) Develop coherent arguments that critique these works from a variety of approaches, such as historical, aesthetic, cultural, psychological, political, and philosophical. The instructor will evaluate students’ performances in the composition of two essay exams and two formal analytical essays (one of which will be revised and receive further evaluation). Specifically, the instructor will evaluate how successful each student has been in formulating a meaningful interpretive claim (thesis statement) about the texts under study and in defending this claim with a sustained argument (of five pages or more) supported by textual evidence. In each exam students will analyze selected passages from the literature designed to test their ability to recognize certain aesthetic forms and to make meaningful sense of these within relevant contexts, including each of the approaches cited in this outcome. In the following passage, for example, students will be expected to identify these lines as part of the invocation of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of Paradise Lost, book one, and to discuss the significance of this invocation in theological, cultural, and political contexts:
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,
In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: Or if Sion Hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's Brook that flow'd
Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous Song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme.

Students will be expected to recognize this invocation as a Christian appropriation of a classical convention and to discuss how Milton is positioning his religious and political objectives in relation to the pagan accomplishments of epic poets such as Homer and Virgil. Also evaluated will be their recognition of the aesthetic aspects of these lines, specifically the grand style of the speaker's voice and the adoption of blank verse. In order to make sense of these aesthetic features, students will need to discuss the political and theological valences of the epic mode and blank verse form within 17th-century European culture and in contrast to classical contexts. Other passages in the exams will prompt students to consider other kinds of interpretive approaches. Similarly, each essay topic will prompt students to analyze the relevant literature from one or more interpretive approaches.

A General Education Assessment Report will be due on a four-year rotating cycle. You will be notified in advance of the due date. This will serve to fulfill the University's accreditation requirements to assess general education and will provide an opportunity to connect with your colleagues across campus and share teaching strategies. Items VI.B-D will be helpful in compiling the report.

B. ACHIEVEMENT TARGETS
(This section is optional. Achievement targets can be reported if they have been established.)
Describe the desirable level of performance for your students, and the percentage of students you expected to achieve this:

1.

2.

3.

C. ASSESSMENT FINDINGS
(This section is optional. Assessment findings can be reported if they are available.)
What were the results/findings, and what is your interpretation/analysis of the data? (Please be detailed, using specific numbers/percentages when possible. Qualitative discussion of themes provided in student feedback can also be reported. Do NOT
use course grades or overall scores on a test/essay. The most useful data indicates where students’ performance was stronger and where it was weaker. Feel free to attach charts/tables if desired.

D. ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

[This section is optional. Assessment feedback can be reported if it is available.]

Given your students’ performance the last time the course was offered, how will you modify the course to enhance learning? You can also address how the course could be improved, and what changes in the course content or pedagogy you plan to make, based upon on the findings. Please include a timeframe for the changes.
SYLLABUS AND SUBMISSION

Please submit syllabus in a separate file with the completed and signed form to the Faculty Senate Office, UH 221. The learning goals for the Literary and Artistic Studies Group must be included on the syllabus. An electronic copy of the original signed form is acceptable.