



EN 265.1

Murder, Mayhem,
and Mirth: An Introduction
to Culture



Professor: Dr. Amy Milakovic
Office Hours: MW 10:30 – 11:30
TR 11:00 - noon
or by appointment
Class: MW 2:00 – 3:15 ORI 204

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Credit: 3 semester hours

Course Description

To speak of a culture is to speak of a people with a common understanding of themselves as a group. Such culture requires a shared language in a broad sense: not merely whether they speak the same tongue, but whether they understand common metaphors, allusions, cultural reference points. One of the primary ways that a society's self-image is shaped is through works that every literate person is presumed to be familiar with, so that one could speak, in our culture, of "the patience of Job" or an "Achilles' heel" without having to explain the stories behind the phrases. We will continue that tradition in this course by studying a number of texts, from ancient to modern, in which people across the world have found beauty, excitement, and intrigue. Genres covered include the epic, the narrative poem, Shakespearean plays, and Romantic poets. The subject of these works is wide-ranging: from divine love to human evil, from chaste devotion to bawdy bedroom tales. By the end of the course, you should have a better understanding of these vibrant works of literature and an appreciation of the virtues and vices shared by all humans.

Required Texts and Materials

- *The Odyssey*. Homer. Trans. Fitzgerald
- *The Canterbury Tales*. Geoffrey Chaucer. Trans. Coghill.
- *The Inferno*. Dante Alighieri.
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. William Shakespeare.
- *Othello*. William Shakespeare.
- Other readings supplied by the professor
- A writing handbook that demonstrates MLA style
- Access to a computer with connection to the Internet.