

## Portuguese 150

### Introduction to the Literatures of the Portuguese-speaking World

#### **How this course meets the general principles of the GEC Model Curriculum and the specific goals of the category(ies) for which it is being proposed**

(From Model Curriculum)

#### **ARTS AND HUMANITIES**

Humanistic inquiry is most often pursued through the study of what are commonly called the humanities and the arts. The humanities, according to a definition accepted by the National Endowment, are “fields of study and branches of learning which record, investigate, analyze, and evaluate the products of human imagination, activity, and culture.” This broad definition is meant to include the history and criticism of the arts. To it must be added production of all forms of artistic expression and the capacity to understand and judge them aesthetically and in cultural context. Humanistic inquiry assesses, across temporal, cultural, or theoretical divisions, how humans view themselves in relation to other humans, to nature, to the divine; what questions they ask about important concerns; and how they express their responses to the conditions of their existence. Language, memory, and symbol are central to the study of both the humanities and the arts. Both also ask questions about the values by which individuals and societies live and the tolerance and mutual understanding needed to allow the full realization of human potential and diversity. Therein they cultivate an appreciation for the unique, particular, and distinctive, for the dated and the placed, often focusing on “tradition” as well as on the intangible aspects of human activity and on the ability of individuals to push against constraints. Therefore, the continuing forms by which humans communicate with, advise, and entertain one another are important, but equally so are those individuals and moments through which new possibilities are opened for the human experience.

The overall goal of this component is to develop knowledge of the humanities and the arts and a humanistic perspective that fosters capacities for: (1) aesthetic and historical response and judgment; (2) interpretation and evaluation; (3) critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and (4) experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience. As a result of meeting this requirement, each student should have studied significant writings and works of art that can be shown to be of lasting and fundamental importance for humanistic inquiry.

#### 2. C. (1) Arts and Humanities-Literature

The guidelines approved in 2008 for GEC courses in the Arts and Humanities category state that expected learning outcomes for the sub-category of Literature are the following:

##### **(1) Literature Expected Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students learn to analyze, appreciate, and interpret significant literary works.
2. Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students learn to understand and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures

→ This course addresses the core goals of the GEC’s Arts and Humanities Breadth category. In this course students will learn about major works, authors, periods and aesthetic currents of the literatures of the Portuguese-speaking world (Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, East Timor). They will be familiarized with canonical as well as marginal productions issuing from often-neglected but rich Western and non-Western literary traditions, and also with some of the most representative critical trends and methodologies within these traditions. Analytical skills will be developed through the practice of close reading and comparative analysis.

→ This course will foster all of the capacities mentioned in the Model Curriculum, as students will be asked not only to acquire knowledge about literature, but also to look at culture critically and in context. They will evaluate the aesthetic qualities of the literature that they are exposed to, but also interpret their significance within the relevant historical

context. This will be practiced through a variety of activities.

→ For each class, students will be required to prepare a response paper on the required reading assigned, in which they synthesize the secondary reading and make several observations about the reading based on insights from that secondary text. They will turn this 1-page, single-spaced document in at the beginning of each class and instructor will grade it and hand it back at the start of the following class.

→ Students will be expected to improve their performance each week on these written assignments, based on comments written on previous ones and in-class discussion, based on the analyses, which will oblige students to increase sophistication of their initial analyses and in-class comments.

→ Three take-home essays, which will require students to combine and expand their work in the response papers, will assess the degree to which they have developed, on the one hand, the ability to analyze literary texts, craft coherent arguments and pursue a careful demonstration backed by textual evidence, and, on the other hand, a sensibility and critical awareness to the ways literary texts represent, dislodge, and recreate social, political and cultural values to which students can either relate to or reject. Weekly formal debates in which students take turns assuming the role of moderators will enhance critical, aural and rhetorical skills that are essential to the success of a general education curriculum.

→ We expect that this course will attract students from a variety of disciplines, such as African American and African Studies, International Studies, Portuguese, Spanish, Film Studies, History, English and Film Studies. The instructor will encourage students, during in-class discussion, small group work, group presentations, and written assignments, to interact and bring to bear their personal experiences—including their disciplinary training—on the topic of the course.

→ Students will be required to write analytically in response papers that they will turn in for every class. They will also conduct research for one oral presentation. Finally, writing skills will be further developed in three longer essays (each 8-10 pages double-spaced).