Sample Syllabus

Advanced Topics in Romanian: Literature

## WEEK 2

**Materials:**

* Book: “Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război” (Camil Petrescu)

**Discussion questions & prompts:**

1. Briefly discuss the author’s background and writing style.
2. Discuss the beginning of the book: What it is about, and what are the main themes and characters? What are your impressions so far?
3. The First World War was a very significant event in Romania’s history. The book discusses both personal and political issues. How do you think a war can affect a person’s psychological well-being? Would heartbreak be as hard to deal with after going through such a hard experience?
4. Roleplay: Imagine you are a writer during the First World War, before Romania joined, living in Bucharest, Romania. You are worried that your country might join the war. You meet with a friend who is also a writer at a coffee shop on Calea Victoriei. They ask you about your ideas for a new novel.

## WEEK 3

**Materials:**

* Book: “Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război” (continued)

**Discussion questions & prompts:**

1. How would you personally describe Ștefan Gheorghidiu? What happened in the last pages you read? Why do you think N. Barbu thinks the character has a dilemmatic and superior character? The commentary mentions that there is only one perspective to the book, do you think this connects in some way to each individual’s own reality? Why do you think the author wrote the book this way, from only one perspective?
2. Discuss deeper concepts about literary analysis. This is a psychological novel, do you think the main character induces himself to feel a certain way? To what extent does his own inner monologue influence the way he thinks about his wife? Do you think the main character aspires to have a perfect relationship where only his feelings are taken into consideration and he is the center of his own universe? How do you think the war experience will affect his romantic crisis?

## WEEK 4

**Materials:**

* Book: “Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război” (continued)

**Discussion questions & prompts:**

1. Discuss the travel scene to Odobești when the main character starts becoming more and more jealous. Discuss the character traits of the main character, how it influences his relationship with others and his wife.
2. Role play: Imagine there are two bystanders of the dinner where Ștefan Gheorghidiu believes that his wife is cheating on him. The bystanders give their opinion on what is happening.

## WEEK 5

**Materials:**

* Play: “O scrisoare pierdută” (Ion Luca Caragiale)

**Discussion questions & prompts:**

1. Discuss the overall reading “O scrisoare pierdută”. What is it about? What is the plot? Did it make you laugh? What stereotypes is it trying to portray?
2. What is the author trying to criticize about society through the characters? What character traits does each character have? How is it relevant to the election process now? Do you find any similarities with how people are elected now?
3. If you were part of this play, how would you have handled the situation? How would you have gotten the letter back?

## WEEK 6: REVIEW

## WEEK 7

**Materials:**

* Short story: “D-I Goe” (Ion Luca Caragiale)

**Discussion questions & prompts:**

1. General discussion about the short story "D-l Goe": What it is about, and what are the main themes and characters?
2. What kinds of real-life characters are portrayed in the play? Why is it important to talk about such behaviors? Do you think kids are influenced to act a certain way in their family or they are just born with a certain personality?

## WEEK 8

**Materials:**

* Short story: “Vizită” (Ion Luca Caragiale)

**Discussion questions & prompts:**

1. General discussion of the short story: who are the characters, what are the main themes? Discuss new and/or challenging vocabulary, expressions, grammar, etc.
2. Discuss the behavior displayed by the adults and the young boy in the story. What is acceptable and what is problematic behavior? Why? What about in today’s society?
3. Compare and contrast “D-l Goe” and “Vizită” and discuss: main themes, characters, text structure (third person vs. first person narratives, use of language and dialogues, etc.).

## WEEK 9

**Materials:**

* Poem: “Ce bine că ești” (Nichita Stănescu)

**Discussion questions & prompts:**

1. After reading the poem for the first time, what are your first thoughts on the content of this poem? What is the main theme of the poem? What is the author trying to convey about love? What is he comparing his love to?
2. What words/terms are repeated in the poem and what do you think is their significance?
3. What feelings does the lyrical I express? Discuss their significance.
4. What modes are expressed in the poem? Discuss their significance to the main theme(s).

## WEEK 10

**Materials:**

* Poem: “Ploaie în luna lui Marte” (Nichita Stănescu)

**Discussion questions & prompts:**

1. What is the poem about, what is the author trying to convey? After reading this poem and last week’s poem, what can we see about the writer’s style and his concept of love? What is a verse that stood out to you and why?
2. Discuss rhetorical devices in the poem such as pronouns, indirect speech, and repetition. What is their impact and significance?
3. Discuss the poem’s metaphors (e.g., love like an ascension) and contrasts (e.g., people vs. rain). What is their impact and significance?
4. A character in the poem is named Lorelei. Lorelei is a siren of Germanic legend whose singing lures Rhine River boatmen to destruction on a reef. Why do you think the poet gave the character this name? Is there a connection to the Lorelei of myth?

## WEEK 11

**Materials:**

* Poem “Îmbrăţişarea” (Nichita Stănescu)

**Discussion prompts & questions:**

1. Briefly discuss the poet’s background and writing style.
2. Exploring the poem’s imagery and themes. What images do you find particularly striking or meaningful? Explore the themes of the poem. What do you think the poem is about? Discuss concepts like love, time, memory, and the physicality of the embrace.
3. Break down the poem’s language. Look at specific word choices, metaphors, and any interesting language structures. Discuss how the poet uses language to convey emotion and imagery.
4. Share personal experiences or feelings that the poem evoked.

## WEEK 12: Review Week