



# Understanding Literature and Life: Drama, Poetry and Narrative

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## Understanding Literature and Life: Drama, Poetry and Narrative The Great Courses

The major texts of Western culture are a gateway to wisdom that can widen your views on self and society in enduring ways. The extraordinary body of literature given us by writers from antiquity to the present day, as Professor Weinstein notes, "is potent stuff, serving not only as transcription of history but also as a verbal Pandora's box, capable of shedding light on those transactions which remain in the dark for many of us: love, death, fear, desire. We are talking about more than artful language; we are talking about the life of the past and the life of the world."

It is truly a monumental legacy. And now you can examine its most important works - whether drama, poetry, or narrative - in this series of 64 penetrating lectures that reveal astonishing common ground. You'll see how this award-winning teacher uses several different analytical perspectives, including Feminism, Marxism, Freudianism, Deconstruction, Postmodernism, and New Historicism, to give us fresh insight into persisting human themes like rites of passage; the "fit" or "misfit" between self and society; the creation of an identity; and the play, weight, and presence of the past in understanding our present.

You learn how drama makes visible the conflicts and wars of culture in ways other forms cannot manage. How poetry can go to the heart of human existence with a purity and power akin to surgery, bidding us to challenge and change the way we usually do business. And how narrative can tell life stories in ways that enable a possession of that life that is hardly imaginable any other way.

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