INTRO TO LITERARY ANALYSIS: ANIMATE OBJECTS
Spring 2018  T/TH 10-11:30am

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Office: VCAM 204
Office hours: Wednesdays 2-4pm and by appt.

Writing is attempting to find a life that does not yet exist. —Richard Powers

Course Description

From the flesh of Pygmalion’s statue to the circuits of artificial intelligence, this course examines the literature of animation, or things coming to life. How can we understand the complex, often amorous relationships between persons and things, and what is the role of literature in helping us to imagine, navigate, and challenge those relationships? Working with classical and modern texts in a variety of genres, we’ll examine how language shapes and reshapes the boundaries between subjects and objects, the living and the dead, the still and moving, the literal and the figurative. We’ll explore the role of race, gender, and class in configuring relations of power, objectification, and commodification. And we’ll ponder our own role as writers in bringing ideas and concepts to life, attending carefully to the pleasures and responsibilities this work entails.

This course will serve as an intensive introduction to methods in literary study. So as we explore the animated life of things, we’ll reflect critically on the process by which we interact with and respond to literature. Our emphasis will be on close reading as a critical practice—learned and honed through repetition—as we discover how literary forms “make sense,” or create, refract, and reproduce the world. In keeping with the tenor of our readings, we’ll aim for intimacy with these texts, rather than mastery of them. Our goal will be to learn to read deeply and thoughtfully, and to engage each other’s critical writing with the same level of attention, curiosity, and animated inquiry that we devote to literature.

Required Texts*

Phillis Wheatley, Complete Writings (Penguin, ISBN 014042430X)
Richard Powers, Galatea 2.2 (Picador, ISBN 0312423136)
John Lasseter, dir., Toy Story (1995; on reserve at Magill and available on Amazon Instant)

*If purchasing these books presents a financial difficulty, please consider speaking with me as soon as possible, and I will have copies available for you.

Assignments

Assignments in this course will be a mix of ungraded, relatively informal (but still rigorous) writing, and graded, formal (but still personable) writing. Ungraded writing will consist of 1) a weekly writing journal (for note-taking, outlining, and in-class exercises); 2) an introductory “essay”; 3) an Ovidean imitation (extra credit for sustained dactylic hexameter); 4) several “They say” paragraphs; 5) various
other short assignments. Graded writing will include four essays, three of which will go through a process of peer review and revision; final grades on these essays will assess the final product as well as the feedback and revision process. At the end of the semester, you will submit a portfolio that reflects on your learning process throughout the semester and curates a selection of materials that demonstrates the development of specific skills.

Course Policies

1. **Attendance**: Punctual attendance at both seminar and tutorials is crucial to your progress in the course. If you need to miss a class for sickness or emergency, please let me know immediately. One unexcused absence for any reason (including sickness) is permitted without penalty. Three or more unexcused absences will be grounds for failing the course.

2. **Deadlines**: Drafts and papers submitted after the deadline will be deducted a full grade for each 24 hour period they are late. Extensions will be granted only in cases of emergency.

3. **Gadgets**: Please keep cell phones silent and out of reach in the classroom and during tutorial. The use of laptops is discouraged; please speak with me if you have a good reason to use one during class or tutorial.

4. **Office Hours**: Please feel free to drop by my weekly office hours. If you have class during office hours, please email me to set up an alternative time to meet.

5. **Email**: Monday-Friday, I aim to respond to all emails within 24 hours; please note that I may not be able to respond immediately or overnight. Messages received after 5pm will usually be answered the next day.

6. **Honor Code**: Part of what we will learn in this course is how to properly cite sources and (more broadly) how to engage responsibly in the shared project of knowledge making. Please see the Writing Center for additional resources on citing sources, as well as Harvard’s Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism.

7. **Writing Center and Office of Academic Services**: I strongly encourage you to use the Writing Center during your drafting and revision processes, and to visit the Office of Academic Services for additional resources and assistance.

8. **Accommodations**: My goal is to make this course accessible to all, and I will work closely with the Office of Disability Services to ensure full and equal access to course material, activities, and discussion. Please speak to me about any accommodations you may require.

Grading

**Graded Writing**: will be evaluated based on your ability to develop a compelling claim, closely analyze textual evidence to support that claim, and communicate in clear and engaging prose. Three of your four graded assignments will be submitted in draft form and subsequently revised in response to instructor and peer feedback; final essay grades will account for drafting and revision process. At the end of the semester, you will submit a final portfolio that curates and reflects on your drafting and revision process. See handout on paper assessment. 70% of final grade.

**Ungraded Writing and Course Contribution**: throughout the semester, ungraded writing will be assigned to help you generate ideas, process the reading, and practice specific skills. With the exception of your writing journal (which I will not collect), ungraded writing will be collected and assessed for credit or no credit; partial credit may be awarded in cases of late submission and/or incomplete work. Ungraded writing is one portion of your “course contribution,” which also includes showing up prepared and on time to class and tutorials, participating fully in class
discussion, providing constructive criticism to your peers, and working to support the collaborative environment of the seminar. See handout on course contribution. 30% of final grade.

Deadlines

- **February 23** Shakespeare draft
- **March 9** Wheatley draft
- **March 23** Shakespeare revision
- **March 27** Wheatley revision
- **April 6** Shelley draft
- **April 20** Shelley revision
- **May 11** Powers

Reading schedule

This reading schedule is subject to occasional revisions and substitutions, which will be announced in class and by email. Readings not listed in the “Required Texts” above will be posted on Moodle. Please print and annotate the readings before coming to class.

**Week One**

Jan. 23 Introduction

  excerpts from Klinkenborg, *Several Short Sentences About Writing*
  Short introductory essay due in class

**Week Two**


Feb. 1 *The Metamorphoses*, from Book X
  Ted Hughes, “Pygmalion,” from *Tales from Ovid*
  Creative imitation due in class

**Week Three**

Feb. 6 Barbara Johnson, from *Persons and Things*
  Excerpt from “They say, I say”

  “Johnson says_____” due in class

**Week Four**

Feb. 13, *The Winter’s Tale* Act II-III

Feb. 15 NO CLASS (please read *The Winter’s Tale*, Acts III-V)
Week Five


Feb. 22 *The Winter's Tale*, conclusion & draft materials workshop

Friday, Feb. 23 first draft Shakespeare essay due by midnight

Week Six (Tutorials TBA)

Feb. 27 Wheatley, *Complete Writings*
Introduction, p. 1-13 *Complete Writings* p. 15-19, 26-29, 50-51

March 1 *Complete Writings* p. 59-60, 88-90

Week Seven

Tara Bynum and Alexis Pauline Gumbs, “Most Affectionately Yours” (2012)

March 8 Thesis workshop

Friday, March 9 first draft Wheatley paper due by midnight

Week Eight (Tutorials TBA)

Jonathan Culler, “Narrative” from *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*

March 22 *Frankenstein* p. 49-114

Friday, March 23 Shakespeare revision due by midnight

Week Nine

March 27 Library session and research workshop

March 29 *Frankenstein* p. 114-189
In class: evidence workshop

Friday, March 27 Wheatley revision due by midnight

Week Ten

April 3 Research session; “They say, I say” paragraph due in class

April 5 Draft materials workshop; introduction to Maker Space

Friday, April 6 first draft Shelley paper due by midnight
Week Eleven (Tutorials TBA)

April 10 Lasseter (dir.), *Toy Story*
Marx, from *The Communist Manifesto*

Lady Gaga, *Bad Romance* (2009)
Kobena Mercer, from “Monster Metaphors”
Jack Halberstam, from *Gaga Feminism*

Week Twelve

April 17 Powers, *Galatea 2.2* p. 1-56

April 19 *Galatea 2.2* p. 57-171

Friday, April 20 Shelley revision due by midnight

Week Thirteen

April 24 *Galatea 2.2* p. 171-225

April 26 *Galatea 2.2* p. 225-329

Week Fourteen

May 1 *Galatea 2.2* Conclusion

May 3 First paragraph of metafictional essay due in class
***CLASS READING***

May 11 FINAL PAPERS AND PORTFOLIOS DUE BY 12PM NOON