E210 Literary Contexts and Contests
Syllabus, Fall, 2001

Call #: 7368  Instructor: Bret Benjamin (bret@albany.edu)
MW 4:15-5:35, HUM 133  Office: Humanities 340 (442-4054)

Office Hours: MW 2:30-3:30

Required Texts

• A Photocopied course packet from Shipmates (in Stuyvesant Plaza)

All texts are available at Mary Jane’s Bookstore, 215 Western Ave

Course Description

Poetry
pardon me for having helped you understand
that you are not made of words alone.
Roque Dalton - "Ars Poetica" (El Salvador, 1974)

If poetry—or literature—might not be made of "words alone," what else goes into making it up? What do the words work with? In the readings and writings of this course, we will be concerned with such questions. Focusing on a set of texts that have argued about the practices of literary history, we will attempt to engage some of the contests and contexts in which the works have been involved, both in their own time and in their critical after-lives. Through active—and activist—readings of these texts, and participatory writing, our own project will be to investigate the cultural arguments that literary works can instigate and the conflicts that they just as often resolve and/or exacerbate.

Breakdown of Grades

• Midterm Examination 35%
• Final Paper 40%
• Quizzes 15%
• Participation 10%

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required. After three absences, I will lower your final class grade by one third of a letter for each additional class that you miss. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. You can miss three classes, and three classes only, before your grade begins to drop. If an extenuating situation arises such as a prolonged illness or a death in the family, you should contact me immediately and your absences may be excused. It is your responsibility to keep track of your own absences.

Lateness Policy

You are late to class if you arrive after I have finished calling roll. Two late arrivals will be the equivalent of one absence. If you do arrive late, see me after class to make sure I have marked you present for the class.
Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a very serious academic offense and, as such, instances of plagiarized materials will be dealt with harshly. Depending on the severity and the details of the case, I reserve the right to file formal disciplinary action with the University (a process that often results in suspension or expulsion) and the right to impose a grading penalty that may go so far as to issue a failing grade for the entire course. DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.

From the University Guidelines on Scholastic Integrity:

Presenting as one's own work the work of another person (for example, the words, ideas, information, data, evidence, organizing principles, or style of presentation of someone else). Plagiarism includes paraphrasing or summarizing without acknowledgment, submission of another student's work as one's own, the purchase of prepared research or completed papers or projects, and the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else. Failure to indicate accurately the extent and precise nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly, or creative indebtedness, and the consequences for violating University regulations.

Examples of plagiarism include: failure to acknowledge the source(s) of even a few phrases, sentences, or paragraphs; failure to acknowledge a quotation or paraphrase of paragraph-length sections of a paper; failure to acknowledge the source(s) of a major idea or the source(s) for an ordering principle central to the paper's or project's structure; failure to acknowledge the source (quoted, paraphrased, or summarized) of major sections or passages in the paper or project; the unacknowledged use of several major ideas or extensive reliance on another person's data, evidence, or critical method; submitting as one's own work, work borrowed, stolen, or purchased from someone else.
Course Syllabus
Fall, 2001

Week One
8/27  Introductions

Week Two
9/3 No Class
9/5  Fish “How To Know a Poem When You See One”

Week Three
9/10 Mailloux, “Interpretation” and Donne, “The Flea”
9/12 Hillis Miller, “Narrative” and Maria-Britton, “The Wreck of the Enid Rose”

Week Four
9/17 No Class
9/19 No Class

Week Five
9/24  Hall, “The Work of Representation” pp 15-30 (including Reading A)
9/26  No Class

Week Six
10/1  Hall, “The Work of Representation” pp 30-41 (including Readings B, C, and D)
10/3  Hall, “The Work of Representation” pp 41-63 (including Readings E and F)

Week Seven
10/8  Williams, “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus,” Auden, “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Wat, “Before Breughel the Elder”
10/10 Kavanagh, “Ideology”

Week Eight
10/15 Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*—discussion
10/17 Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*—discussion

Week Nine
10/22 No Class
10/24 Midterm Exam

Week Ten
10/29 Reader Response, Rabinowitz
10/31 Feminism, Smith

Week Eleven
11/5  Deconstruction, Hillis Miller
11/7  New Historicism, Thomas

Week Twelve
11/12 Cultural Perspective, Brantlinger
11/14 Hall, “The Spectacle of the Other” pp. 225-257 (including Readings A and B)
Week Thirteen
11/19  Hall, “The Spectacle of the Other” (including Readings C and D)

Week Fourteen
11/26  Apocalypse Now—Discussion
      Optional Draft of Final Papers Due

Week Fifteen
12/3   Hagen, “Heart of Darkness and the Process of Apocalypse Now” and Dorall, “Conrad
      and Coppola: Different Centers of Darkness.”
12/5   No Class—Extended Office Hours

Week Sixteen
12/10  No Class—Extended Office Hours
12/12  Final Papers Due at Beginning of Class