

English 108H: Isolation and Alienation (Fall 2012)

Tuesday / Thursday: 04:00-05:20 Room: ML 349

Instructor: Somayeh Kiani

Contact info:

PAS 2215 Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 2.30pm-3.30pm

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Course Description

Isolation and Alienation: The study of a variety of works centering on the theme of individuals in crisis, the stress being on people at variance with their inner selves, other persons, or their world. The course will discuss the process in which wisdom and maturity are gained as the ultimate products of suffering.

The course centers on the themes of alienation and isolation in a variety of literary works and across historical and cultural contexts. We will investigate how literary accounts of isolation and alienation are constructed, what purposes they serve, and what these ideas and experiences reveal about our identities and the societies we create and inhabit. This course will challenge you to examine the many ways isolation and alienation intersect with conceptions of gender, sexuality, power, race, and sub-themes of madness, memory, loss, wealth, war, and love to name a few. Throughout the term, we will also discuss the process through which understanding may be gained, but only, perhaps, as the consequence of personal trauma and crisis.

Required Texts:

Amis, Martin. *Time's Arrow*.

Atwood, Margaret. *Surfacing*.

Beckett, Samuel; Krapp's Last Tape (Course Readings).

Eliot, T.S. *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (Course Readings).

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wallpaper* (Course Readings).

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Minister's Black Veil*.

Joyce, James. *The Dead* (Course Readings).

Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*.

Powell, Patricia. *The Pagoda*.

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

Williams, Tennessee. The Glass Menagerie.

Woolf, Virginia. Kew Gardens (Course Readings).

Wordsworth, William. The Prelude: Book VII. Residence in London (Course Readings).

Conduct and Expectations

Scheduled readings must be completed before the relevant class. You should have the assigned texts available for reference, and be able to offer respectful and contextual comments. Please come to class on time and prepared to contribute, ask questions, offer opinions, and listen to others. Have a piece of paper on hand in case of a Pop Quiz.

Learning is an active process that must occur in a safe, respectful, and friendly environment. A classroom is a place to listen to other perspectives and communicate your ideas, while keeping an open mind. You may disagree with other opinions, and you are welcome and encouraged to express and discuss your own thoughts; however, you must, at all times, maintain a positive critical vocabulary and be respectful of fellow students and their views. At no point will sexist, racist, or homophobic language be tolerated.

Please **bring the relevant text(s)** and **turn off** your cell phone/iPod, iPad etc. in class.

Grading

Participation (includes attendance, pop quiz, and other in-class activities): 10 %

Close Reading: 15%

Group project: 20 %

Term Essay: 25% (includes Tentative Outline and Introductory Paragraph 5% and Final Draft 20%)

Final Exam: 30 %

Close Reading: In order to practice reading critically and writing as a way to develop ideas, you will be required to write three short (500 word) papers, which develop a thesis-driven argument based on a close reading of 10-20 lines of a text on the syllabus. These papers are designed to help you practice analysis and argumentation, and may be used as the basis for your longer papers.

Group Project: Each group will choose one of the texts on the course outline and prepare a 15 minute presentation. The presentation should provide contextual, critical, historical, or cultural material that will enable a better understanding of the chosen text. You may also refer to other texts or authors discussed in the course. Please speak to me regarding your topic in advance to the presentation date.

You should try to engage other students, generate questions and comments, and respond to them appropriately. Try to be creative in approaching and presenting your topic.

You are also required to provide each class member with a one-page outline of the presentation and hand in one written copy of your work for analysis. Please cite all the sources you use.

The presentations will be evaluated based on the presentation of the material, as well as the intellectual aspect (a rubric will be provided). All members of the group will receive the same grade. It is the group's responsibility to make sure that every member plays an equal role in research and presentation.

Final Essay: You will write one formal essay of 1500 (+/- 150) words, that will analyze one or more texts on the course outline. Possible topics will be distributed in class at the end of September, but you may devise your own topic provided that I approve it. You are required to complete and submit an Introductory paragraph, tentative outline, and a final draft on the appropriate due dates.

A) First Paragraph and outline (5%): Due October 16

Once your topics have been approved, you can begin writing your introductory paragraph and preparing your tentative outline. The introductory paragraph must include a strong, clear thesis statement, but may later change to some extent.

B) Final Draft (20%): Due November 20

The final Essay should not recapitulate class discussions, but should develop and expand your own ideas and arguments. Essays must be formatted using MLA guidelines. You must submit a copy of your first Paragraph and tentative outline with your final draft of the essay on **November 20th**.

Final Exam: The final exam will take place in the exam period and will cover material from the entire course. It will be in short answer and essay format.

Late policies

Late assignments will be penalized 5% each day they are late (including Saturday and Sunday) and will not be accepted after one week past the deadline. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis but only if consultation takes place *prior* to the due date. Any requests made after the due date will require appropriate medical documentation.

Class Schedule

Week	Date	Due dates		Concepts
Week 1	September 11		Introduction	
	September 13		Hawthorne: The Minister's Black Veil	Ambiguity/ Metaphor/ Symbolism/ Sin and Sorrow/ Barriers / Implied reader
Week 2	September 18		Charlotte Perkins Gilman; The Yellow Wallpaper	Madness/ Point of view/ Narrator reliability/Feminism/

	September 20		Wordsworth; Prelude book 7	Marxism/ City and Nature/ I
Week 3	September 25		Wordsworth; Prelude book 7	Romanticism/ Imagery
	September 27		Eliot; The love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock	Allusion/ imagery/ Romanticism
Week 4	October 2st	1st Close reading due on October 2nd	Woolf; Kew Gardens Joyce; The Dead	Focalization/ Epiphany/ Free Indirect Discourse/
	October 4		Tennessee Williams; The Glass Menagerie	Flash back/ Disability/ Memory /
Week 5	October 9		Tennessee Williams; The Glass Menagerie	Past and present/ Denial/ Stage directions/ Lighting
	October 11		Jean Rhys; Wide Sargasso sea	Madness/ Femininity/ Narrator reliability
Week 6	October 16	Introductory paragraph and Tentative outline due on October 16th	Jean Rhys; Wide Sargasso sea	Race/ Femininity/ Multiplicity
	October 18		Samuel Beckett; Krapp's Last Tape	Memory/ Past/ Retelling/ Existentialism
Week 7	October 23	2nd close reading due October 25th	Kingston; The Woman Warrior	Diaspora/ Immigration/ Autobiography
	October 25			
Week 8	October 30		Kingston; The Woman Warrior	Homeland/ Hybridity/ Story telling
	November 1		Margaret Atwood; Surfacing	Past/ Loss/ Trauma
Week 9	November 6	3rd Close reading due on November 6th	Margaret Atwood; Surfacing	Binary Oppositions/ Canadian identity/ Us and them
	November 8			
Week 10	November 13			Characterization/ Narrator/ Ethics
	November 15		Martin Amis; Time's Arrow	

Week 11	November 20 November 22	Final paper due November 20th	Martin Amis; Time's Arrow Powell; The Pagoda	Time Race/ Otherness/Language
Week 12	November 27 November 29		Powell; The Pagoda	History/ Writing/ Gender and Sexuality/ Performativity

Academic Integrity: in order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4,

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline,

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals,

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities:

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require academic accommodations (such as alternate test and exam arrangements) please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term and inform the course instructor.