English 108H  Alienation and Isolation
Instructor:  Mark Rowell Wallin
Time: Monday and Wednesday, 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Room: 208 Arts Lecture Hall
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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:00 – 2:30, or by appointment
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Course Description

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.

In this course we will be examining the development of what we currently understand to be isolation and alienation. We’ll look at various kinds of texts (novels, poems, short story, music and film), setting different modes together in order to see how they complement and diverge from each other to portray similar visions. While we will discuss plot, we’ll pay special attention to craft, technique and the distinctive strategies each artist uses to present the impression of isolation and alienation. Of particular interest will be how the techniques and strategies that serve to isolate simultaneously serve to bring communities together. To facilitate this reading we’ll look at the texts with race, gender and class in mind.

Required Texts

Bradfield, Scott. History of Luminous Motion
Brecht, Bertold. Good Woman of Sechwan
Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness
Copolla, Francis Ford. Apocalypse Now (film)
Donaldson, Stephen R. Lord Foul’s Bane
Fincher, David. Fight Club (film)
Genet, Jean. The Balcony
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. “Rappacinni’s Daughter”
Kafka, Franz. The Trial
Soderbergh, Steven. Kafka (film)
Wells, Orson. Citizen Kane (film)
Zwigoff, Terry. Crumb (film)

Assignments

2 essays the first worth 20% (1500 words), the second worth 45% (2,000 words): For the first, I will provide a topic list (as opposed to a thesis statement) that you may select from if you wish. The second will require your own thought for both topic and thesis. I will ask you to compare two literary and one non-literary
texts. I expect you to move beyond plot issues and concentrate on craft – explore how the authors achieve the effect of isolation and alienation, be it of the characters or of the reader.

**Journal** 20%: Every week I expect a journal entry of at least 500 words. The entry will address questions from the discussion list and will be handed in the last day of each discussion section. The journal will be marked on both completion and thought – formal essay style is not required. They will be marked (with a check or a minus) and returned. The complete package will be handed in with the final paper. This is an all or nothing deal: if you keep up and hand in everything (and indicate that you’ve actually read the stuff) it’s an easy 20 marks. Fall behind and you’ll be writing hack entries while you are finishing your final paper.

**Quizzes** 15%: I will administer a series of quizzes to test whether or not you have read the texts. No trick questions – I just want to know if you are keeping up on your reading.

**Academic Offences** (and other unpleasantness): The Faculty of Arts requires me to politely let you know that:

All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with policy #71 (student academic discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:11). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of any aspect of discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

To briefly expand on one point: plagiarism is "the act of presenting ideas, words, or other intellectual property of another as one’s own.” Make everything easy for all of us and remember to cite all your sources.

**Schedule (Tentative)**

September
- 11- Welcome, syllabus, course requirements
- 13- introduction to isolation and alienation.
- 18- Conrad; Tennyson; Copolla
- 20- Conrad; Tennyson; Copolla
- 25- Conrad; Tennyson; Copolla
- 27- Conrad; Tennyson; Copolla

October
2- **Kafka; Soderbergh; Bartheleme**
4- **Kafka; Soderbergh; Bartheleme**
9- **Thanksgiving – Go to your home! Don’t you like your home?!**
11- **Kafka; Soderbergh; Bartheleme**
16- **Kafka; Soderbergh; Bartheleme – First essay due**
18- **Brecht; Hawthorne**
23- **Brecht; Hawthorne**
25- **Genet; Wells**
30- **Genet; Wells**

November
1- **Donaldson; Zigoff; Bishop**
6- **Donaldson; Zigoff; Bishop**
8- **Donaldson; Zigoff; Bishop**
13- **Donaldson; Zigoff; Bishop**
15- **Bradfield; Fincher; Byron**
20- **Bradfield; Fincher; Byron**
22- **Bradfield; Fincher; Byron**
27- **Bradfield; Fincher; Byron**
29- **Concluding remarks**

December
3- **Concluding remarks – final essay and journal due**