ENGLISH 108H (04)
ISOLATION AND ALIENATION

Instructor: Paul Kreller
Office: HH 258
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs.
8:30-9:30; 2:00-3:00

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The aim of English 108H is to introduce you to the university-level study of English literature through the examination of works which illustrate aspects of human isolation and alienation. The organization is basically thematic. We will focus on psychological, social, and religious aspects of isolation and alienation, and we will consider both their positive and negative implications.

However, we will not deal with these works from an exclusively thematic approach. Our exploration will also consider such literary topics as plot construction, point of view, methods of characterization, style and genre.

A related aim of the course is the development of skills in critical thinking and effective writing. I also hope that you will enjoy reading the works on the course.

TEXTS:

The following texts are required:
Euripides, Medea (Dover).
Toni Morrison, Beloved (Plume).
Eugene O'Neill, The Emperor Jones (Dover).
George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four (Penguin).
Christina Rossetti, Goblin Market and Other Poems (Dover).

English 108H: Isolation and Alienation: Reading package (essays, stories, poems) available from the bookstore.

The following text is recommended:
Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArthur, The Little, Brown Compact Handbook, First Canadian Edition (Addison-Wesley). (This text has very useful sections on punctuation, grammar, and sentence errors, as well as a summary of the MLA style for documenting sources. All royalties derived from the sale of this text will be donated to the Department of English scholarship fund.)

In addition, some short poems will be provided on handouts.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

1. Emily Dickinson, "The heart asks Pleasure--first"; Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool"; William Blake, "Infant Sorrow" (handout); Christina Rossetti, "Song" (p. 33).
2. William Blake, "London" (handout).
3. William Wordsworth, "Residence in London" (reading package); "I wandered lonely" (handout).
5. Rebecca Harding Davis, "Life in the Iron Mills" (reading package).
6. George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-four.
10. Toni Morrison, Beloved.
11. Euripides, Medea.
12. Sylvia Plath, "Daddy" (handout).
14. Alice Munro, "Circle of Prayer" (reading package).
15. John Keats, "La Belle Dame sans Merci" (handout).
16. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Mariana" (handout).
17. Christina Rossetti, "Cousin Kate" (p. 19); "Sister Maude" (p. 33); "A Triad" (p. 18); "After Death" (p. 22); "L.E.L." (p. 56).

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Two short essays of three to five double-spaced, typewritten pages. These two essays will account for 30% of the final grade (i.e., 15% each).

One longer essay of six to eight double-spaced, typewritten pages. This essay will account for 30% of the final grade. As an alternative to this essay, students may write an original short story. This story should have some relation to the theme of isolation and/or alienation, and it should be accompanied by a personal commentary.

One 3-hour final exam will account for the remaining 40% of the final grade.

Class participation will affect the final grade positively (up to 5%). There may be some deduction of marks (up to 5%) if your attendance is noticeably irregular.

(Note also: One number grade (1%) may be subtracted for each day a paper is late, unless an extension has been granted in advance. No paper will be accepted after other students' papers have been returned to them.)