ALIENATION AND ISOLATION

Required Texts:

Beckett, Samuel  *Waiting for Godot*
Camus, Albert *The Outsider*
Conrad, Joseph *Heart of Darkness*
Coupland, Douglas *Generation X*
Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Left Hand of Darkness*
Reading Package (can be purchased in the bookstore; all texts on the reading schedule marked with * are in the reading package)

Recommended Text:

McArthur, Murray *The Little Brown Compact Handbook, Canadian Ed.* (All proceeds from the sale of this text will go into the University of Waterloo Department of English Scholarship Fund.)

Assignments:

Quizzes (10, worth 1% each) 10%
Short Essay (750 words, Due October 8) 20%
Midterm (In class essay, November 5) 30%
Introduction/Bibliography for Research Paper (250 words, Due November 19) 10%
Research Paper (1250-1500 words; Due December 7) 30%

* PLEASE NOTE: Assignments must be submitted AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE DAY THEY ARE DUE. Students will be assessed a late penalty of 5% PER DAY, INCLUDING WEEKENDS. Only in extreme circumstances and with all appropriate documentation will extensions be granted. Plagiarism will be penalized to the fullest extent allowed by the university.

Description:

In this class, we will examine the related themes of alienation and isolation in (mostly twentieth-century) literature, including novels, short fiction, poetry, and drama. In addition to exploring literary representations of these themes, we will discuss some of the historical, political, and social contexts of the texts, often paying particular attention to such issues as gender, race, and class, among others. Furthermore, we will explore the following questions: what does it mean to be alienated/isolated? how do different authors represent these themes? do they use literature as a way to defeat alienation/isolation? do they use literature as a tool for alienating/isolating? what do these themes—and the exploration of them—teach us about literature? about ourselves? Classes will be conducted in seminar format—with the occasional short lecture to introduce key topics—and all students are expected to contribute to class discussions.
ENGL 108 H: Reading Schedule

September 15: Introduction

September 17: Backgrounds and Contexts; McFarlane, “The Mind of Modernism” (*)

September 22: Hemingway, “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” (*)

September 24: Lessing, “To Room Nineteen” (*)

September 29: Lessing, “To Room Nineteen” (*)

October 1: Kafka, “Metamorphosis” (*); Short Lecture on Essay Writing

October 6: Kafka, “Metamorphosis” (*)

October 8: Kafka, “Metamorphosis” (*); SHORT ESSAY DUE

October 13: Camus, The Outsider

October 15: Camus, The Outsider

October 20: Camus, The Outsider

October 22: Beckett, Waiting for Godot

October 27: Beckett, Waiting for Godot

October 29: Eliot, “The Wasteland” (*)

November 3: Eliot, “The Wasteland” (*)

November 5: IN CLASS ESSAY

November 10: Conrad, Heart of Darkness

November 12: Conrad, Heart of Darkness

November 17: Le Guin, The Left Hand of Darkness

November 19: Le Guin, The Left Hand of Darkness; WORKING INTRO./BIB. DUE

November 24: Le Guin, The Left Hand of Darkness

November 26: Coupland, Generation X

December 1: Coupland, Generation X

December 3: Conclusion/Wrap-up (NOTE: FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE MONDAY, DECEMBER 7)