English 108 H: Isolation & Alienation – Course Syllabus
Fall 2007
Tues. & Thurs. 11:30-12:50TTh – MC 4058
Instructor: J. Andrew Deman
PAS 2212 – email: jademan@artsmail.uwaterloo.ca
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10:30-11:30am (or by appointment)

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.

Course Objective:

The objective of this course is to foster some understanding of the various forms of communal ties that exist within our society, and of the myriad consequences of isolation or alienation from some form of social, cultural, or political institution. What does it mean to stand outside of expectations? What are the ramifications of removal? What does the isolated or alienated character contribute to our understanding of the world around us? This course will also seek to aid you in the development of literary analytical skills, and essay-writing ability.

Required Texts:

Course Package 108 H – Available in Bookstore
Toni Morrison – The Bluest Eye
Susan Swan – The Wives of Bath
J. D. Salinger – The Catcher in the Rye
Mary Shelley – Frankenstein
Chris Ware – Jimmy Corrigan
Courseware Package
Sherwood Anderson – “Tandy”
John Donne – “Meditations XVII”
William Faulkner – “Barn Burning”
Daniel Keyes – “Flowers for Algernon”
E. A. Robinson – “Richard Cory”
Alfred Tennyson – “The Lady of Shalott”
Assignments and Grading:

Final Exam – 25%
The final exam will test the student’s comprehension of material covered in the readings and in-class discussions, and also require an essay section in which the student will demonstrate their ability to apply classroom concepts to the texts covered.

Final Essay – 40%
This paper will be the culmination of the student’s work in the course. Due one week after the final day of class, this paper will be a comparison of two or more classroom texts with regard to an issue of relevance to in-class discussions. All topics must be approved by me prior to writing. Students will receive a detailed description of this assignment along with possible essay topics well in advance of the due date. Minimum length of this essay is 6 pages.

Quizzes – 15%
No trick questions or curveballs. These random (pop) quizzes are simply intended to ensure that you keep up with your reading, and give you extra incentive to keep up your attendance.

Midterm Essay – 20%
Students will receive a detailed description of this assignment in advance of the due date. This will be due on the Tuesday of the fifth week of class. Minimum length of this essay is 4 pages.

Course Policies:

Note on avoidance of academic offences: All students registered in courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline) which is supplied in the 2001-2002 Undergraduate Calendar (page 1:10). If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

All assignments handed in late will receive a penalty of 10% per day. Anything turned in late must be date-stamped before I will accept it. All papers must be handed in one-sided, double-spaced, in a 12 point Times New Roman or equivalent font with 1” margins, and should include a title page, and a list of references. All material must be in keeping with MLA format in every possible way. Handbooks on MLA format are available in the library or bookstore.
Weekly Schedule (Subject to Alteration):

Sept. 11 – Introduction: Syllabus Overview, Class Expectations
Sept. 13 – Donne (CP) – The Tolling Bell & the Cult of Humanity
Sept. 18 – Shelley – The Figure of the Monster
Sept. 20 – Shelley – The Drive for Companionship
Sept. 25 – Shelley – Social Responsibility
Sept. 27 – Faulkner/Robinson (CP) – Class Division and Social Hierarchy
Oct. 2 – Morrison – Racial Identity and Racial Otherness
Oct. 4 – Morrison – The Politics of Desire
Oct. 9 – Morrison – Transference of Disempowerment
Oct. 11 – Anderson (CP) – The Paradox of Openness (MIDTERM ESSAY DUE)
Oct. 16 – Swan – Gender Rules, Gender Barriers
Oct. 18 – Swan – Sexual Choice & Sexual Identity
Oct. 23 – Swan – Emulative Maturity: The Role of the Role Model
Oct. 25 – Swan – Literary Expression, Literary Extension
Oct. 30 – Keyes – Super and Sub: The Burden of the “intelligent” Suffix
Nov. 1 – Ware – Introduction to Comics Literature & Comics Technique
Nov. 6 – Ware – The Socially Disenfranchised & the Geek
Nov. 8 – Ware – Filial Desire & Parental Responsibility
Nov. 13 – Ware – Deflated Mythologies & the Postmodern Condition
Nov. 15 – Tennyson – Artistic Detachment
Nov. 20 – Salinger – Fractured Psyches: Ennui & Anger
Nov. 22 – Salinger – The City as Social Space
Nov. 27 – Salinger – A Reason to Live: Transcendent Beauty
Nov. 29 – Conclusions and review.
Dec. 6 – FINAL ESSAY DUE