“Isolation and Alienation”
English 108H
Fall 1996

Instructor: Marion Muirhead
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Hours: Tuesday 6:00-7:00, Friday 2:00-3:00
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Class: ML117 T7-10

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to examine a range of texts that have as their theme the isolation and alienation of women and men. Issues discussed will include gender, class, race, consumerism, technology, the social construction of reality, language, and other sites of perceived alienation. In exploring these issues, an interdisciplinary approach provides a broad theoretical basis for discovery, while literary concepts provide an understanding of textual techniques. English 108H offers an opportunity to explore these dimensions in lectures, discussions, seminars, and essays.

Tentative Schedule

Sep. 10 Introduction
17 The Awakening, Kate Chopin
24 Inspecting the Vaults, Eric McCormack
Oct. 1 Nights at the Circus, Angela Carter
8
15 Slaughterhouse Five, Kurt Vonnegut
first essay due
22 Slaughterhouse Five, continued
29 White Noise, Don DeLillo
Nov. 5 Generation X, Douglas Coupland
12 Snow Crash, Neal Stephenson
19 Neuromancer, William Gibson
26 Neuromancer, continued
second essay due
Dec. 3 Review

Assignments

Seminar: 15-20 mins worth 15%
Class Participation: 5%
Essays: 4-6 pages 2, worth 25% each
due October 15 & November 26
Must be written on a primary text from the appropriate section of the course (first section up to and including Vonnegut) Essay II is a research paper worth 30% (to include all material from reading list)

NB: DO NOT write on The Paradise Motel; it is not on our reading list.

Your seminar and your essays must be on different texts; avoid covering the same ground in any two assignments. Your diction in a seminar may be slightly less formal than in an essay. If you consult secondary sources for your seminar, be sure to acknowledge them in a handout. Handouts are recommended as an accompaniment to the seminar. You may also use overheads and other visual aids. Please list three choices for seminar texts on the back of your student information sheet. During the third class of the term I will send the seminar schedule around; please sign next to your name. I require advance warning for cancellations, and there is no guarantee of rescheduling.

All essays must conform to MLA style. Consult the style manual and reference all sources properly. Correct grammar and academic essay structure are mandatory. Formal diction is required.

Assignments are due on the due date with a late penalty of 10% per day for a maximum of three days unless accompanied by a medical certificate or other appropriate documentation. Essays are due before class on the due date, but if for any reason you should have to hand in an essay at any other time, be sure to have it signed and dated by one of the English Department secretaries (preferably the undergrad secretary) and put in my mailbox in the English Department mailroom in Hagey Hall, second floor. DO NOT shove your paper under my office door—you have no way of knowing when I will find it.

Class participation is your opportunity to demonstrate that you are keeping up with the readings, that you have thought about what you have read, and that you have valuable insights to contribute in group discussions.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an academic crime with severe penalties. Any words or ideas that you have acquired in your reading or in lectures and class discussions must be acknowledged on your Works Cited page. Whether you use direct quotations or paraphrase, you must cite the source. Do not make the mistake of thinking an instructor will not recognize the irresponsible use of sources.

Office Hours

If I am not in my office during scheduled office hours, please check the computer lab just down the hall from my office. The best way to reach me is by email. At other times a message may be left in my mailbox.