ENGLISH 108H: ISOLATION AND ALIENATION
Spring 1993

Section: 01  Wednesdays, 6.30-9.30 p.m.  Room HH150
Instructor:  Jana Karger  Room HH 228D, Ext. 3886
Office Hours:  5.30-6.30 p.m. Wednesdays
(or according to class needs)
and by individual appointment

Texts:  Barfoot, Joan. Dancing in the Dark
Buckler, Ernest. The Mountain and the Valley
Kogawa, Joy. Obasan
Maillet, Antonine. Pelagie
Ed. Linda Hutcheneon and Marion Richmond. Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions
(Selections)

Course Description in Calendar

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.

We will examine isolation and alienation in the assigned texts through a structure that combines lectures, active participation in small group and class discussions, workshops, seminars, written work undertaken in class, journals, and papers. As we develop a deeper understanding of the many facets of isolation and alienation we may question some of the values underlying the tacit assumptions in the Calendar course description. We will consider the social, political, and cultural environments that shape and develop identity/ies and consider both positive and negative outcomes that may arise when an individual or group is set apart in some way.

Tentative Schedule

May 5  Introduction
May 12  Pelagie
May 19  Pelagie: small group presentations
May 26  Obasan
June 3  Obasan: small group presentations
June 9  The Mountain and the Valley
June 16  The Mountain and the Valley: small group presentations
June 23  Dancing in the Dark
June 30  Dancing in the Dark: small group presentations
July 7  Other Solitudes--selections
July 14  Other Solitudes--selections
July 21  Other Solitudes: small group presentations
July 28  Conclusion
Brief details on assignments and marking scheme:

In Class Assignments and Participation: 15%
Such assignments will be varied—brief written responses to some aspect of the text/s under discussion; working with one or two other students to stimulate ideas for essays; providing peer support through an exchange of essay drafts; responding to another student’s journal.

Journals: 15%
You will write a weekly journal, which you will submit on May 26, June 9, June 23, July 7, and July 21. Occasionally, I will ask you to exchange a journal entry with another student. Details concerning how to keep a journal will be provided on May 5th and on an ongoing basis throughout the term.

Small Group Presentations: 15%
Students will work in small groups of 3-5 individuals concerning a text of their choice and share their work with the class in informal but carefully prepared presentations. Each student in the group will participate in both the preparation and presentation of the material.

Short Essay: 5 pages: 25% DUE DATE **June 16**
Drafts due June 2. For this essay, secondary research is discouraged. The purpose of this essay is to develop thoughtful and sensitive analytical skills.

Research Essay: 7-10 pages: 30% DUE DATE **July 28**
Drafts due July 14. If you wish, but not necessarily, this paper may develop some aspect of your small group presentation.

I will provide specific details for all assignments well in advance. Unfortunately, a penalty will apply to all late papers.