ENGLISH 108H: ISOLATION AND ALIENATION
Spring 1994

Section: 01  Wednesdays, 6.30-9.30 p.m.  Room HH150

Instructor:  Jana Karger: Room HH 228D, Ext. 3886, or leave a message with the Undergraduate Secretary Illona Haus, Ext. 2634.

Office Hours: To be established with students on night of first class. Also by individual appointment.

Texts:  Carr, Emily. Hundreds and Thousands
Harrison, Charles Yale. Generals die in bed
Kogawa, Joy. Obasan
Ross, Sinclair. As For Me and My House
Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions (Selections).
Ed. Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond.

You will need  coloured manila folders, as follows:
Blue for journal assignments
Red for class exercises or responses
Yellow for essay submissions

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 themes of 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. 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. 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.

Tentative Schedule
May 4  Introduction to the course and texts; in-class exercises
May 11  Generals: FILM; seminar workshop; journal 1 due
May 18  presentations; class discussion; journal 2 due
May 25  As For Me and My House: POSSIBLE FILM; mini-workshop on developing good writing skills; journal 3 due
June 1  presentations; draft essay exchange
June 8  Obasan: FILM; draft essay peer workshop; journal 4 due
June 15  presentations; Essay 1 due
June 22  Other Solitudes: POSSIBLE FILM; journal 5 due
June 29  presentations; journal 6 due
July 6  Other Solitudes; presentations; draft essay exchange
July 13  Hundreds and Thousands: FILM; draft essay peer workshop; journal 7 due
July 20  presentations; Essay 2 due
July 27  Conclusion to course; journal 8 due
Brief details on assignments and marking scheme:

In Class Assignments and Participation: 10% (mark assigned at end of course when final grade is given)

Such assignments will vary and may include brief written responses to some aspect of the text/s under discussion; working with one or two other students to stimulate ideas for essays; contributing to small group and class discussions. Any student missing three or more classes will lose their participation mark.

Journals: 15%

You will write a minimum of eight journals, but may write more if you wish. Journal assignments must be dated, numbered, and titled, and submitted on the dates noted. Some journal assignments will involve exchanges with another student. Each student is entitled to one late submission in the term. If you have fulfilled requirements and have shown a sincere effort in responding to the assignment, you will receive the full 15% for your journal assignments. After your one late submission, you will lose 3% for each entry not handed in on time. Full details for each assignment will be provided.

5 Minute Presentations/Class Discussion Facilitation: 10%. Further details will be provided on May 11th, when the class will participate in establishing the ground rules for presentations.

You will coordinate your five-minute presentation with a group that comprises six or seven students interested in the same text. The group may split into two, but efforts must still be coordinated, to avoid repetition or unnecessary overlap. The group members will share their work with the class in informal but carefully prepared presentations. Each student will participate in both the preparation and presentation of the material and will also be responsible with other members of his or her group for stimulating and leading group or class discussions on the text of their choice. Since it is difficult for eight people to get together at any one time, I suggest you meet either before or after classes—once to do your preliminary planning, and once to have a practice run.

Essay 1: 30%: Approximately 5 typed pages: Full details to be provided.

The purpose of this first essay is to develop thoughtful, sensitive analytical and critical skills that rely on your own interpretations of the text. Individual presentations may, if you wish, form the basis of your first essay.

Essay 2: 35%: Approximately 7 typed pages: Full details to be provided.

If you wish, and have not already done so for your first essay, this paper may develop some aspect of your small group presentation. In this essay, however, you will refer to two texts, or one text and a number (2-3) of short stories.

For both essays, a draft must be submitted to your assigned peer group and instructor; you must also comment on the drafts of two other students and participate in the essay workshop. Students who do not submit a draft or participate in the peer workshop by providing written and verbal comments to their peers will lose 10% of their possible essay mark.

Portfolio

You will keep a portfolio to hand in at the end of term. Your portfolio will contain your work throughout the term: class work, draft essays, copies of peer comments on your draft, final essays, journals.