This course is concerned with the close reading of texts, mostly literary. The aim is for you to gain a critical understanding of how texts work (i.e. what makes them mean something) as objects of interpretation and performance.

INSTRUCTOR: Kevin McGuirk, HH 263; phone ext. 2419; e-mail <kmcgurirk@watarts.uwaterloo.ca>; office hours T1-2, Th6-7, and by appointment

TEXTS:
Rob Pope, Textual Intervention, Routledge
Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, Anchor
Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes, eds. The Rattle Bag, Faber

The English department recommends that all students purchase a handbook of style for reference purposes, specifically The Little, Brown Compact Handbook by Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArthur. All royalties derived from the sale of this handbook at the UW bookstore will be donated to the Department of English scholarship fund.

APPROXIMATE SCHEDULE OF READINGS:
Sept. 11: introduction
Sept. 18, 25: Pope ch.1
Oct. 2, 9, 16: Pope ch.2
Oct. 23, 30: Pope ch.3
Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27: Pope ch.4, and Things Fall Apart

NOTE: poetry from The Rattle Bag will be assigned as we proceed. Bring the book to every class.
Course texts may be supplemented on occasion by xerox handouts brought in by the instructor.

ASSIGNMENTS:
1 There will be four brief written assignments each worth 20% of your course grade (your lowest mark will be worth 15%). These will be due approximately every three weeks. Topics will be given one week before assignments are due (this is one reason why attendance in class is critical). One or two of these assignments may be performed in class. (75%)
2 You will be required to memorize passages from the course texts for evaluation. Twice you will be asked to write out a memorized passage; these two will be marked strictly for accuracy. Each mistake (except for non-significant spelling errors) will bring your mark down by 1/2 a mark (out of 5 marks). Once you will be required to recite a passage (to the class, or to me in my office); the recitation will be marked not only for accuracy, but for meaning-enhancing attention to rhythm, syntax, and sound (5% each - 15% total). I will announce passages you may choose for memorization and dates for tests as the term proceeds. There will be three dates for writing out memorized passages; skip one of these and recite the third passage by the end of term. You may choose your own passage for recitation.
3 The remaining 10% will be based on attendance and constructive participation in discussion and group work. Attendance is critical. If you must miss a class, make sure to find out about assigned work through a friend in the class, by phoning me at my office, or my e-mailing me.

NOTE: My office hours are FOR YOU. Make use of them. If my regular hours are inconvenient for you, make an appointment or drop by when my door is open.