ENGLISH 460C
BRITISH LITERATURE: 1945-THE PRESENT

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

English 460C examines representative works by British authors writing from 1945 (the end of World War II) to the present. We will consider the works in their historical contexts, as well as in the light of current literary and critical theory.

The course will emphasize student-led discussions rather than teacher-led lectures.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To give you practice and training in reading and interpreting works of literature, with particular emphasis on their cultural and historical backgrounds.
2. To give you practice in scholarly research and in the critical analysis of individual works of literature, as well as the comparative analysis of several works.
3. To open up for your consideration some current literary and critical trends.
4. To give you practice presenting your ideas orally.
5. To help you to write more effectively.
6. To give you some enjoyment reading (I hope!).

TEXT BOOKS:

The following text books are required:

Martin Amis, Time's Arrow (Penguin).
Colin Dexter, The Wench Is Dead (Pan).
Graham Greene, A Burnt-Out Case (Random).
Ted Hughes, Birthday Letters (Penguin).
Iris Murdoch, The Unicorn (Random).
George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four (Penguin).
English 460C: Reading Package (available from the bookstore)

In addition, poems will be provided on handouts.
The following text is recommended:

Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArthur, *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook*, First Canadian Edition (Addison-Wesley). This text has useful sections on punctuation, grammar, and sentence errors, as well as a summary of the MLA style. All royalties derived from the sale of this text will be donated to the Department of English scholarship fund.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS:**

**A. POETRY (4 weeks):**

1. **Dylan Thomas**: "Fern Hill" (listening); "Do Not Go Gentle"
2. **Stevie Smith**: "The Galloping Cat" (listening); "Our Bog Is Dood"; "Thoughts about the Person from Porlock"
3. **Philip Larkin**: "Aubade"
4. **Ted Hughes**: "Pike", "Hawk Roosting"
5. **Sylvia Plath**: "Daddy", "Lady Lazarus"
6. **Frieda Hughes**: "Readers", "Birds", "Foxes"
7. **Derek Walcott**: "A Far Cry from Africa"
8. **Seamus Heaney**: "The Bog Queen", "Punishment"

**B. NOVELS (8 weeks):**

(Supplementary materials are in the Reading Package.)

   (Theory: Foucault, from *Power/Knowledge*)
    (Theory: Achebe, "Image of Africa")
    (Theory: Freud, "The Uncanny")
    (Theory: Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra"; Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society")
    (Theory: Lacan, "Mirror Stage"; Baudrillard, from *The Illusion of the End* (handout))
    (Theory: Barthes, "The Death of the Author")
GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

1. One short (5-page) analysis of an assigned poem from *Birthday Letters*. (20%)

2. One long essay of approximately 10-15 double-spaced, typewritten pages. The topic will involve at least one of the novels and should involve at least one of the theoretical works (50%)

3. Participation in a 40-minute group presentation, based on one of the novels; this novel should be different from the long essay (although this issue is negotiable). (10%)

4. Professionalism (see below). (20%)

*Note:* Class participation will affect the final grade positively (up to 5%). Attendance is expected.

PROFESSIONALISM:

Because the course is organized more as seminar-type discussions than as lectures (and because there is no final examination), students will have certain responsibilities throughout the term. These are as follows:

1. Students will be expected to attend and contribute to class discussions.

2. Each student will read and write comments on one other student's essay on *Birthday Letters* before it is submitted for marking. (I will organize the exchange.)

3. Each student will be expected to read the final essays on *Birthday Letters* by the other members of the group.

4. Each student will post an essay proposal and brief outline on our website:
   http://pluto.beseen.com/boardroom/n/55910/
   I'm hoping that we will have time to discuss essay proposals in the last two weeks of class.

5. *Group Responsibilities:*
   --to participate in the preparation and presentation of the group project; this includes posting a summary notice on our website.
   --to write a short evaluation (as a group) of another group's project.
   --to organize reading *Birthday Letters* essays within the group.

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And the Faculty of Arts requires that we notify you of the following:

"Note on the avoidance of academic offenses: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline) which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:11). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses 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."

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