Fall 8-15-2003

ENG 4300-001

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Course Description:
In this senior seminar we will trace the theme of temptation and related concepts across a range of literary texts from different historical periods and of various genres. We will examine and discuss the frameworks that we adhere to in resisting temptations—for example, moral codes or personal ethics—as well as the rationalizations we develop when we violate our conscience or social prescriptions.

We will begin with John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which offers a complex re-presentation of the Judeo-Christian myth of the Creation and "The Fall of Man." Milton vividly portrays the dynamic partnership of external temptation and internal rationalization that leads to transgressive acts and their consequences: the loss of innocence and the violent breakdown of relationships with others and with nature. We, then, will turn to other texts that take up many of these issues introduced to us in this epic.

Please note that this seminar is DISCUSSION-DRIVEN. This means that there is an expectation that each student will be fully prepared for each meeting with the text assigned for the day read and able to initiate or contribute to discussion with relevant and meaningful questions or comments that indicate a serious effort to grapple with the assigned texts and the questions that frame this course.
Texts: (Available through TRS)
Paradise Lost by John Milton
Les Liaisons Dangereuses by Pierre Choderlos LaClos
Tess of the d’Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy
The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis
The Color Purple by Alice Walker

Assignments:
Key Passages (15) 20%
3 four-page Papers: 30%
Final Project (TBA) 25%
Final Exam: 25%

Key passages: These assignments are intended to encourage thoughtful reading of the texts and to help stimulate class discussion. As you read the assigned texts, note passages that seem especially revealing, interesting, perplexing, or controversial in the light of this seminar’s topics. When you finish reading the texts for that week choose one passage (no more than 4 lines of poetry or 3 prose sentences) and jot it down on a 4X6 index card along with your name, the date the reading is due, and the author and title of the work in which the passage appears and the section/page number in which it appears. On the back of the card, write a paragraph explaining what you think is taking place, what you think the passage means and why it is significant to the themes of this class. Given the course focus, a good strategy would be to look for examples in the texts in which the speaker attempts to justify actions that he or she believes (or society or God assert) to be wrong. These passages may be handed in late only in cases of excused absence (i.e. absence due to sickness for which a doctor’s note is provided, or to participate in an approved University activity).

Attendance Policy: You may miss four classes no questions asked, no excuses needed. After four classes you will drop a grade level, for example, if you were earning a B, you would be dropped to C. If you miss six or more classes you will receive a failing grade for this class.

Provisional Schedule:
Week One: M/25 Course Introduction
W/27 Genesis chapters 1-3
F/29 Paradise Lost Book One (kp)
Week Two: M/1 Labor Day/ No Class
W/3 Paradise Lost Book Two (kp)
F/5 Paradise Lost Book Two
Week Three M/8 Paradise Lost Book Four (kp)
W/10 Paradise Lost Book Four
F/12 Paradise Lost Book Nine (kp)
Week Four M/15 Paradise Lost Book Nine
W/17 Paradise Lost Book Ten (kp)
F/19 Paradise Lost Book Twelve (kp)
Week Five M/22 Paradise Lost paper due/ The Temptation of Christ
W/24 Les Liaisons Dangereuses Part One
F/26 Part One (kp)
Week Six  
M/29  Part Two (kp)  
W/Oct 1  Part Two  
F/3  Part Three (kp)  

Week Seven  
M/13  Part Three  
W/15  Part Four (kp)  
F/17  **MIDTERM Break/No Class**  

Week Eight  
M/20  Part Four  
W/22  Introduction to *Tess*  
F/24  *LLD* paper due: Part the First  

Week Nine  
M/27  Part the Second and Third (kp)  
W/29  Part the Fourth  
F/31  **Eastern Illinois University Literature Conference**  

Week Ten  
M/Nov 3  Part the Fifth (kp)  
W/5  Part the Sixth (kp)  
F/7  TBA  

Week Eleven  
M/10  Part the Seventh (kp)  
W/12  Intro to *The Screwtape Letters* Letters 1-7  
F/14  *Tess* Paper due *SL* Letters 8-14 (kp)  

Week Twelve  
M/17  *SL* Letters 15-23  
W/19  *SL* Letters 24-31 (kp)  
F/21  Intro to *The Color Purple* pages 1-60  

Week Thirteen  **Thanksgiving Recess**  

Week Fourteen:  
M/1  *The Color Purple* 61-121  
W/3  *The Color Purple* 122-199  
F/5  *The Color Purple* 200-295  

Week Fifteen:  
M/8  Final Project-Paper Due/ Reading Packet  
W/10  Reading Packet  
F/12  Class Wrap-up/Evals