Philosophy Department

PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE

PROFESSOR: Chris Latiolais Humphrey House #202 Office Hours: 1) Mon. 8:00 - 9:00 2) Wed. 5:00 - 6:00 3) Fri. 9:00 - 10:00

TEXTS:
5. Bakhtin, Mikhail:
   A) Speech Genre and Other Essays (University of Texas Press, Austin 1986).
   B) "Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel" in The Dialogic Imagination (University of Texas Press, Austin 1981).

COURSE GOALS:
This course introduces students to a few important issues in the philosophy of literature. In the first part of the course, we will introduce Bakhtin's ambitious historical typology of literary forms. In the second, we will explore the connection between narrative structure and the temporal unity of the human self. In the third, we will review the most important schools of literary criticism. In the fourth, some basic issues in the philosophy of language will become our focus. And, finally, our attention will turn to the so called "post-modern" critique of the unity of the text and the coherence of the self. The goal of the course is to attain a better understanding of how narrating -- i.e. "telling stories about" -- actual and possible situations allows humans to "give meaning to" or "make sense of" their lives.

EVALUATION:
Students will be evaluated on the basis of class participation, fidelity to an academic journal, two midterm examinations and a final paper.

Class Participation, seminar presentations and discussion=40%
Midterm examinations 2 @ 15% each=30%
Journal (required though ungraded)=10%
Final Paper 10-15 pages=20%

POLICIES:
Open, respectful and critical discussion is the life-blood of this course. Journals prepare participants for classroom deliberation, and the final paper offers students the opportunity to respond in depth to a single topic. Journals will be collected every three weeks, and the final paper is due on the day scheduled for the final examination. 3 unexcused absences will result in a full grade reduction.
SCHEDULE OF READING

INTRODUCTION:

WEEK ONE
TUES. JAN 5TH: What are the philosophical issues regarding literature?

1. THE TASK OF WRITING A HISTORY OF LITERARY FORMS: BEOWULF AND BAKHTIN:

THURS. JAN 7TH:
A) Bakhtin: "Epic and Novel"
B) Beowulf (begin reading)

WEEK TWO
TUES. JAN 12TH: Beowulf (Discussion)

THURS. JAN 14TH:
A) Beowulf (Final Discussion)
B) Begin reading Heart of Darkness.

2. THE MODERN NOVEL: NARRATIVE UNITY, BIOGRAPHICAL WHOLENESS AND THE TEMPORAL CONTINUITY OF THE SELF:

WEEK THREE
TUES. JAN 19TH: Carr, Introduction and "The Temporal Structure of Experience and Action."

THURS. JAN 21ST: Carr, "Temporality and Narrative Structure" & "The Self and the Coherence of Life."

WEEK FOUR
TUES. JAN 26TH:
A) Carr, "Temporality and Historicity."
B) Heart of Darkness (Discussion): Author, Narrator and Character.

THURS. JAN 28TH: Heart of Darkness (continued)

WEEK FIVE
TUES. FEB 2ND: Heart of Darkness (continued)

3. THE MODERN NOVEL AND SCHOOLS OF CRITICAL INTERPRETATION:

THURS. FEB 4TH:
A) Student Presentations:
   1. Psychoanalytic.
   2. Reader-Response.
   3. Feminist.

B) Begin Reading The Crying of Lot 49.
WEEK SIX
TUES. FEB 9TH:
Student Presentations (cont.):

   4. Deconstructionist.
   5. New Historicist.

4. THE PROBLEM OF THE TEXT: TOWARD A PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE:


WEEK SEVEN
TUES. FEB 16TH:
A) Bakhtin, "Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences."
B) Kristeva, "Prolegomenon."

THURS. FEB 18TH: Kristeva, "The Semiotic and the Symbolic."

WEEK EIGHT
TUES. FEB 23RD: Kristeva, "The Semiotic and the Symbolic" continued

THURS. FEB 25TH: Kristeva, "Negativity: Rejection."

WEEK NINE
TUES. MARCH 2ND: Kristeva, "Heterogeneity."

THE POST-MODERN FRACTURING OF NARRATIVE UNITY: DISCONTINUITY AND IRONY.

THURS. MARCH 4TH: The Crying of Lot 49

WEEK TEN
TUES. MARCH 9TH: The Crying of Lot 49, continued

THURS. MARCH 11TH: Final discussion and student evaluations.

FINALS WEEK