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OfficeHours: M,W 10:00-11:30;
TTh 3:00-4:30; and by appointment
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FS 102 W: Academic Discourse II Self-Reflexivity in Literature and Film

The second FS seminar continues the work of FS 101 to develop writing and speaking skills that will be necessary for academic success as you proceed through the major, the junior seminar, and the senior project. It is intended as a “bridge” between FS 101, with its orientation and advising components, and FS 201, where you will learn the methods and protocols associated with a specific discipline. And because this particular section is designated as a “W” seminar, there will be more frequent writing assignments and greater emphasis on planning, drafting, and revising effective college essays. These papers will increase in challenge, complexity, and length as the semester proceeds, culminating in an extended essay expressing a personal philosophy of art.

Like all FS seminars, this one is designed to foster:

- Critical thinking and intelligent reflection
- Careful listening, viewing, and reading
- Thoughtful speaking and writing

Freed from the necessity of introducing you to college life and mentoring you through your first semester, FS 102 is perhaps more *content*-oriented than FS 101, although the emphasis will remain on study *in depth* rather than *coverage* of the topic. The required readings and screenings have been left deliberately limited compared to upper-division, discipline-specific courses; most of your time outside of class will be devoted to thinking seriously about the role of the humanities (particularly, literature and film) in the totality of human experience. The topic of this section is *self-reflexivity*, how various works of art acknowledge and comment on their own status as literature (or film), thereby reminding us of their fictionality and our own credulity.

In a famous statement about the necessary transaction that takes place when a reader (or viewer) confronts an imaginative work of art, Samuel Taylor Coleridge described how we must engage in a “willing suspension of disbelief” in the reality of the object being depicted in order to derive pleasure from the experience. The artist and audience, in other words, are mutually dependent for the representation to “work.”

The celebrated painting by Rene Magritte and the apocryphal story about Picasso’s portrait both speak, in different ways, to the problem posed by representational art and implicitly raise a fundamental question: *what do we expect from art?* In what sense can a painting, photograph, novel or film be valued as “true” and therefore truly valuable? What is the responsibility of the artist to his material and to his audience? What demands, if any, can the audience rightfully impose upon the artist? These are the questions the seminar will begin to examine; where they lead us remains largely up to you.

Course Requirements

The reading required in this seminar is relatively limited, particularly for a course in the humanities or social sciences, although the work load—including the time spent responding to pointed questions, writing papers, and preparing oral presentations—will be considerable. With the exception of Nicole Krauss' contemporary novel, *The History of Love*, the readings are all contained in the seminar CoursePack. *All students are expected to own copies of Diane Hacker's A Writer's Reference and Jo Sprague and Douglas Stuart's The Speaker's Compact Handbook, which were required texts in most sections of FS 101.* I have ordered a few extra copies that can be purchased from the college bookstore.

Please note that there will be three screenings in the Vukovich Center, where the aesthetic experience of watching films is immeasurably enhanced. Students should make every effort to attend these films at the scheduled time rather than watching them privately.

Assignments

To meet the academic goals of FS 102W—improving communication and analytical skills, with particular emphasis on writing—students can expect weekly assignments, including but not limited to the following list:

Writing:

- Diagnostic essay describing your expectations for “good” literature or film
- Preliminary paper on what matters most in art
- 2-4 page essays on particular problems raised in class about responsibilities of artist and audience
- Short commentaries on films
- Revision of one submitted essay
- Term paper (5-7 pages): A Philosophy of Art

Speaking:

- Extemporaneous self introduction/
- Oral interpretation of a poem and commentary
- Speech about work-in-progress: case study

In addition to these graded assignments, the seminar will incorporate 2-3 days devoted to writing workshops on specific topics such as passive voice, subordination, dangling modifiers, and revision strategies. The total amount of writing required in this “W” section of FS 102 will be about 30 pages, excluding revisions.

Attendance

Because FS 102 has been designed as a *seminar*, a small class that centers on student participation, your attendance—and attentiveness—becomes vital to the course's success. You should, therefore, make every effort to be there for every class meeting—especially since our class meets only twice a week. *Students who have more than three unexcused absences are subject to grade penalty.*

Grading

I will hold you to high standards in the seminar, but I will not expect you to reach goals that are beyond your abilities. In other words, I hope to provide a stimulating intellectual challenge without provoking perpetual frustration. I ask for your consistent effort, your curiosity and attentiveness throughout the semester, and your faith in your own intelligence and your instructor's fairness and good will.

Because discussions are so vital to the success of a seminar, participation will count for as much as 25% of your overall grade. Students are welcome to discuss their grades on a particular assignment or in the seminar as a whole at any time. In the past, the class average for my FS courses has ranged from 2.6 to slightly above 3.0.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, whether intentional or not, constitutes a kind of intellectual theft. Plagiarism occurs when you use another author's language, images, or specific ideas—whether from print, website, or other form such as dvd features—without giving proper credit. It is a violation of Allegheny's Honor Code and will be treated accordingly.

Be very careful when taking notes, either from print or Web sources, to distinguish between your own words and thoughts and those that originate elsewhere. Be certain to document all secondary sources, both in the text and at the end in a list of works cited. (In this class, MLA documentation style is preferred. See the Learning Commons link <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/> for more about citing sources and avoiding plagiarism.)

Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels the need for an accommodation based on a documented disability should contact me as well as John Mangine in the Learning Commons (john.mangine@allegheny.edu, 332-2898). The Learning Commons arranges reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

Weekly Schedule

[Note: Because all seminars are, by nature, somewhat improvisational, and because FS 102 W, in particular, combines a variety of important academic goals, the following plan is necessarily tentative. Mid-course adjustments may be made.]

Wk	Topics/Activities	Readings/Films
1/19	What is "self-reflexivity"?	Coleridge, "Willing Suspension of Disbelief" Graff, et al. "Entering the Conversation"
1/26	Extemporaneous Self-introduction Four Ways of Talking About Art	Kafka, "A Hunger Artist"
2/2	Formalism: the virtue of craft	Doctorow, "The Writer in the Family"
2/9	Mimesis (Realism): the virtue of verisimilitude	Jonze and Kaufman, <i>Adaptation</i> (Tu, 2/7, 4:00)

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| 2/16 | Scene analysis: how to read a film | Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" |
| 2/23 | Genius: the virtue of originality
Sonnets | MacLeish, "Ars Poetica"; Shakespeare, Sonnet 18 (Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"); Keats, "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer" |
| 3/1 | Didacticism and Pragmatism:
the virtue of affecting an audience | Definitions of Poetry |
| 3/8 | Speech 1: Oral Interpretation | poems by Cummings, Francis, Collins, Merwin, and Wilbur |
| 3/15 | Seminar Self-Reflexivity: catch-up,
assessment, and recapitulation | |

SPRING BREAK

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| 3/29 | Illusion/Allusion | Krauss, <i>The History of Love</i> (+ Study Questions) |
| 4/5 | Exhibition/Voyeurism | Kieslowski, <i>A Short Film About Love</i> (Th, 4/5, 4:00) |
| 4/12 | Film as Art | Bordwell, "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice" |
| 4/19 | Artist and Audience | Bergman, <i>Persona</i> (Tu, 4/17, 4:00)
Michaels, "Bergman and the Necessary Illusion" |
| 4/26 | Speech 2: A Philosophy of Art | |