THE INDIVIDUAL VERSUS SOCIETY

Fall Semester 2004
Office phone: 487-3246
Office Location: Walker 327
Office hours: 10:30-11:00 Tu/Th.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Youth versus age? Courage versus tradition? Child versus Parent? Take your pick. Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, Molière's Tartuffe, and Eugene O'Neill's Desire Under the Elms are three of the five literary venues through which we will explore the theme of the individual versus society. Oedipus, with the fatal flaw of pride, seeks to know too much, having unknowingly killed his father and married his mother. Justice prevails against the lone figure, Tartuffe, who masks his evil under the appearance of religious piety. We are left with uncertain feelings as the lovers Abbie and Eben are led off to jail at the end of O'Neill's Desire Under the Elms. Through some films, writing, the Socratic method and other creative venues, we will explore the theme of the individual versus society.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. To engage the student in active inquiry into interdisciplinary questions.
2. To introduce the student to critical thinking and critical reading.
3. To foster in the student the habit of accuracy and thoroughness.
4. To nurture and strongly encourage creativity.
5. To encourage the student to use reasoning and evidence to support arguments.
6. To develop effective oral, written and visual communication.
7. To teach the use of the library.
8. To help promote diversity and respect for other religions, races, genders, ages and other differences in a calm, rational manner.

TEXTS:
- You Can't Take It With You, Kaufman and Hart
- Oedipus Rex, Sophocles
- Othello, Shakespeare
- Desire Under the Elms, O'Neill
- Tartuffe, Molière

Mon. - August 30 -- Introductions, distribution of syllabi, explanation of course expectations, filling out of bio cards, questions.
Wed. - Sept. 1 -- You Can't Take It With You, Kaufman and Hart
Mon. - Sept. 6 -- LABOR DAY (UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY)
Wed. - Sept. 8 -- You Can't Take It With You
Fri. - Sept. 10 -- You Can't Take It With You
K-Day begins at noon. This class will meet on September 10.
Mon. - Sept. 13 -- Othello, Act I
Wed. - Sept. 15 -- LIBRARY VISIT. This is very important. Please meet me in the library in the front and do not come to Walker. Please do not miss.
Fri. - Sept. 17 -- Othello, Act II

(next page, please)
Mon. - Sept. 20 - Friday, Sept. 24 - Othello, continued, an act per day.
Mon. - Sept. 27 - Oct. 4 - FIRST PAPERS/PROJECTS DUE. I will schedule each student, in advance. Please do not ask for an extension unless you have a grave emergency. Power outages and computer glitches do not constitute a legitimate reason for delay. Please learn to meet deadlines. The success of this class depends on your showing up when you are expected.

Fri. - Oct. 15 - Friday, Oct. 22 - SECOND PAPER/CREATIVE PROJECT
Mon. - Oct. 25 - Wed., Nov. 3 - Tartuffe, Molière
Fri. - Nov. 5 - Discussions regarding academic integrity and course assessment - student conferences in my office/Reflections

(Conferences will be held over a four day period. They will conclude on Friday, Nov. 12.)

Mon. - Nov. 15 - Friday, Nov. 19 - Oedipus Rex, Sophocles
Mon. - Nov. 22 - Friday, Nov. 26 - THANKSGIVING BREAK

Mon. - Nov. 29 and Wed., Dec. 1 - Oedipus Rex (This is flexible.)
Fri. - Dec. 3 - Friday, Dec. 10 - FINAL PAPERS/PROJECTS
Mon. - Dec. 13 - Friday, Dec. 17 - FINAL EXAMS. There are no final exams in this class.

GRADING POLICY: Grades are based, entirely, on the three papers, which are given equal weight. You may also do a creative project, but it generally has to have a written component. I do not give points. I grade holistically. Criteria appear at the end of this syllabus.

KINDS OF PAPERS/PROJECTS:

You have choices of:

1. a critical paper, supported by one article (from which you must quote directly) found in refereed journals, generally indexed in the MLA Bibliography. You will learn about the MLA Bibliography and JSTOR at the library orientation. If you use JSTOR, you may ONLY use the Language and Literature selections.

2. a performance analysis of an actor's work of the plays we are studying. You will need three reviews from quality magazines or newspapers. One good source is Lexis Nexis, but it only goes back twenty years. At the library orientation, we will explain what Lexis Nexis is. I also recommend Current Biography for performance reviews, as well as the New York Times Index. Infotrac is also valuable.

3. a historical or social analysis of a play, where you use at least three reputable sources. I must approve the sources, in advance.

4. a creative project with a scholarly narrative, including, but not limited to, music, puppetry, multi-media projects, a website (no narrative needed), a drawing, a painting, photography or some other evidence of your creative genius. You should work with the strongest of your seven intelligences, according to Harvard scholar Howard Gardner. All creative projects must show research found in a refereed journal and there must be at least one direct quote. You may also do scene design or costume design, with written justification.

5. You may do one personal paper. No research is required.

Please see the next two pages for my policies and grading criteria. Thank you for choosing my class!!! Good luck!
ABSENCES: In the real world, employers expect regular attendance. Classroom attendance is vital and it is training for the rest of your life. Students in my classes base three unexcused absences, summer and during the regular year. Thereafter, on a case by case basis, I reserve the right to lower your final grade by ½ a letter grade. (for each absence beyond three) On the fifth absence for summer school (and on the tenth for the regular year), I reserve the right to give the student an F regardless to what grades may be earned on papers/projects. This will be an F for the course.

WHY? Eighty per cent of college students, nationwide, according to Newsweek, work 20 hours a week. A number of students holding full-time jobs sign up for as many as 18 credits per term and participate in extra curricular activities. For most human beings, this is an absolute impossibility, so they have heavy absences from class. In recent years, excessive absences have gone beyond all reasonable bounds, straining relationships and severely jeopardizing the student’s grade.

Students with major illnesses are encouraged to drop and not "hang in there at all costs." I understand brief absences for weddings, funerals, court appearances, job interviews, and short-term illnesses. I also do not normally require any form of documentation. I will when the problem becomes excessive. Discipline is key!

GRAMMAR: Few successful people in life in any field thrive with poor language skills. If a pilot for a major airline said over the loud speaker: "Ladies and gentlemen, we now bees over the Mississippi," he or she would, under the best case scenario, be transferred to Siberia, if not fired. It makes no difference how well he or she can drive the plane. So it is with virtually all other jobs where one is upwardly mobile. One will not be excused because this form of speech is their dialect. Dialect is generally accepted in limited social circles and on stage/screen.

GRADES AFFECTED BY GRAMMAR: I often give dual grades, such as an A/F, the former for content and the latter for grammar. This is not something I must do, or even feel strongly about. I do it in order to help students who have made some effort, but still have a paper that is problematic. If you are uncomfortable with this and we cannot work on trust, I will happily give you one grade; it will, generally, lock you into a grade which is final. The double or dual grade is flexible, but never to be used against a student. As you present, you may say, "I prefer only one grade, please."

LATE PAPERS: Late papers are a hassle. I reserve the right to lower your grade by one letter grade for each day it is late.

RESPECT: I am very strong on mutual respect. I prefer to be called Professor Gill or Dr. Gill and I will give you the same courtesy. An attitude of respect must prevail in any classroom where learning is to effectively take place.

LENGTH OF PAPERS; Format: Under the ADA, I do respectfully request that all papers be in a size 14 font and that they be double-spaced. I will return papers that do not comply with this request. All pages should be numbered, except page one. I generally ask for five page papers, but this may be negotiable, especially when one does a creative project.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS: Please bring an extra copy of your paper. All work must be presented before the class. Thanks.
No set of criteria can include all the characteristics of every forceful and convincing piece of writing or speaking. However, the purpose of this form is to help you learn to incorporate certain elements of effective communication in all your papers and speeches.

CONTENT

Central idea: clear; limited; implications of situation carefully considered? adapted to audience?
Support: sufficient, relevant? specific? sources attributed as needed?

ORGANIZATION

Beginning engages interest? indicated purpose? Development: thoughtful analysis apparent?
Purpose and relationship of sections clear? paragraphs coherently structured?
Ending: significance maintained? Is there a sense of closure?

EXPRESSION

Tone: indicates involvement with subject? (I hold that tone is the single most important element in writing.) Appropriate to purpose and audience? Appropriately maintained?
Sentences: clear? concise? varied? patterns suitable for reading and/or listening?
Word Choice: accurate? appropriate to audience?

DELIVERY

Conveys involvement with audience and subject: animation? (Is your delivery alive and enthusiastic?) Are gestures appropriate? Do you have too many gestures? Are they overdone? Eye contact? Too much reliance on notes? Are you familiar with the piece you are presenting?
Voice: articulation clear? appropriate projection? intensity? rate?

MECHANICS (Writing and speaking)

Punctuation? Spelling?
Usage: tense? subject-verb agreement? (This can be very serious.)
Do you write in fragments? (This is a serious problem.)
Documentations: form correct? We use the MLA Handbook as our guide. It can be purchased.
I recommend the Fourth Edition. It is also available on the World Wide Web. It is in the library and in The Writing Center.