Course Description

Course Requirements

Class Schedule

Due the Day Before Each Class:

A. Two Discussion Questions

and either

B. Three BIG WORDS

or

Professor Richard Burt
Kafka, Kierkegaard, and the King James Bible

C. Three shots with three film analysis terms or both, depending on the assignment.

FIRST PAPER, DUE Saturday, September 20 by 11:59 p.m. 750 words.

It's time for you to take a You-Turn

Please email me only to send me class assignments. Otherwise, please talk to me in person after (or before) class or during office hours.

Office: 4314 Turlington Hall
Office Phone 352 392-6650
Office Hours: after class, and by appointment

“I could think of another Abraham for myself.” . . . This sentence comes to us from a brief parable, two pages by Kafka . . . “I do not see the leap” he would have to had to make in order to show himself reacting to the word leap here confirming what is otherwise well known, namely, that Kafka had read Kierkegaard.

--Jacques Derrida, “Abraham, the Other,” in Judeities, 1-2

Kafka did not always evade the temptations of a modish mysticism. . . . His ways with his own writing certainly does not exclude this possibility. Kafka had a rare capacity for creating parables of himself. Ye parables are never exhausted by what is explainable; on the contrary, he took all conceivable precautions against the interpretation of his writings. One has to find one’s way in them circumspectly, cautiously, warily. One must keep in mind Kafka’s way of reading, as exemplified in his interpretation of the abovementioned parable [“Beim Bau der Chinesischen Mauer”; “Building the Great Wall of China”]. The text overall is another case in point. Given its background, the directive in which Kafka ordered the destructor of his literary remains is just as unfathomable, to be weighed just as carefully as the answers to the doorkeeper in “Vor dem Gesetz” [“Before the Law”]. Perhaps Kafka, whose every day on earth brought him up against insoluble modes of behavior and imprecise communications, in death wished to his contemporaries a taste of their own medicine.


June 24. Midnight.

Not even what I am writing here is my innermost meaning. I cannot entrust myself to paper in that way even though I see it in what is written. Think of what could happen! The paper could disappear; there could be a fire were I live and I could live in uncertainty; I could die and thus leave it behind me; I could lose my mind and my innermost being would come into alien hands; I could go blind and not be able to find it my not know whether I stood with it in my hands without asking someone else, not know whether he lied whether he was reading, what was written there or something else in order to sound me out.


"Nur ein Völlig Fremder kann Ihre Frage stellen. Ob es Kontrollbehörden gibt? Es gibt nur Kontrollbehörde Freilich, sie sind nicht dazu bestimmt, Fehler im großen Wortsinn herauszufinden denn Fehler kommen nicht vor, und selbt, wenn einmal ein Fehler vorkommt, wie in Ihrem Fall, wer darf den endgültig sagen, es ein Fehler ist."

"Das wäre etwas Völlig Neues!" rief K.

"Mir ist es etwas sehr Altes," sagte der Vorsteher.

--Franz Kafka, Das Schloss, (Fischer Verlag, 1979), 65
A little about me

STEAM, not STEM (The "A" stands for "Arts," as in Liberal Arts.)

If Students Are Smart, They'll Major in What They Love

Missing UF Faculty (mostly from English)

The CIA’s Kafkaesque Guide to Subverting Any Organization with “Purposeful Stupidity” (1944)

The CIA's Timeless Tips for ”Simple Sabotage”
I interrupt my paraphrase to point out that I was speaking about issues, concerns, matters of altered into our field of vision and only now, by means of imperiled speech, did they emerge as shadows at the horizon that we have the way of verifying what he means of his own, annotated presentations at the hear with the dimly excited fantasy of children listening to something incomprehensible, fairy-tale whispers for us, but heard as grade school: children listen to something incomprehensible, prophecy for them—and with much more delight what lies close at hand, from what is fitting and proper considered the most intensive and proud, perhaps the official kind of learning—anticipatory learning, lean on its own. As a pedagogue I should propose its behalf, but I know for a fact that young people's preference for it, and I suspect that with time it filled up all on its own.

from Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, trans. John Wood, p. 63
Pollini); you learn about the piano sonata; about the sonata and classical music; classical versus romantic music; late Beethoven- quartets; deafness, and so on.)

**You Already Know How to Read Film** (Genre—you know what to expect) Example: *Hostel (2005)*

Reading is a vice which can replace all other vices or temporarily take their place in more intensely helping people live, it is an aberration a consuming passion. No, I don’t take any drugs, I take books, of course I have certain preferences, many books don’t suit me at all, some I take only in the morning, others at night, there are books I don’t ever let go, I drag them with me in the apartment, carrying them from the living room into the kitchen, I read them in the hall standing up, I don’t use a bookmark, I don’t move my lips while reading, early on I learned to read very well, I don’t remember the method, but you ought to look into it. They must have used an excellent method in our provincial elementary schools, at least back when I learned to read.


**Gladstone said, “To me, the biggest amazement when I looked at everything was that for someone as iconoclastic as that who didn’t care for the system, he saved every scrap. He cared about posterity, or else throw it away! Every little napkin—”**

She gestured toward some twenty boxes that had been assembled for the perusal of Marvin J. Taylor, the director of the Fales Library, at N Y U., and the founder of the library's Downtown Collection, which would be receiving Smith's ephemera. (Gladstone will hold on to the sellable work.)

Performing Race:

**Black Like You: Blackface, Whiteface, Insult & Imitation in American Popular Culture**

Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy"

Writers Reading Writers

"Neoliberal Arts" *Harper's Magazine* 2015


"Historical, in fact philological, considerations have slowly but surely taken the place of profound explorations of eternal problems. The question becomes: What did this or that philosopher think or not think? And is this or that text rightly ascribed to him or not? And even: Is this variant of a classical text preferable to that other? Students in university seminars today are encouraged to occupy themselves with such emasculated inquiries. As a result, of course, philosophy itself is banished from the university altogether."

**Nietzsche, Fredrich. 1872 anti-education Harper's Magazine**

Friedrich Nietzsche, 1872. ANTI-EDUCATION introduction and annotation by Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon, translated from the German by Damion Searls


**Auerbach, Eric. 1943. Epilogue to Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature**


During the war and postwar years, I lost sight of foreign literary criticism after it vanished and was thus inaccessible to me. Also, as a consequence of an airraid in 1944, parts of the Bonn University Library were unusable or burnt. I could no longer check various citations or consult many sources. But if literature is "the fragment of fragments" (Goethe), an attempt like this one in particular must exhibit a fragmentary character. — "Vorwort," in *Europäisches Literatur und Lateinische Mittelalter*, (my translation; not translated in the English
Curtius, E. R. 1953. I have tried to show that humanistic tradition is from time to time attacked by philosophy. It may suffer a serious setback from these aggressions. Many signs seem to point to the fact that we are faced once more with an incursion of philosophers, existentialists... "Appendix: The Medieval Bases of Western Thought," *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*, 592

De Man, Paul. 1983. As a control discipline . . . philology represents a store of established knowledge; to seek to supersede it . . . is without merit. "Heidegger's Exegeses of Hölderlin," *Blindness and Insight*, 263-4.


When do you have to go outside the text in order to understand it? Philology (history through etymology)

Philology as entry into history and culture: Life / Sex Life / End of Life = life, sex, and death=civilization
Set design for the trailer / short film *The Nursing Home* (Tagline: "Before you die . . . you've already gone to Hell"), to be filmed with scale models and voice-overs.

Remember. Elders Care!

JAMIE HOLMES, "The Case for Teaching Ignorance" *NY Times* AUG. 24, 2015

Reading as skipping and stumbling

Geoff Dyer, "Reader's Block"

Jacques Derrida, "Eating Well"

Jacques Derrida *Interview on writing as food or drugs*

STEAM (not STEM) "A" stands for "Arts," as in Liberal Arts

Freud's Disruptive Student

Autocorrect

Farhenheit 451 paratext

Juan Luis Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote"

Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues*

Writing as a Drug

Samsung Instinct film trailer

Martin Scorcese on pan and scan versus letterboxing

Warner Brothers high def website; Toshiba's "dead" website The Look and Sound of Perfect HD-DVD website

(YouTube trailer)
Kafka, Kierkegaard, and the King James Bible

Photo taken by Elizabeth Burt, December 12, 2014. Interior lighting by Elizabeth Burt.

That's me in Berlin circa 1995.

Me circa. 1984
Sigmund Freud, "Dreams and Telepathy"
Sigmund Freud, "Psycho-analysis and Telepathy"
Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia"
Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle standard edition
Derrida on invention and illegality

Jacques Derrida in Ghost Dance
Avital Ronell on the examined life
Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny"
Friedrich Schlegel, "On Incomprehensibility"

My LibraryThing
Kafka

Interpretation as Circle

Citations

Blogs / News outlets I happen to like: Gawker and RT

My Blog

Content on this page requires a newer version of Adobe Flash Player.
September 19, 1998, possibly the happiest day of my life. Photo taken by Maclay Burt.