

Blake, Newton, & Disney

Fall 2014

ENG 4953

Sect. 6170

Days: MWF 5, TUR 2322

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appointment only, TUR 4354

Office Hours: MWF 6, by

**TEXT:** Course pack available at Xerographics, 927 NW 13<sup>th</sup> St. (across 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. from Applebee's), 352-375-0797

**Primary Rule:** I expect you to assume considerable responsibility for making this course work for you. I will not spoon feed you instructions about exactly what you should do to “get a good grade.” I am fully aware that grades are extremely important. I do not take grades lightly, but the primary focus of your work should be your own intellectual development and production. There will be considerable course “content,” much of which may seem difficult, but I hope it will be exciting once you engage it with imaginative and intellectual honesty and power. This course should be approached as being fundamentally about your coming to terms with your own individual productivity in a creative, spontaneous, and often unpredictable academic context.

**Course Overview:** This experimental course will explore interpretations of and interconnections and incommensurabilities among William Blake's, Isaac Newton's, and “Walt Disney's” productions, and call into question widespread popular and academic conceptual formations regarding these exemplary figures of cultural production through close readings and viewings of individual texts associated with these three figures. Because the course will deal in some detail with complex and unusual (and in many ways unlikely) relationships, I have included a considerable amount of my own published work on Blake and Newton and on the comic book work of Disney storyboard producer and comic book artist/writer Carl Barks, as well as analysis and examples of the animation work of Ub Iwerks and comic strip artist Floyd Gottfredson—three individuals whose identities were (until recently) obscured by the Disney machine. The texts in this course should not be taken as prescriptive—not as the “true” or “only” or “best” way to confront these problems—but as a set of possible interpretive strategies, open to question, that I hope will serve as a springboard for opening up your own imaginative and conceptual originality and insight. Please review the reading schedule to see the kind of reading we'll be doing.

**Requirements:** You will be responsible for reading all the material in the course pack, but not necessarily in the order that it appears. Read at least 25-30 pages per class period. There will be one out-of-class written exercise (4-7 pages), one in-class writing exercise, and one out-of-class final paper/project. There is no set ratio for written assignments and class participation; your grade will be a holistic evaluation of your performance in all areas. Due dates for assignments will be announced in class and/or by listserv at least one week (and usually two weeks) before they are to be handed in. All assignments are due on the scheduled dates. NO EXCEPTIONS. Extraordinary, DOCUMENTED circumstances will be taken in to consideration for extensions. Write your papers early to avoid last-minute “emergencies.” Your submitted work must NOT be some version of a “research paper.” Making use of INTERPRETATIONS from outside sources, such as the Internet, for your writing assignments is unacceptable in this course. The course pack material is the primary source for your essay submissions. Texts such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* are acceptable. **IMPORTATION OF IMAGES TO SUPPORT YOUR INDEPENDENT WRITING, HOWEVER, IS FINE.** If you have any questions regarding this rule, check with me. If you don't understand what is expected in an assignment, talk with me in my office about it BEFORE you submit your essay. Do not wait until the last day before the paper is due to talk to me about the assignment.

**Attendance:** If your grade is on a borderline, excellent or poor attendance can tip your grade in one direction or the other. More than six unexcused absences may result in your grade dropping by a point (B- to C+, for example).

**Essays must be submitted in paper format.** In DOCUMENTED emergencies, I will, however, accept papers sent to my gmail account ([donault@gmail.com](mailto:donault@gmail.com)) in either of the two following formats ONLY: \*.doc or \*.rtf (NOT \*.docx). **Do not assume that I have received your paper if you send it electronically.** \*\*\*Your essays must demonstrate your analytical ability, your creativity, and your powers of argumentation. The emphasis at all times will be on originality and imaginative insight combined with precision and conciseness of thought and writing.

### UF Requirements and Policies

**Final Grade Appeals:** If you are unsatisfied with your final grade, you may appeal by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department of English office (Turlington 4008). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

**Class Attendance and Work:** Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

**Student Disability Services:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

**Harassment:** UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

<http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eeo/sexharassment.html>

**Statement on Academic Honesty:** All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

**Statement on Online Course Evaluation:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### Tentative reading/discussion schedule (subject to change)

**Mon. Aug. 25:** Course introduction

**Aug. 27-29**

Ault, "Incommensurability": section I

From Ault, *Visionary Physics*: to Chap. 2, sect. II

From Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*: Chap. 1, sect. 1-3

Blake, *The [First] Book of Urizen*: "Preludium," Chap: I-III

Keynes, "Newton, the Man"

**Mon. Sep. 1: Labor Day, no class**

**Review last week's reading assignments**

**Sep. 3-5**

Ault, "Incommensurability": section II

From Ault, *Visionary Physics*: Chap. 2, sect. II

From Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*: Chap. 1, sect. 4-8

Blake, *The [First] Book of Urizen*: Chap: IV[a]-VI

From Newton, *Principia*: "Axioms, or Laws of Motion"

Barks, "Vacation Time"

Ault, "Visual Narrative in 'Vacation Time'"

**Sep. 8-12**

Ault, "Incommensurability": section III

From Ault, *Visionary Physics*: Chap. 4, sect. I

From Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*: to the beginning of Chap. 9

Blake, *The [First] Book of Urizen*: Chap: VII-IX

From Newton, Rules for interpreting scripture

**Sep. 15-19 (Sep. 19 flex day)**

From Ault, *Visionary Physics*: Chap. 4, sect. II

From Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*: Chap. 9, sect. 1-2

From Barrier, *Walt Disney: The Animated Man*: to Chap. 3

From Iwerks and Kenworthy, *The Hand Behind the Mouse*: all

**Sep. 22-26**

From Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*: Chap. 9, sect.3-4

Blake, *The Book of Ahania*

From Barrier, *Walt Disney: The Animated Man*: Chap. 3

Hansen, "Of Mice and Ducks"

**Sep. 29-Oct. 3**

From Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*: Chap. 9, sect.5-6

Blake, *The Book of Los*

From Newton, "Definitions"

From Gleick, *Isaac Newton*: Chap. 10

**Oct. 6-10**

From Ault, *Visionary Physics*: Conclusion, p. 61-71

From Blake, *Milton*

From Newton, *Opticks*

From Gleick, *Isaac Newton*: Chap. 12

**Oct. 13-15 (Oct. 15 flex day)**

Notes and quotations from Newton scholarship

From Newton, "Rules for methodizing the Apocalypse"

From Ault, *Visionary Physics*: Conclusion, p. 71-81

Review Ault, "Incommensurability"

**Fri. Oct. 17: Homecoming, no class**

**Oct. 20-24**

Excerpts from Newton scholarship

From Newton, "Rules for interpreting the Apocalypse"

Review Ault, *Visionary Physics*: Conclusion

From Blake, *The Four Zoas*, Night IV

**Oct. 27-31**

From Blake, *The Four Zoas*, Night V

**Nov. 3-7**

From Blake, *The Four Zoas*, Nights VI

**Nov. 10-14**

From Dobbs, *Janus Faces of Genius*

Kunzle, "Preface to the English Edition"

Kunzle, "The Parts that Got Left Out"

From Marovelli, et al., *Social Phenomenology in the Comics of Carl Barks*

**Nov. 17-21 (Nov. 21 flex day)**

From Blake, *The Four Zoas*: Night VII[A]

**Nov. 24:** From Blake, *The Four Zoas*: Night VII[A]

**Nov. 26 – 29: Thanksgiving break, no class**

**Dec. 1-5**

Ault, "Visionary Synchronicities in Carl Barks Comics"

Barks, V-2 rocket story

**Dec. 8-10:** Flex day