

Instructor: Matt Englund

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## Literature and Psychology

COLI 211B-05

### Course Description:

Whether it is Plato's realm of Forms or Freud's unconscious, investigations into mind and consciousness are frequently grounded on a central idealism that provides both a commonality of understanding and a basis for truth; while such an idealism is not without its benefits numerous problems arise from such a conception. Strangely, many of these problems find strong analogies in the disciplines of linguistics, and literary theory, specifically with regard to the mediated nature of any such knowledge of this kind of idealism might yield, and also in the manner in which it invests a regime of signifiacnce. This course will examine the connection between Freudian and Platonic idealisms on the one hand, and modern literary theory on the other, in order to problematize the concept of sanity, specifically as an epiphenomenon that emerges at the investiture of a regime of rational idealism which assumes meaning and truth to exists in an external and never wholly conceivable exterior but that, with sufficient effort, may be analyzed and interpreted, however imperfectly.

### Required Texts:

--Paul Auster, *New York Trilogy*

--Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Trans. Michael Hulse

--Hermann Hesse, *Demian*, Trans. Michael Roloff and Michael Lebek

--Plato, *Phaedrus*, Trans. Christopher Rowe

--Patrick Suskind, *Perfume: the Story of a Murderer*, Trans. John E. Woods

--Selected shorter texts to be found on Blackboard under "Course Documents"

### Attendance:

As you will notice below in the grading policy, attendance accounts for 10% of your grade. You will be allowed one unexcused absence without penalty; all subsequent unexcused absences will reduce your attendance grade by one point each. Absences will be excused at my discretion; if

there is a scheduling conflict with a particular class session you should notify me ahead of time and, if at all possible, provide me with documentation.

### **Participation:**

You are expected to come to class prepared and capable of discussion the day's assigned reading. Your participation grade will be a reflection both of the quantity and quality of your participation; it is not necessary for you to be constantly active in a discussion, it is necessary however for you to be attentive and engaged during the discussions. This is primarily for your benefit as most if not all of the paper topics that I will suggest will emerge directly out of our class discussions

### **Honor Policy:**

You are expected to know and abide by the University's academic integrity policy; if you are unclear on this policy please consult the University Bulletin. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class**; if an instance of plagiarism is discovered it will result in an automatic F for the assignment and be reported to the University for disciplinary action.

### **A Note on Electronic Devices:**

If you have to bring your cell phone to class, please do me the courtesy of putting it on vibrate or simply turning it off. Please do not text during my class, nor should you be listening to your iPod or playing solitaire on your laptop—if you are caught, I will mark you absent for the day.

### **Papers:**

You will need to write four 4-6 page papers, each of which will be submitted to me twice, once as a draft and a second time having been revised in light of the comments I have made. The grades you receive on both the first draft and the revision will be factored into your final grade with slightly more weight being placed on the revision (draft 40%, revision 60%). **The due dates listed below are for first drafts, revisions will be due one week after I return the initial version to you.** If you have trouble with your papers do not hesitate to consult with me or make use of the University Writing Center. I will send you suggestions for paper topics periodically throughout the semester, but these will not be exhaustive, and you are encouraged to develop topics of your own that deal with the texts and problems discussed in class.

### **Grading:**

--Four 4-6 page papers: 20% each (draft 40%, revision 60%)

--Attendance: 10 %

--Participation: 10 %

## **Reading Schedule:**

### **September**

T 1—Introduction

R 3—Plato: *Phaedrus* (pp. 3-39)

T 8—Plato: *Phaedrus* (pp. 39-end)

R 10—Freud: “the Unconscious”, “Mourning and Melancholy”

T 15--Goethe: *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (4 May-12 August)

R 17—Goethe: *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (15 August-3 November)

T 22—Goethe: *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (8 November-end)

R 24—Hesse: *Demian* (Chs. 1 & 2)

T 29—Hesse: *Demian* (Chs. 3-5)

### **October**

R 1—Hesse: *Demian* (Chs. 6-8) **Paper #1 Due**

T 6—Freud: “the Dissolution of the Oedipal Complex”

R 8—Kafka: “the Judgement”

T 13—Borges: “Aleph”

R 15—Lacan: “Mirror Stage”, “Signification of the Phallus”

T 20—Auster: “City of Glass” from *the New York Trilogy* (Chs. 1-6)

R 22—Auster: “City of Glass” from *the New York Trilogy* (Chs. 6-9) **Paper #2 Due**

T 27—Auster: “City of Glass” from *the New York Trilogy* (Chs. 10-13)

R 29—Foucault: “Passion and Delirium” (from *Madness and Civilization*)

### **November**

T 3—Lovecraft: “Call of Cthulu”

R 5—Buechner: “Lenz”

T 10—Dick: “Faith of our Fathers”

R 12—Heidegger: “Being Towards Death”

T 17—Eliot: “Tradition and the Individual Talent”

R 19—Suskind: *Perfume* (Chs 1-10) **Paper #3 Due**

T 24—Suskind: *Perfume* (Chs 11-22)

R 26—NO CLASS: Thanksgiving

### **December**

T 1—Suskind: *Perfume* (Chs. 23-32)

R 3—Suskind: *Perfume* (Chs. 33-42)

T 8—Suskind: *Perfume* (Chs. 43-51) **Paper #4 Due**

R 10—Conclusion