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Spring 2014

### Course Syllabus (SP14) COLI 211 Literature & Psychology: "The Sublime, the Uncanny, and the Imagination"

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SUNY Binghamton Department of Comparative Literature  
COLI 211B-06 Literature and Psychology: "The Sublime, the Uncanny, and the Imagination"  
Instructor: Christopher Southward; [csouthw1@binghamton.edu](mailto:csouthw1@binghamton.edu)  
Class Hours: MWF 9:40-10:40; Office Hours: MW 11-12:30

This course fulfills the SUNY Binghamton General Education "Composition" and "Humanities" requirements. The University's guidelines regarding these categories are as follows:

Category 1: Language and Communication: *Composition (C)* courses are courses in any of the departments or divisions of the University. They require a process of revision and a minimum of 20 pages of expository prose. At least 50 percent of the course grade is based on student writing.

Category 4: Aesthetics and Humanities: *Humanities (H)* courses enhance students' understanding of human experience through the study of literature or philosophy.

Source: [http://buweb.binghamton.edu/bulletin/program.asp?program\\_id=103](http://buweb.binghamton.edu/bulletin/program.asp?program_id=103)

#### Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

In a world in which what counts as knowledge is predominantly restricted to the measurable and the calculable, those elements of human experience which elude and exceed these parameters are often ignored and discounted. In this course, we will examine questions of the sublime, the uncanny, and the speculative as treated in literature, psychoanalysis, and philosophy in order to think and write critically about them. Here, we will consider the possible extent to which an openness to such experiences can enrich our lives.

#### Course Requirements and Grading:

**(1)** Two (2) 6-8-page papers (Draft + Revision: 40% total); **(2)** A 10-page Final Paper (60%). The purpose of these exercises is to enable students (1) to recognize and respond to authors' main and sub-arguments, (2) to generate questions and make observations that will facilitate class discussions, and (3) to develop possible theses for the final paper. All papers are to be type-written and double-spaced using 1-inch margins, 11- or 12-point font, and MLA format. Students in need of writing assistance are encouraged to visit the University Writing Center at LN 2412. You are also encouraged to visit me frequently during office hours or to contact me by email with questions you may have or problems you may encounter pertaining to the course.

#### Expectations and Responsibilities:

Students are expected to arrive to class on-time and ready to discuss the assigned texts for the day. Students are additionally expected to maintain a binder containing each of the assigned readings in their entirety and to bring this each class session. Students who arrive to class without the readings will be asked to leave and will incur an absence for the day. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own academic success and to support that of their colleagues, thereby promoting the success of the course as a whole. Active participation will facilitate these goals. Students will be allowed one (1) absence during the semester; absences beyond this limit will result in the reduction of your grade by one half grade-point per absence (for example, a grade of A for the course will be reduced to A-, and so on. The same policy will apply to late submissions of papers).

\*The use of laptop computers will be permitted for note-taking. Please silence cellular phones and other apparatuses before the start of class.

Students who have special learning needs are encouraged to inform the instructor of them privately no later than the week following the Course Add/Drop deadline.

A Note on Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism consists in the unacknowledged use of another person's work. Students enrolled in this course are required and expected to do their own work. Instances of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, will be punished in accordance with University policy. Students found to have engaged in plagiarism in this course will receive an F for both the assignment in question and the course. Students in need of clarification of the University's policy on academic integrity are urged to review it online at the following link: [http://www.binghamton.edu:8080/exist9/rest/lists2013-14/2\\_academic\\_policies\\_and\\_procedures\\_all\\_students/academicPoliciesAndProcedureAllStudents.xml?\\_xsl=/db/xsl/compose.xsl#d1591e36](http://www.binghamton.edu:8080/exist9/rest/lists2013-14/2_academic_policies_and_procedures_all_students/academicPoliciesAndProcedureAllStudents.xml?_xsl=/db/xsl/compose.xsl#d1591e36).

A Note on the Readings:

All scheduled readings are required and will be available on Blackboard. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the reading schedule on short notice and as deemed appropriate.

**Part 1: The Sublime and the Speculative**

**Week 1:**

M 1/27: Introductions; No readings.

W 1/29: Jean-François Lyotard—"The Sublime as Dynamical Synthesis"

F 1/31: Edith Wharton—"The Eyes"; Lafcadio Hearn—"In a Pair of Eyes"

**Week 2:**

M 2/3: Edmund Burke—"A Philosophical Enquiry into Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful"

W 2/5: Cont. Burke

\*F 2/7: Hearn—"Nightmare Touch"; Edgar Allen Poe—"The Tale-Tell Heart"

**\*Course Add/Drop Deadline**

**Week 3:**

M 2/10: Sigmund Freud—"The Unconscious"

W 2/12: Cont. Freud

F 2/14: Hearn—"Gothic Horror"

**Week 4:**

M 2/17: Lyotard—"The Sublime as Mathematical Synthesis"

W 2/19: Cont. Lyotard

F 2/21: Takahashi Takako—"Holy Terror"

**Week 5:**

M 2/24: Immanuel Kant—"Analytic of the Sublime"

W 2/26: Cont. Kant

\*F 2/28: Abe Kobo—"The Magic Chalk"

**\*Paper #1 Draft due in class**

**Part 2: The Uncanny and the Strange**

**Week 6:**

M 3/3: Sigmund Freud—"The Uncanny"

W 3/5: Cont. Freud.

F 3/7: Edgar Allen Poe—"Shadow—A Parable"; "Silence—A Fable"

**Week 7:**

M 3/10: Freud—"Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams"

W 3/12: Cont. Freud

\*F 3/14: Natsume Sōseki—"Ten Nights of Dream"

**\*Paper #1 Revision due in class**

**Week 8:**

M 3/17: Carl Jung—"Visions"

W 3/19: Cont. Jung

F 3/21: Sōseki—"Hearing Things"

**Week 9:**

M 3/24: Kant—"Dreams of a Spirit-seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics"

W 3/26: Cont. Kant

\*F 3/28: Hearn—"The Corpse-rider"

**\*Course Withdrawal Deadline**

**Week 10:**

M 3/31: Freud—"Repression"

W 4/2: Cont. Freud

\*F 4/4: Ryunosuke Akutagawa—"Rashōmon"; "In a Bamboo Grove"

**\*Paper #2 Draft due in class**

**Part 3: Time, Space, and the Imagination****Week 11:**

M 4/7: Henri Bergson—"The Multiplicity of Conscious States; The Idea of Duration"

W 4/9: Cont. Bergson

F 4/11: Cont. Bergson

**Spring Break: 4/12 – 21 (Saturday – Monday)**

**Week 12:**

W 4/23: Jean-Paul Sartre—"Imaginative Consciousness"

\*F 4/25: Cont. Sartre

**\*Paper #2 Revision due in class**

**Week 13:**

M 4/28: Calvino—"At Daybreak"

W 4/30: Calvino—"The Form of Space"

F 5/2: Gamow—*Mr. Tompkins in Wonderland*, Ch. 1: "City Speed Limit"

**Week 14:**

M 5/5: Gamow—*Mr. Tompkins*, Ch. 2: "The Professor's Lecture on Relativity which Caused Mr. Tompkins' Dream"

W 5/7: Gamow—*Mr. Tompkins*, Ch. 4: "The Notes of the Professor's Lecture on Curved Space"

\*F 5/9: **No Readings.**

**\*Final Paper due in class**