

US: Fever Fantasy Desire
Vaughan Lit 104; Wednesday 2-4:52s
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VL 233/577-1319
Office Hours: tba

The premise of *Fever Fantasy Desire* is that literary texts and other forms of cultural production encode and are traversed by ideology, or what we will take to mean the way members of a society experience and understand relationships to themselves, their neighbors, their civic and private institutions, their economy, and to outsiders. Writers cannot step outside culture to comment upon it as they are themselves members of the set they would otherwise describe. But they are a distinct set of agents, who, in performing for the public (as they understand their audience) and representing a world variously and differentially known or unknown to that public, tend to possess or claim an uncommon degree of self-consciousness and often *feel* privileged or alienated to their contemporaries. They make legible choices of self- and social-representation. It is their profession to think critically about language, form, audience, publicity, and desire. The early novelists of the new United States were among the first (what we now call) creative writers to earn their bread through art. The first copyright laws were passed in the 1790s, enabling works of the imagination to become means for making a living.

There's was also a time of tremendous political and economic change. The United States had become independent, rejecting the British monarch and its parliamentary government for Federal Republicanism, a new form of constitutionalism that imagined the rational enactment of collective will while also aiming to maintain regional and individual autonomy. Depending on whom you might be, these efforts would appear to a greater or lesser degree successful. One measure of this degree was economic, and, by practice, racial. Slavery divided North and South, a distinction preserved until after the Civil War. And though Americans defined themselves in relation and opposition to developments in England and Europe, they also felt pressure and saw advantages of their newfound western hemispheric affiliation. Individuals also found new resources and opportunities for self-discovery and autonomy, though as often, these created only a different kind of anxiety about free will and determinism. If place, both in terms of social class and region, had seemed to create predictable and stable expectations for individuals' lives before independence, after national independence—and in response to further conflicts in France and the Caribbean—new aspirations for mobility drove desire to escape societal expectations and limitations. It was an exhilarating and often terrifying time to be alive.

In this class, we will work with self-consciously creative texts to explore the fantasies and fears of the era. We will also experiment with psychoanalytic methods of literary analysis to push our interpretation of texts beyond contextual, biographical, or formal modes of criticism. Our guide to this approach will be the post-Freudian thinkers Jacques Lacan and his materialist and contemporary avatar, Slavoj Žižek. We will begin with Freud's attempts to bridge his study of the individual psyche to broader social movements.

Course Learning Goals

1. Arts Literacy and Practice

Students will develop the ability to appreciate, evaluate, and articulate the aesthetic and formal elements of a work of art. Students will develop the ability to comprehend and interpret works of art within historical and cultural contexts. Students will develop the ability to synthesize conceptual, formal, aesthetic and technical elements resulting in the performance or creation of works of art.

1. W2

English/Humanities 306 counts for W2 credit. There will be writing instruction, frequent writing assignments, and training in writing within the discipline of humanistic studies.

1. Diversity in the US

The acquisition of contextualized knowledge about some aspect of complex group interactions in the United States. The ability to use concepts and tools of inquiry from at least one discipline to analyze issues related to the

diversity of cultural experience in the United States. The ability to reflect critically on the ways in which diversity (broadly understood) within the United States shapes the experiences of citizens and persons residing within the U.S.

English Department Learning Goals

English 306/606 also meets the English Department's specific Learning Goals. Majors in English will be able to:

- Analyze a variety of texts and respond to their aesthetic and cultural value.
- Respond to a wide range of literary and filmic texts and understand their historical and cultural contexts.
- Articulate ideas effectively in discussion and in oral presentations.
- Write gracefully, coherently, imaginatively, and persuasively, with proper attention to effective organization.

Comparative Humanities Learning Goals

Cross-listed with Comparative Humanities 306, the course will fulfill the following departmental learning goals:

- Understand all cultural norms as provisional positions in a historical process of change and conflict.
- Compare and evaluate cultural differences in a non-hierarchical manner across boundaries of all kinds:

Historical (including situations, intellectual products, and material remains of different periods);

Cultural (including race, gender, nationality, religion, and sexual orientation); and

Formal (between different modes of thought and expression).

- Appreciate the benefits, problems, and intellectual challenge of comparative study across historical, cultural, or generic boundaries.
- Demonstrate effective expository skills, both orally and in writing.

Assignments

Class Preparation and Discussion

Complete reading assignments for the day they are listed on the syllabus. Pace yourselves...the reading is heavy: we will have both literary and theoretical readings every week. You will not do well if you leave your reading until the day before class. Participation in class discussion is mandatory. What does this mean? Come to class prepared. Come with questions or comments to share. Listen carefully to what others are saying and be ready to respond generously to your peers. Complete all in-class writing assignments.

Papers

Writing Assignments: These are indicated on the syllabus below and must be completed and turned in *by midnight* on the day the assignment appears below. You must choose from the options on the syllabus. I'm looking for 3-5 pages per assignment.

A final paper of 15 pages will be due at the end of the term. This paper will be written in stages throughout the semester. Students will receive frequent feedback on the choice, development, and execution of their projects. The final version *must* be proofread and include proper bibliographic citations. A minimum of 5 secondary sources must be consulted and appear in the bibliography whether or not cited directly.

Presentations

Each week, students will be selected to make short presentations for the following week's class. The topics for these presentations will be assigned or agreed upon during office hours. Presentations should last 10-15 minutes.

Interest Statements

Students will write a 2-4 page Interest Statement each week. Bring these with you to class. You will be called on to

initiate discussion regularly. Your Interest Statement assures that everyone is ready to contribute. Use your Interest Statement to summarize, analyze, argue with, or research the week's materials.

Quizzes

Occasionally, I will ask short answer questions at the beginning of class to assess reading comprehension and to stimulate discussion.

Special Note for Graduate Students

Graduate students will meet all of the expectations required of undergraduates.

In addition:

1. They will meet with me an additional hour at a time to be decided.
2. They will be assigned to prepare author biographies when a new author is introduced (no more than 10 minute presentations to the class, as if introducing a speaker)
3. They will also choose a recent book (in the last 5 years) on a topic relevant to the course (and their final project) and prepare a 1000 word book review.
4. Finally, they will be expected to write a 20-30 page final paper aspiring to a product that can be submitted for peer review in a professional journal.

Course Policies & Grading

Student Responsibilities

Because we meet only once per week, missing class will severely affect a student's final grade. **More than two absences will result in a grade of "F" for the course.** *If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what was discussed, to complete in-class writing assignments, and to fulfill other obligations for the week. I will not re-teach the class in office hours for students who miss class.* Participation in discussion, preparation of the material, and timely completion of assignments are essential.

Office Hours

I will hold scheduled office hours and additional time by appointment. I expect every student to meet with me at least twice during the semester. No final project will be accepted if has not been first discussed with me.

Instructor Responsibilities

Students will receive prompt oral and/or written response from me on their work. In addition to regular office hours, I will schedule periodic, individual meetings to discuss the research project with each of you.

Academic Dishonesty

"Bucknell students are responsible for the preparation and presentation of work representing their own efforts. Acceptance of this responsibility is essential to the educational process and must be considered as an expression of mutual trust, the foundation upon which creative scholarship rests. Students are directed to use great care when preparing all written work and to acknowledge fully the source of all ideas and language other than their own."

I fully support the above principles and the institutional process that deals with violations of academic responsibility at Bucknell. I will not hesitate to initiate this process if the above mentioned "mutual trust" is violated in my course. In addition, it is important that you recognize that there may be instances when collaboration is appropriate in my class and other instances when it is not. Absent specific instructions to the contrary, you are to assume that all assignments are to be completed without collaboration. Finally, in acknowledging the source of all ideas and

language other than your own, you must cite the creator of Internet posted information just as you would an author of a textbook, a journal article, a reference book, emails, or personal conversations from which you have used information or ideas.

Grading

Periodic Writing Assignments 25%
 Presentations 10%

Evaluated for content, organization, and delivery
 Interest statements, participation, and other exploratory exercises 15%

Final Paper 35%

Evaluated for content, organization, and mechanics

Week/Date	Reading	Writing/Testing
1/Jan 16	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Brown, "Pig! Pig! Pig!"</p> <p>Movie: <i>The Madness of King George</i></p>	<p>Announcement: <i>The Masquerade and 18th Century England Reading Workshop with Professor Terry Castle, Stanford University</i></p> <p>January 21st, 12-1pm</p>
2/Jan 23	<p>Wright, "What is a Psychoanalytic Reading" from <i>Speaking Desires can be Dangerous</i> (1999), 13-17.</p> <p>Brooks, Peter. "The Idea of a Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism." <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 13.2 (1987): 334-348.</p> <p>Freud, <i>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</i>, 1-79.</p> <p>Anonymous, <i>History of Constantius and Pulchera</i></p>	Interest Statement #1
3/Jan 30	<p>Foster, <i>The Coquette</i></p> <p>Lacan, <i>The Mirror Stage</i> (moodle)</p> <p>Lacan, <i>Four Fundamental Concepts</i>, 17-52</p>	Paper #1 (3-5 pages)

4/Feb 6	Brown, <i>Arthur Mervyn</i> , 1-112 Selections from <i>The Man at Home</i> (moodle) Lacan, 53-90	Interest Statement #2
5/Feb 13	Brown, <i>Arthur Mervyn</i> , 113-252 and Appendix A Lacan, <i>Four Fundamental Concepts</i> , 91-118	Interest Statement #3
6/Feb 20	Brown, <i>Arthur Mervyn</i> , 253-330 Lacan, <i>Four Fundamental Concepts</i> , 123-160 Zizek, <i>The Seven Veils of Fantasy</i> (moodle)	Paper #2 (5-6 pages)
7/Feb 27	Sansay, <i>Secret History</i> , Introduction and novel (10-154) Lacan, <i>Four Fundamental Concepts</i> , 161-215	Interest Statement #4
8/Mar 6	Sansay, <i>Secret History</i> , and Appendix C Lacan, <i>Four Fundamental Concepts</i> , 216-276	Interest Statement #5
9/Mar 13	Spring Break	
10/Mar 20	Poe, "The Purloined Letter," "The Black Cat," "Murders in the Rue Morgue," "Masque of the Red Death" Zizek, <i>Looking Awry</i> , 3-47 Freud, " The Uncanny " (moodle)	Interest Statement #6
11/Mar 27	Poe, "Philosophy of Composition," "How to Write a Blackwood's Article," <i>The Raven</i> . Lacan, "Seminar on "The Purloined Letter" (moodle)	Paper #3 (5-6 pages)

	Zizek, <i>Looking Awry</i> , 48-87	
12/Apr 3	Melville, <i>Pierre</i> Zizek, <i>Looking Awry</i> , 88-122 Silverman, Gillian. " Textual Sentimentalism: Incest and Authorship in Melville's Pierre ." <i>American Literature</i> 74.2 (2002): 345-72.	Interest Statement #7: Prospectus for Final Paper and List of Sources
13/Apr 10	Melville, <i>Pierre</i> Zizek, <i>Looking Awry</i> , 124-169 Hurh, Paul. " The Sound of Incest: Sympathetic Resonance in Melville's Pierre ." <i>Novel</i> 44.2 (2011): 249.	Interest Statement #8
14/Apr 17	Melville, <i>Pierre</i> Nixon, Nicola. " Compromising Politics and Herman Melville's Pierre ." <i>American Literature</i> 69.4 (1997): 719-41.	First Draft of Final Paper Due in Conference
15/Apr 24	Melville, <i>Pierre</i>	Final Paper Due on Date Scheduled for Final Exam

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