IN PLACE OF READING: SOCIAL LOCATION AND THE LITERARY TEXT

CHUM 321/ENGL 380
Spring 2013
Monday, 1:10-4pm
Center for the Humanities 106

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DESCRIPTION
To read, Michel de Certeau wrote, is to travel. True enough, but de Certeau is using a metaphor, and traveling has appeared in place of reading. Why is it so hard to keep reading in view? Why are so many readers so eager to put something else in its place? This course considers the question by suggesting that, if to read is to travel, it is also to remain precisely where we are, reading. Social location shapes the specific qualities of our attention to literary objects. We will examine key texts that have invited -- or coerced -- readers into an "intensive" style of reading in modern times, and we will ask questions about the social worlds represented within the texts and implied outside them. Why have so many of these texts depicted -- or tried to enact -- the social transformation of readers: that is, to move them somewhere else? What makes some readings portable and roots others profoundly to their places of origin? Who has time and resources to read, and to read "closely"? Is close reading itself a noxious byproduct of modernity's decadence? Or are there ways of getting close to texts that promise more than social privilege? What are the locations of reading, and how are they part of readers' actualizations of the texts they read?

Our texts will range from early modern fiction to contemporary novels, from painting to film, and will be accompanied by writings on the ethics and theory of reading.

Texts Available at Broad Street Books:
**Please acquire the exact edition we are using.**

Lazarillo de Tormes (1554) (Penguin, 2003)
Daniel Defoe, Moll Flanders (1722) (Penguin, 1989)
Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (1894-95) (Penguin, 1998)
Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey (1818) (Penguin, 2003)
Mary Wollstonecraft, The Vindications (1790, 1792) (Broadview, 1997)

Note: T.J. Clark, The Sight of Death (Yale UP, 2006), is not available at the bookstore. I will provide each member of the seminar with a copy at cost. Details to come.

Shorter texts posted on the course Moodle site, marked below with an asterisk (*).

REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES
Reading. This is a course about reading, so we will take the reading seriously. Read and reread. Then read again. Makes notes in the margins, underline and circle words and phrases, bescribble the page. Each week’s reading assignments are substantial. Plan your time. Complete the reading well before each session, give yourself time to think about the texts before class, and arrive with points and passages for discussion. Bring your reading notes to class. If you have not done the reading, do not come to class.

Film screenings. In addition to the reading and regular seminar sessions, we will watch three films together at the Center for Film Studies. These screenings are a required part of the course and may not be missed. If you cannot attend the film screenings, you cannot take the course.
Writing. You’ll write two types of paper in the course:

i) **Five readings** (3pp.) focused on close reading. These will be an occasion for you to get close to the texts and the images and to write through some of the issues in the course outside the demands of a longer paper.

ii) **Two essays** (7pp. and 15pp.). The first of these may be modeled on one of your short reading exercises. The longer should be a substantial piece of criticism, based on both your engagement with a text or film and your research into relevant historical, theoretical, and/or critical materials. An abstract and preliminary bibliography for this second essay will be due several weeks before the paper itself.

Participation. This course is a *seminar*: we succeed or fail collectively. Arrive at each of our sessions ready to talk and ready to listen with engagement and generosity to your fellow students. If a text excites you, talk about why. If something confuses you, ask questions. If you agree with comments someone makes, elaborate on your agreement with the class. If you disagree with someone, explain why. In short, contribute with gusto to our common enterprise in the seminar.

Attendance, deadlines. Attendance at every session is required. Because we meet only once a week, more than one absence will lead to an automatic F for the course. Assignment due dates are provided on the syllabus so that you can plan your work for the semester. All due dates are firm; no extensions. *Don’t even ask.* You are welcome to turn in your papers early. *Please note: All assignments are required as part of the course; a missing assignment will lead to an automatic F for the course.*

Students with disabilities. It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services and making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please notify me as soon as possible (certainly by the second week of the semester) so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at [http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/index.html](http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/index.html).

The Honor Code. If you have complied with the Wesleyan Honor Code, please indicate that on every assignment you turn in. More information on the Honor Code may be found at [http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/studentconduct.html](http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/studentconduct.html)

Grading

Your final grade breaks down like this:

- 15%: Participation
- 30%: Five readings (6% each)
- 55%: Two essays (5-7pp., 20%; 12-15pp., 35%)

*Note: All assignments are required as part of the course. A missing assignment will lead to an automatic F for the course.*

**SCHEDULE**

1. **MONDAY, 1/28:** Introduction: intensive reading in modern times

**I. READING FOR LIFE: BEING JOSTLED**

2. **MONDAY, 2/4:** The *pícaro*: reading and survival

   *Lazarillo de Tormes* (vii-xxxi, 1-60)

   6pm: Center for the Humanities lecture by Frank Ankersmit: “A new look at an old question: the agreements and disagreements between the sciences and historical writing”
3. MONDAY, 2/11: Reading, thinking, stealing, thriving
   Reading #1 due in class.

   4pm. Wednesday, 2/13, Memorial Chapel: Center for Humanities lecture by Judith Butler: “Martin Buber’s Two Zionisms and the Question of Palestine”

4. MONDAY, 2/18: From *pícaro* to self-made man
   Franklin, from *Autobiography* (43-208)
   Malcolm Bull, “Reading Like a Loser,” from *Anti-Nietzsche*  

   6pm: Center for the Humanities lecture by Greg Golberg: “IRL (In Real Life)”

5. MONDAY, 2/25: Labor-time, reading-time, and education
   Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (vii-xliii, 1-196)

   6pm: Center for the Humanities lecture by Matthew Garrett: “Subterranean Gratifications: Sites of Reading and Scenes of Mobility after the Pícaro”

6. MONDAY, 3/4: Labor-time, reading-time, and education (con.)
   Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (197-408)
   Antonio Gramsci, notes on “Americanism and Fordism,” from the prison notebooks
   Reading #2 due in class.

   6pm: Center for the Humanities lecture by Dara Orenstein: “On the Waterfront”

**Friday, 3/8: First essay due in box outside my Center for the Humanities office.**

[3/11 AND 3/18: MID-SEMESTER RECESS.]

7. MONDAY, 3/25: The reader’s leisure, the writer’s work
   Coetzee, *Youth*
   Jacques Ranciere, from *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*
   Reading #3 due in class.

**FIRST SCREENING: *TOUT VA BIEN*, SUNDAY, 3/31, 7-10PM, CENTER FOR FILM STUDIES**

8. MONDAY, 4/1: Emancipatory reading 1
   Godard and Gorin, *Tout va bien*
   Bertolt Brecht, “Theory of Pedagogy”*

   6pm: Center for the Humanities lecture by David Kazanjian: “That no tax will be paid, by white, black or indian: For Over-Reading the Speculative Atlantic, 1820-1860”

**PART TWO: READING BEING READ**

9. MONDAY, 4/8: Subjected to reading/Learning to read 1
   Austen, *Northanger Abbey*
   D.A. Miller, from *Jane Austen, or The Secret of Style*
   Jacques Lacan, from “God and Woman’s Jouissance”*
   Reading #4 due in class.

**[3/11 AND 3/18: MID-SEMESTER RECESS]**
In Place of Reading

6pm: Center for the Humanities lecture by Dolores Hayden: “‘I have seen the future’: Selling the Interstate Highway System”

10. MONDAY, 4/15: Emancipatory reading 2
Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (99-343)
Simon de Beauvoir, from The Second Sex.*

6pm: Center for the Humanities lecture by Indira Karamcheti: “Big Talk, Small Places: The Caribbean Epic”

**SECOND SCREENING: VERA DRAKE, SUNDAY, 4/21, 7-10PM, CENTER FOR FILM STUDIES**

11. MONDAY, 4/22: Subjected to reading/Learning to read 2
Leigh, Vera Drake
Sean O’Sullivan, from Mike Leigh.*


PART THREE: RESILIENCE OF THE OBJECT
12. MONDAY, 4/29: Looking
Clark, The Sight of Death
Abstract and preliminary bibliography for second essay due in class.

6pm: Center for the Humanities lecture by Sarah Croucher “The Places of Archaeology: Re-membering Local Histories”

**THIRD SCREENING: STALKER, SUNDAY, 5/5, 6-10PM, CENTER FOR FILM STUDIES**

13. MONDAY, 5/6: Being absorbed
Tarkovsky, Stalker (1979)
Gilles Deleuze, from Cinema 2: The Time-Image.*
Reading #5 due in class.

6pm: Center for the Humanities lecture by Gary Wilder: “Turning Empire Inside Out: Negritude and the Politics of Radical Literalism”

**Tuesday, May 14: Second essay due in box outside my Center for the Humanities office.**