

Pat Day Rice 114 ext. 8574
Email: pday@oberlin.edu
Office Hours: MWF 2:30-3:20 and by appointment

FYS 157: The Sense of Time and Place. Fall 2008

MWF 10:00 am KING 335

This course grew out of a widespread view in American culture that time and place are essentially the background against which the individual makes his or her own identity and life. *Rocky* and *Pretty Woman* are two of many popular stories that seem to exemplify this view, though strikingly in both movies an accidental encounter triggers the title character's transformation and rise. So I became interested in looking at works of art, mostly but not exclusively, American that seemed to imagine a most dynamic and intimate relationship between self, time, and place, one in which time and place were not just background and life was not just a string of lucky accidents. At the same time I became interested in how time and place were dealt within in other ways, in other academic disciplines. Thus in addition to works of art, we'll read essays which approach time and place from analytical and philosophical perspectives, not just to add to our readings and viewing of works of art but also to clarify how different ways of thinking relate to each other. I don't assume one approach is better than the other, and we'll use works of art to interpret critical writing as well as critical works to interpret works of art.

In "The Sense of Time and Place" three equally important concerns run throughout the course. The first concern is how the various works we read and view imagine the relationship between the self, time and place. "To imagine"

means to make visible and we'll be concerned with how these works clarify their own sense of the significance of these terms.

Second, we'll be concerned with the specificity of the work we read and view. Our discussions will not focus exclusively on self, time and place; we'll also be concerned with the particular experience and understanding we have of each work, especially how different media (print, film, painting, etc) and mode (narrative, image, poem, essay) affect how we understand the work.

Third we'll pay attention to our own process of reading, viewing, and making sense of these works. We understand works of art and thought through our interaction with them. Analysis and response are only parts of this process, and we'll try throughout the semester to understand how we make meaning and value, and what it means to be a good reader or viewer of works of art.

Syllabus/Schedule

Week/ Day	Reading/Viewing Assignment	Writing Assignment
Week 1 Sept. 3 WF	F "The Loss of the Creature"	Short reading/essay assignment
Week 2 Sept. 8	<u>M: How We Read</u> <u>W & F American Graffiti</u> dir. George Lucas. Written by George Lucas, Gloria Katz, Willard Huyck "A Sense of Time, A Sense of Place" John Brinckerhoff Jackson	
Week 3 Sept. 15	M "How Many Kinds of Time?" Edward T. Hall W "To Autumn" John Keats F "The Bight" Elizabeth Bishop	
Week 4 Sept. 22	M "Defining Place" by Tim Creswell W "Nighthawks" Edward Hopper	Midterm proposal due, Friday
Week 5 Sept. 29	<u>M & W The Year of Living Dangerously</u> dir. Peter Weir Written by David Williamson,	Midterm draft due, Friday

WF	Peter Weir, C. J. Koch F "Scientific History and the Idea of Modernity" Appleby, Hunt, & Jacobs	
Week 6 Oct. 6	<u>A Thousand Acres</u> by Jane Smiley M: Part 1 & 2 W Part 3&4 F Part 5	Midterm Essay Due Friday, Oct. 19
Week 7 Oct. 13	<u>A Thousand Acres</u> by Jane Smiley	
Oct 20	Fall Break	
Week 8 Oct 27	<u>Yi-Fu Tuan "Time and Place Lone Star</u> dir. and written by John Sayles	
Week 9 Nov. 3	M "Sacred Space and Making the World Sacred" by Mireacu Elidae <u>Housekeeping</u> by Marilyn Robinson W Chapters 1-6 F Chapters 7-12	
Week 10 Nov. 10	M: Housekeeping W: Sacred Time and Myths" by Mireacu Elidae	
Week 11 Nov. 17	<u>Days of Heaven</u> dir. and written by Terrence Malick	
Week 12 Nov. 24 MW Thanksg iving	" These Lacustrine Cities" by John Ashbery Photography by William Eggleston	Final essay proposal due
Week 13 Dec. 1	Group Projects Presentations	Draft of Final essay due
Week 14 Dec. 8	Last Things	

Movies are available from the Reserve Room on 5-hour reserve and in AV on the 4th floor of the Library for viewing in AV while it is open. There will be open showings on Sunday afternoon in Mudd 050; Readings are available on Blackboard

General Information **Attendance**

You're allowed 3 absences. More than 3 absences will affect your grade. More than 9 total absences and you **will** fail the course.

I assume valuable things happen in class sessions. I take attendance; I expect you to keep track of your attendance too, because "I didn't realize I'd missed that many classes" is not an excuse. We only have 39 classes, less than 39 hours over the semester. The issue is not why you are absent but that you

have missed class, which is an essential part of the course; missing class sessions is no different than not handing in written work. In the economy of your existence, some things may seem more important to you than attending class; I recognize that and don't take such choices personally, but you need to understand there are consequences to such decisions. You may get sick or have family emergencies, but the best way to deal with that is to make sure you come to class, so if those things happen, illness and emergencies won't affect your grade.

I expect you to show up on time; sometimes unavoidable delays occur, but strolling into class 5 minutes late on a regular basis is a very bad idea.

Discussion

This course will proceed mainly through discussion. This means people should come to class prepared to participate. In order to prepare you should before each class, take some time to write about the topic/ assignment for the day; even a paragraph is enough. You should also write down questions you would like to raise. I may occasionally collect these pieces of writing.

There are other forms of participation--the short essays are one example. It is as important to be a good listener as well as having things to say. At the end of the semester I may ask you to write a brief report and self-evaluation on your participation.

Incompletes Policy

Academic or emergency incompletes are yours to take if you want, as long as you are in good standing in the course. You don't need to tell me the story, unless you want to; I trust you wouldn't take an incomplete without a good reason. "Good Standing" means that you have completed all the work assigned for the first module and at least some of the work for the second

The Honor Code

It should go without saying that I expect you to hand in your own work, not somebody else's. But in this course I expect you to read each other's writing and talk to each other about your ideas. Having a real intellectual life does not mean hiding from other people's thoughts in hopes of staying "original" but instead responding imaginatively and creatively to the influence of other people's ideas. If you are in essence quoting what someone else wrote or said, you should cite them, though you can do so informally.

Thus obvious cheating--buying papers off the net, using somebody else's essay from another course, lifting unacknowledged sections from other people's writing--is plagiarism, and you simply can't learn anything from this sort of thing, This is a violating of the honor code. If you have questions about using

sources other than those within the format of the class, you should speak to me or the writing tutor.

According to the rules, each piece of written work must be accompanied by the Honor Pledge ("I have adhered to the Honor Code in completing this assignment.")

Writing Assignments

- Attendance at Writing Workshops is required
- Written work must be handed in on time.
- Late essays will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor
- **All work must be accepted in order to get credit for the course.**
- All writing assignments are judged on the quality of expression as well as content; for our purposes, quality of expression and thought are equally important.

Critical Writing Assignments

- Essay #1 a critical essay of @1500 words (5-7 pages)
 proposal due end of week 5
 draft due end of week 6
 final version due the day before Fall Break
- Essay # 2 critical essay of @2500 words (7-10 pages)
 proposal due Monday, week 12
 draft due week 13
 final version due the end of Reading Period

The choice of topic for these essays is open; you may write on a particular work or do a comparative essay.

- Hard copies of essays must be typed, double-spaced, stapled together, with pages numbered.
- Backs of previously used paper are fine for drafts; final version should be printed on both sides of the sheet.
- Essays must have a title, though they don't have to have a cover sheet.
- References should be in the following form: (Wordsworth, "Preface" p. 2) in the body of the text

Presentations

Everyone will do two brief presentation (about five minutes) with a partner during the course of the semester. The presentation will begin with questions, circulated via Blackboard the day before class. The presenters will explain why these seem like important or interesting questions to them, how

they devised them, and what they were trying to accomplish by looking at the work through this particular lens.

For the presentation each pair should meet and discuss what the work and what issues, questions, or problems each of them finds most interesting. Each pair can/should meet with me.

Presentations will be judged on the quality of presentation as well as content; thus incoherent mumbling, shuffling of papers, irrelevance, general chaos, and boring everybody, count against you.

Short Essays

You'll write a short essay (about 600 words) every other week; you'll be assigned specific days on which these assignments are due. These essays will be available to everyone in the class via Blackboard. Sometimes I will ask you to write about specific topics, on other occasions the topic will be open. Short essays are due by 4:30 pm the day before class (if you have an essay for Wednesday you need to post it by 4:30 pm Tuesday.)

Group Projects

During the last 3 weeks of the course, small groups will present projects they've worked that reflect their understanding of the sense of times and place. These can take a variety of forms. More details will be forthcoming in the second module.

How I comment on your written work.

The comments on your writing will be, as one former student put it, "ambiguous." I don't do much "this is good, that's bad" commenting. The comments I make will be directed to making you think about what you're writing about, raising issues you may want to consider in revising, or writing about in the next short essay. I do this because you need to develop the ability to judge your own work, rather than to always expect to be told whether it is good or bad by someone else. Thus, I may not always comment on your short essays.

For specific advice on how to revise, what to do with a particular argument, etc., we should set up a conference.

Grading

Though you will get comments and responses to your work, you won't receive grades, except on the midterm essay, over the course of the semester.

This isn't because the grade is unimportant (if it was unimportant we wouldn't give it, would we?) but because the work in the course is part of a process, rather than a sequence of discrete units. If I am trying to encourage you to use your writing to be experimental and speculative, leading to your final essay, it makes little sense to grade it along the way.

I also think that micro-evaluation becomes overbearing and keeps people from learning how to realistically evaluate their own work, which I think is a major goal of liberal arts education.

If you want a sense of how you're doing, you should feel free to come and speak to me about your work. I will be able to tell you if you are making what I see as reasonable progress, what things you may want to work on, what things you seem to be doing best. I won't be able to be extremely precise about a grade equivalent, though.

Occasionally students will ask about a response to an essay or a final grade by saying "I worked very hard on this essay." I assume, absent clear evidence to the contrary, that *everybody* works hard. I can't evaluate anything but what I can see and hear--the things you write, what you say in class, etc. The grade in a course can't really evaluate how hard you worked, just as it doesn't directly reflect what you have learned. It reflects my professional evaluation of the work you produced. This doesn't seem at all unfair to me--it is simply built into the grading system as it exists.

The Sense of Time and Place FYSP 157 Fall 2008

What do we do when we read? What kind of reader are you?

Read the selection handed out in class. As you read, pay close attention to what you are actually *doing* as you read. You may have to slow down your usual way of reading a good deal to do this. Take notes on what you do. Try to record as much as you can of what you do, rather than simply general impressions or summary.

Pay attention to how you go about making sense of the selection. What kinds of assumptions you make? What you react to? The style? the characters? the tone? the theme?

Think about what examining this process tells you about reading in general as well as what it tells you about how you are making sense of this particular selection.

Write up an account of exactly what you did when you were reading: what you paid attention to, what kind of mental processes you went through (visualize, anticipate, etc)

In the final page, try to write about how reading works and what you know about the things that focus your attention as a reader.

“Reading” Assignment