

## English 400/Cinema Studies 498

### Senior Tutorial

Jeff Pence  
Spring 2008  
TTH 10:00-10:50  
Rice 217

Office: Rice 109  
Hrs: W 2-3:30; Th 12:30-2  
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What have you learned by majoring in English or Cinema Studies at Oberlin College? You've probably been exposed to a variety of texts in different forms, from different times and places, and with different styles and concerns. Hopefully, you've also been exposed to a number of ways of approaching such texts and have had the opportunity to assess for yourself the viability and value of these perspectives for pursuing particular questions. Such knowledge could likely be measured by something like an exam (don't expect much more from the GREs, if for some reason you feel compelled to endure that thing). This course is intended to provide you with a chance to explore something else—your ability to define and take responsibility for your own intellectual project. You will be asked to mark out a subject of inquiry, identify and reflect upon what you feel is the best method for exploring this subject, and to produce a final project and presentation that effectively engages a community of likewise committed thinkers. You will also be asked to take a great role in designing the course and mutually supporting one another in carrying out your individual projects.

In the first few meetings, we will use some sample texts to think through what possibilities and challenges aesthetic works offer us. What kinds of questions would we ask of these works? What sort of information would we want to seek, and how would go about doing so? What would our goals be in thinking critically about these works? What might our response to these works and questions look like? Subsequently, as a group we will divide into small working groups. The point of these groups is to provide a context and feedback for the 20 page papers (or their equivalent) and presentations that you will produce. Knowing your audience is key to knowing what you want to say and how you want to say it.

The groups will meet regularly on their own and with me, although the precise procedures of each group will be self-defined. Your first task will be draw up a syllabus for your group for the rest of the semester. What do you want to do and how do you want to do it? What do you expect from each other? After each group has met and decided these issues, you'll meet with me about once a week for the rest of the semester.

In weeks 12-14 the larger group will reconvene. Each student will decide on a format for sharing his or her work in a class setting (i.e. this is not the final presentation, but a final chance to share the process of producing the work, the questions raised, etc.). There will be a final public presentation of the projects at the end of the semester.

Your final project will be due during our scheduled Exam Period.

<b>Week/Day</b>	
Week 1 2/5	Introductions; Herman Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener" (I'll email you a Pdf copy)
Week 2 2/12	"Bartleby the Scrivener" cont.; Raymond Carver, from <i>What We Talk About When We Talk About Love</i> (Pdf)
Week 3 2/19	Carver, cont.; Rebecca Miller, <i>Angela</i> (available at circulation); W.G. Sebald, <i>The Rings of Saturn</i>
Week 4 2/26	Sebald, cont.; Project discussion; Preliminary project descriptions due Friday
Week 5 3/4	Small Group/individual Meetings: Group syllabi due
Week 6 3/11	Small Group/individual Meetings
Week 7 3/18	Small Group/individual Meetings
Week 8 3/25	Break
Week 9 4/1	Small Group Meetings; Formal Proposals due, 3-6 pp. including annotated bibliography
Week 10 4/8	Small Group/individual Meetings
Week 11 4/15	Small Group/individual Meetings
Week 12 4/22	Student run class
Week 13 4/29	Student run class
Week 14 5/6	Student run class
Week 15 5/13	Public Presentations
Exam Period	Final Project Due