ENG 492

ENG 492
SENIOR SEMINAR
Fall 2008  •  CRN # 30452
W 10:20-11:15  •  CH 0126
Dr. Alison Ganze
CH 132  •  MWF 2:15-3:15 & by appointment
745-5766  •  Alison.Ganze@wku.edu

REQUIRED TEXTS
Tracy Chevalier, *The Girl with a Pearl Earring*. Plume, 2005
Additional readings on handout

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Goals The Senior Seminar provides its students with an opportunity to synthesize what they have learned over the course of their degree. What do English literature majors study, how do they study it and why do they study it? The Senior Seminar also explores opportunities available to English majors beyond graduation. What specific abilities and interests do students develop through the formal study of literature? What possibilities are there to further develop and/or apply those interests and abilities after graduation?

Content and Scope The scope of this course is very broad. While it will present some new readings and assignments, it will also rely on students’ previous and current experiences as English majors. This course will ask students to revisit, reflect on, and in some cases revise materials and assignments from other English courses. The major project will be to assemble an “exit portfolio” of material that reflects each student’s understanding of the field of English, demonstrates his/her abilities and interests, and articulates his/her goals.

Methodologies Classroom activities will consist of the discussion of readings and the presentation of additional relevant material by the instructor and guest speakers. Students will be expected to actively contribute to these discussions and presentations and to take part in shaping the direction and emphasis of the course. Outside of class, students will be expected to produce some original writing and research (appropriate to a one credit hour course) and to assemble and revise materials for the exit portfolio.

COURSEWORK AND GRADING

Exit Portfolio (75%) The assignment sequence in this course uses writing and reflection to create a portrait of your time as an English major at WKU. It will allow you to express your personal interest in the study of literature, to present a sample of the formal assignments that you have completed in English classes, and to begin to look ahead to how you may make use of these interests and abilities in the future. The sequence will culminate in a final portfolio.

Participation and In-Class Work (25%) What we accomplish in class depends much upon what you each bring to it; if you come to class prepared only to absorb information, we will all quickly become bored and cranky. A good rule of thumb is make one pertinent comment or to ask one
pertinent question during each class meeting. Other guidelines for class discussion: stay focused on the issues, be polite concerning other students’ ideas, speak up so the class can hear, and address the class as a whole instead of the teacher or a single individual. Other class activities may include workshops, inclass writing assignments, and guest speakers. As part of the participation grade, all students will be required to submit a paper to the Undergraduate Literature Conference.

**COURSE POLICIES**

*Assignments* All assignments must be completed by the beginning of the designated class period. This policy covers all written work, assigned reading, and preparation of topics for discussion. If you must be absent or late, arrange for a classmate or friend to deliver your assignment on time. Late written work will lose 10% for each calendar day late.

*Accommodation* In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center, A-200. The phone number is 270-745-5004. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

*Attendance* What happens in class cannot be duplicated or summarized for you if you are not present, nor will you be allowed to make up in-class work. More than one absence from regular class meetings will negatively affect your final course grade—since we don’t meet often, each one is important.

*Plagiarism* Please read the attached handout concerning the Department of English’s definition of and policy on plagiarism. The penalty for the first occurrence will be a zero for the assignment. The penalty for more than one occurrence will be a zero for the course.

*Withdrawals* Withdrawing from classes is your responsibility. I cannot remove you from the class. If you do not officially withdraw from class through the registrar's office, I will turn in an F for your grade. The last day to withdraw from class is October 14.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments are due on the day they appear on the schedule. Any changes in the schedule will be announced in class and on Blackboard.

W8/27 Course introductions

W 9/3 Assignment due: Opening Survey: Why I became an English Major—a brief intellectual autobiography and reflection on the English major at WKU

W 9/10 Sample Literature Test and Discussion

W 9/17 Assignment due: The Discipline of English I: Scholarly Journal—an analysis of a current scholarly journal (literary or English education) of your choice as a manifestation of the discipline of English
W 9/24 Appiah, “The Case for Contamination” (handout)

W 10/1 Meet in Career Services Center, DUC room A-210

W 10/8 Assignment due: The Discipline of English II: What is the (an) English Major?—a short argumentative essay in which you critique the discipline of English based on your own experiences and on readings covered in class

W 10/15 Grad School Information (Dr. Reames and other guest speakers)

W 10/22 Assignment due: Short Paper with Reflection—choose a short (3-6 page) analytical/interpretive/critical paper that you have written for an English class. Make a clean copy of the paper and add a one-page reflection on how this represents your abilities and accomplishments as an English major Reading due: Orwell, “Politics and the English Language;” Nussbaum, “The Professor of Parody;” Butler, “Values of Difficulty;” Bauerlain, “Bad Writing's Back” (handout)

W 10/29 Reading due: Chevalier, *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* (pp. 1-120)

W 11/5 Reading due: *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* (pp. 120-240)

W 11/12 In-class writing: “On-Demand” Writing—a one-hour essay in response to Tracy Chevalier’s novel *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. This is designed to be the equivalent to an essay exam and to show your ability to compose “on the spot.” (Meet in CH 15)

W 11/19 Assignment due: Career or Graduate School Letter—a real or mock cover letter for a job or a real or mock statement of purpose for a graduate school. This should be a substantial effort to articulate your accomplishments, your abilities, and your goals. Reading due: TBA

W 11/26 Assignment due: Longer Research Paper with Revision and Reflection—choose a longer paper written for an English class that required at least six outside sources. Generate a fresh copy with any revisions you wish, then add a 1-2 page reflection on what you changed and, again, how this represents your abilities as an English major Reading due: TBA

W 12/3 Final Portfolio due—to include a brief introductory essay to the materials that will be in your final portfolio and the exit survey, a more detailed reflection on the English major at WKU as you experienced it