

Madness & Reason: The Literature of Spirit & Mind

ENG 352 English Seminar; Sec 70
Cedar Crest College
Spring 2010; Tues. 7-9:30 PM
Room: ALH 211; Format: Seminar

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King Lear and the Fool in the Storm (Act III, Sc. ii)
(Louis Boulanger, 1836)

"Poetry led me by the hand out of madness." --Anne Sexton

"Men have called me mad; but the question is not yet settled, whether madness is or is not the loftiest intelligence." --Edgar Allan Poe

"Language is the first and last structure of madness."
--Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*

Course Description: Stories provide us with a fundamental way of making sense of the world. (Some would say that stories are the only way to make sense of the world.) They provide us with a way of creating order out of disorder. Of sharing some understanding with others. Or of giving our existence some purpose. But skilled readers also see that even a well-crafted story contains disorders, ambiguities, and complexities that threaten to erupt at every word. This course is about those eruptions between order and disorder, about the struggles between madness and sanity, irrationality and reason, belief and evidence.

ENG 352 is the capstone experience of the English major, featuring semi-independent research and seminar discussion on a common literary concern. This means that the course is an opportunity for you to showcase the considerable interpretive skills you've developed over these past years as a reader—your knowledge of literary history, of differing ways of understanding language, and of producing scholarship that explains why literature is such a significant expression of what it means to be human.

Books & Resources: The below books can be purchased from the Campus Bookstore, but feel free to pick them up elsewhere. Used bookstores and online booksellers (e.g. www.alibris.com, www.betterworldbooks.com) often sell books at reduced prices.

William Shakespeare. *King Lear*. (1606) Norton Critical Edition. Grace Ioppolo, ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008.

Charles Brockden Brown. *Wieland; or, The Transformation: An American Tale*. (1798) Arlington, VA: The Invisible College Press, LLC, 2001.

Herman Melville. *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*. (1851) Norton Critical Edition. Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford, eds. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002.

Flannery O'Connor. *The Violent Bear It Away: A Novel*. (1960) New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

Margaret Atwood. *Oryx and Crake: A Novel*. (2003) New York: Anchor Books, 2003.

In addition to these books, the class will be selecting two additional texts that we'll determine by voting on proposals from you and your classmates. These additional books should be chosen because either 1) they fit especially well with our discussion of the "madness and reason" theme, or 2) they're works we feel compelled to study as part of an English degree. Be prepared to obtain copies of these two books by early March.

You'll also want access to the course's eCollege (.Next) companion website, which will have digital copies of the syllabus, schedule, assignments, and handouts. We'll also be using the eCollege site's message boards to propose discussion questions on given readings. The site is accessed at: www.cedarcrestonline.net. To login, you'll need a user ID and password issued to you from the Cedar Crest Registrar's Office, typically sent to your Cedar Crest email account.

Your writing for the course should follow the MLA format, so you'll want to have access to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* or a manual that covers the MLA style. An online companion to Diana Hacker's *Research and Documentation in the Electronic Age*, which covers the MLA and research in the Humanities, is available at: www.dianahacker.com/resdoc. See also my "Guidelines for Writing about Literature and Film."

Honor Philosophy: The Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy states that students shall uphold community standards for academic and social behavior to preserve a learning environment dedicated to personal and academic excellence. It is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

Classroom Behavior and Protocol: From one week to another, you'll be expected to share your understandings of the literature we'll be reading together. By sharing each of our interpretations, we'll develop a more refined and broadly considered understanding of these works. But a discussion—like any conversation worth having—requires both talking and listening. So, I ask that we treat each other's contributions with their deserved respect, consider one another's interpretations with an open mind, and not attempt to impose a particular point of view on our classmates. You should argue for a particular interpretation to which you're committed, but do so with an openness to other ideas and a respect for disagreement.

Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations, and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction or otherwise compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education.

As we live in an age of increasing technological diversion—the call of cell phones, the click of mice, ringing in our ear—it becomes easy to forget the good manners of paying attention to those immediately around us. Please remember to silence cell phones before class begins (a vibrate setting is appropriate for emergencies). Also, refrain from checking your email or any wayward browsing of the internet during class time.

Attendance: Simply put, you must attend class. An accumulation of absences will lower your course participation grade. If you miss more than three meetings, you should reconsider whether or not you can uphold your commitment to the class. If matters crop up during the semester that keep you from attending class—and if you're having problems with the course for whatever reason—please don't hesitate to speak with me.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: Incumbent from the Honor Code, academic integrity and ethical behavior provide the foundations of the Cedar Crest scholarly community and the basis for our learning environment. Cedar Crest College expects students to set a high standard for themselves to be personally and intellectually honest and to ensure that other students do the same. This standard applies to all academic work (oral, written, or visual) completed as part of a Cedar Crest education.

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's ideas or words and passing them off as your own without giving credit to the original source. Since a key goal of a college education is to develop and express your own ideas, plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense.

It is dishonest to present oral or written work that is not entirely your own, except as may be approved by the instructor, and you must follow the requirements of the instructor regarding when and how much collaboration with other students is permitted. Any language taken from another source, whether individual words or entire paragraphs, must be placed in quotation marks and attributed to the source, following the MLA format. Paraphrased material from a source must also be attributed. In addition, if you are indebted to another source for a specific perspective or a line of argument—regardless of whether or not you've directly quoted the source—that debt must be acknowledged.

In this class, the penalty for plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct is a grade of F either on the individual assignment or for the entire course, to be determined by the instructor based upon the severity of the offense. All cases of academic misconduct will be kept on record with Cedar Crest College's Provost Office.

Course Objectives: ENG 352 seeks to help students acquire the ability to read and critically analyze works of literature, to acquire a general knowledge of the history of literature in English, and to expand their knowledge and appreciation of their own and others' cultures and historical moments expressed in writing. ENG 352 also seeks to develop students' oral and written communication skills.

As a capstone experience, ENG 352 seeks to provide students with the opportunity to synthesize these skills as an accumulating point of their literary studies.

Course Outcomes: Upon successful completion of ENG 352, students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of a range of significant literary works concerned with the themes of madness and reason. Students will also be able to demonstrate their understanding of the production and content of such work, their historical and social contexts, and the possibilities for their interpretation and critical understanding. In addition, students will demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge of literary terminology and theoretical approaches to the study of literature to assist their analyses of the assigned texts. They will, further, demonstrate their competency to convey their insights through both speaking and writing. Finally, the course will provide students with the opportunity to reflect upon the value of literary study beyond the classroom and their own professional skills as English majors.

Assessment of Course Outcomes: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the content and interpretive contexts of the assigned literature, as well as literary terminology and theory, through participating in and leading seminar discussions, oral presentations of literary biography or scholarly criticism on assigned authors, analytical papers, and seminar papers requiring substantial research and careful textual analysis.

Class Cancellation: If Cedar Crest's campus is open, you should expect our class meetings to be held. If troublesome weather threatens to close the campus and thus cancel class, you should refer to Cedar Crest's Inclement Weather Hotline at 610-606-4629 for notification. Of course, you should always use common sense and place your safety first when determining whether or not it's appropriate for you to drive to campus under such conditions. If I cancel class independently of the campus closing, due to weather or for other reasons, I will send a class-wide email to your Cedar Crest account and (if possible) place an outgoing message on my office voicemail (x3474).

College Policy Regarding Learning Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with me during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact Academic Services.

Assignment Format: All formal out-of-class assignments must be typewritten, stapled, and double-spaced with a 12-pt Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. Syntactically correct American English should be used. You don't need a cover page or fancy binder, but be certain to include your name, our class information, and a descriptive title on the first page. Digital submissions to the course website must be in either MSWord (*.doc/*.docx) or Rich Text Format (*.rtf).

Assignment Submissions, Deadlines, and Lateness: Out-of-class assignments must be submitted to me both in print form and to our course website in digital form under the appropriate "Dropbox" basket (www.cedarcrestonline.net). Be certain that your digital files are in either MSWord (*.doc/*.docx) or RTF (*.rtf) document. (You may also submit assignments in those formats via email (rawilson@cedarcrest.edu) as an attached file in those formats.) Please do not send assignments in a different format (WordPerfect, etc.): most word processing programs allow you to save files as either Word or RTF documents. OpenOffice (www.openoffice.org) provides word-processing software available for free download.

Since it's important to work with deadlines and fairest to your classmates to maintain consistent due dates, assignments are due for the dates specified on the course schedule. Assignments submitted late may be reduced one letter grade (e.g. B to B-) for each 24-hour period after the due date. Individual assignment extensions may be granted for extenuating circumstances (personal or family crisis, serious illness, roommate problems, etc.), but should be requested as soon as possible. Computer problems are not appropriate excuses for extensions or lateness.

Assignments: Here are the assignments you'll be expected to complete as part of our seminar. Additional directions will be handed out regarding the résumé, cover letters, and the group leading of discussion.

Literary Autobiography (3 pages minimum): (5% of final grade) Write a brief literary autobiography that defines who you are as a reader. Use some of these questions as starting points: How did you become an English major (or co-major or minor) at Cedar Crest? Why do you read? What do you want out of reading? What does reading give you as a person that you wouldn't otherwise have? What are the three most important literary works that you've read? What are three literary works that you haven't yet read but you feel are important to get to? Do you have a philosophy about reading? Is reading (and writing) an essential part of who you have been? Who you are now? Who you will be? (Don't feel compelled to answer all of these questions in turn. This is a literary autobiography: you were born on a Friday, at twelve-o'clock at night. You live. You read. Why?)

Résumé & Cover Letter: (5% of final grade) An important part of your experience as an English major is how you value and represent yourself professionally. We'll conduct a professionalism workshop during class, covering how to represent your skills to an employer, the types of careers open to you, and how to look for jobs and internships. Bring your résumé (1-2 pages) and a cover letter (1 page, business letter format) for an internship, an entry-level opening, or a graduate school application.

Oral Presentation: (20 minutes) (10% of final grade) You'll give an oral presentation of 20 minutes on one of the assigned works this semester. Your focus will be either on an article concerning the author's biography or on a scholarly article's interpretation of the work. Possible biographical and scholarly articles are indicated on the syllabus, and you should answer the following questions for the appropriate category.

Biographical Presentation: What events in the author's life have shaped his or her writing? What other works has the author produced? How do you see the work we're reading fitting in with those other works (following with or diverging from character types or themes)?

Scholarly Presentation: What are the article's central claims about the work? What passages does the article interpret to demonstrate competing views of the work? In what ways do you share or disagree with the articles claims?

Analytical Paper: (4-6 pages, not including "Works Cited" page) (10% of final grade) For one of works we've studied as part of the first half of the semester, select two or three passages and explain how they relate to the rest of the text. Your topic should come from our readings and discussion.

Leading of Class Discussion: (Full class period, as group) (20% of final grade) You and a group of your classmates will propose a number of books that relate to the theme of madness and reason, are essential to study as part of an English degree, or both. From that list, the class will vote to select one book to study. On the nights that we discuss the book, your group will be responsible for leading our class discussion on either the first or second half of the book. Guidelines for leading discussion will be distributed as we decide on what books to read.

Discussion Questions & Seminar Participation: (10% of final grade) A seminar is a course where advanced students present their own ideas and ask informed questions alongside the instructor. For each night we have a reading due, you'll post one question to a discussion board on our course website (www.cedarcrestonline.net). These questions will be an important part of our nightly agendas. Questions should be in the form of 1) identifying a passage within the text we're reading via a brief quotation and page or line citation and 2) raising a sincere and open-ended question (or two) likely to draw a variety of answers.

For instance: Bees are a repeated image in Anne Sexton's poetry, as in "Said the Poet to the Analyst," where she writes, "words were counted like dead bees in the attic" (4). What does the simile mean here? Do her uses of the "bee" motif in other places mean something similar or different?

And since questions unanswered do not a thoughtful conversation make, you'll also be evaluated on your nightly contributions to our discussion. Below are the criteria by which those contributions will be evaluated.

Evaluation of Course Participation	
Grade	Criteria
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consistently raises thoughtful questions and proposes original ideas based upon course texts and concepts. Makes substantive connections, criticisms, and interpretations between multiple texts. Goes beyond those interpretations presented in lectures and readings. ○ Regularly cites specific textual evidence (passages from the readings, scenes from a film, etc.). When offering reader-response to a text or drawing upon personal experience or anecdotal evidence, regularly bases those reactions in a clear understanding of how textual language and images operate. ○ Regularly engaged in discussion with professor and classmates, and responds constructively to questions and alternative interpretations. Maintains consistent participation throughout the semester. ○ Demonstrates excellent understanding of course texts and concepts.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequently contributes to discussion with relevant points and questions drawn from course texts and concepts. ○ Tends to cite specific textual evidence. May rely upon reader-response to a text, personal experience, or anecdotal evidence with a vague understanding of how textual language and images operate. ○ Listens attentively to discussion with professor and classmates, and responds to questions and alternative interpretations. Maintains regular participation throughout the semester. ○ Demonstrates good understanding of course texts and concepts.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infrequently contributes to discussion except when called upon, but contributions demonstrate familiarity with essential course texts and concepts. ○ Occasionally cites textual evidence. Relies heavily upon unqualified reader-response to a text, personal experience, or anecdotal evidence without reference to how textual language and images operate. ○ Listens to discussion with professor and classmates, but does not respond to questions or alternative interpretations. Participation variable throughout the semester. ○ Demonstrates competent understanding of course texts and concepts.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rarely contributes to class discussion except when called upon and contributions are off-topic and do not reference course texts and concepts. ○ Does not cite textual evidence. Relies almost exclusively upon unqualified reader-response to a text, personal experience, or anecdotal evidence without reference to how textual language and images operate. ○ Absent from several classes. ○ Demonstrates unsatisfactory understanding of course texts and concepts.
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fails to contribute to class discussion. ○ Absent from multiple classes. ○ Demonstrates negligible understanding of course texts and concepts.

Annotated Bibliography (at least 6 scholarly sources in addition to your primary texts) (5% of final grade) Your seminar paper (described below) must incorporate into its claims at least six scholarly sources (published by peer-

reviewed presses) on either the authors or the specific books about which you're writing. You should evaluate these sources in a critical bibliography with annotations one paragraph (3 or 4 sentences) long for each entry.

Seminar Paper: (10-12 pages, not including "Works Cited" page) (30% of final grade) Your major project for our course will be a 10-12 page scholarly paper where you make an interpretive argument about one or two (but no more) of the books we have studied this semester. Since ENG 352 features semi-independent research, you'll propose your own topic in a 1-page proposal partway through the semester and design your argument from there. Your interpretive argument must incorporate what other scholars have written about the author or texts you've chosen with substantial reference in the body of your paper to at least six scholarly sources. You'll evaluate these scholarly sources in an annotated bibliography described above and submitted beforehand, but also revised and included with your final paper.

Seminar Paper Presentation: (10 minutes) (5% of final grade) During the finals period meeting, you'll give a 10-minute presentation of your seminar paper. You should offer an overview of your topic, your central claims about the works, and a passage or two to illustrate those claims.

Final Grade:

Points	Assignment	Grades for the course will be issued according to the following percentages:	
___/50	Literary Autobiography	94-100%	A
___/50	Résumé & Cover Letter	90-93.99%	A-
___/100	Oral Presentation	87-89.99%	B+
___/100	Analytical Paper	84-86.99%	B
___/200	Leading of Class Discussion	80-83.99%	B-
___/100	Discussion Questions & Seminar Participation	77-79.99%	C+
___/50	Annotated Bibliography	74-76.99%	C
___/300	Seminar Paper	70-73.99%	C-
___/50	Seminar Paper Presentation	67-69.99%	D+
___/1000	Final Grade	60-66.99%	D
		0-59.99%	F

ENG 352: Spring 2010 Schedule

Date	Reading & Assignments Due
1/19, T	Edgar Allan Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart" Emily Dickinson, "Much Madness Is Divinest Sense" and "A little Madness in the Spring" Anne Sexton, assorted poems from <i>To Bedlam and Part Way Back</i> (1960), including "Noon Walk on the Asylum Lawn," "Venus and the Ark," "Said the Poet to the Analyst," "You, Doctor Martin," "Music Swims Back to Me," "Ringing the Bells," and "The Double Image"
1/26, T	Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter" Edgar Allan Poe, "Genius and Madness," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Purloined Letter," and "The Pit and the Pendulum" _____ Biographical Presentation on Poe (Antebellum Writers in the South, Second Series, <i>Dictionary of Literary Biography</i> , Vol. 248) _____ Scholarly Presentation (Mark Keller, "Dupin in the 'Rue Morgue': Another Form of Madness?" <i>Arizona Quarterly</i> 33 (1977), pp. 249-255) Assignment Due: Literary Biography <i>Senior Portfolio:</i> For graduating seniors, your Writing Portfolio , a requirement for the degree, is due to Lydia Orban in 119 Hartzel Hall by Friday, 1/29/10. (Please refer to the <i>Guide to the English Program</i> for the contents of your portfolio, which depends upon the concentration of the major that you're completing.) For secondary-education majors taking the course in your junior year, don't forget to satisfy this requirement during the spring semester just prior to when you plan to graduate.
2/2, T	William Shakespeare, <i>King Lear</i> (pp. 1-115 and "Primary Sources" pp. 137-159) _____ Biographical Presentation (Elizabethan Dramatists,

	<p><i>Dictionary of Literary Biography</i>, Vol. 62)</p> <p>_____ Scholarly Presentation: (Kenneth Muir, "Madness in <i>King Lear</i>," <i>Shakespeare Survey</i> 13 (1966), pp. 30-40)</p>
2/9, T	<p>Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland: Or the Transformation</i> (through Ch. CIV, pp. 7-159)</p> <p>_____ Biographical Presentation (American Literary Critics and Scholars, 1800-1850. <i>Dictionary of Literary Biography</i> Vol. 59.)</p> <p>Graduation Application Deadline: 1/15/10 is the deadline to apply for May graduation.</p>
2/16, T	<p>Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland: Or the Transformation</i> (finish novel, pp. 160-282)</p> <p>_____ Scholarly Presentation (James R. Russo, "'The Chimeras of the Brain': Clara's Narrative in <i>Wieland</i>," <i>Early American Literature</i> 16.1 (Spring, 1981), pp. 60-88)</p> <p>Assignment Due: Resumé and Cover Letter, Professionalism Workshop</p>
2/23, T	<p>Herman Melville, <i>Moby-Dick</i> (through Ch. 54, "The Town-Ho's Story," pp. 1-214)</p> <p>_____ Biographical Presentation (Antebellum Writers in New York: Second Series, <i>Dictionary of Literary Biography</i>, Vol. 250)</p>
3/2, T	<p>Herman Melville, <i>Moby-Dick</i> (finish novel, pp. 214-427)</p> <p>_____ Scholarly Presentation (Michael Vannoy Adams, "Madness and Right Reason, Extremes of One: The Shadow Archetype in <i>Moby-Dick</i>," <i>New Interpretations of American Literature</i>, Bucknell UP, 1988. pp. 97-109)</p>
3/9, T	No Class: Spring Break
3/16, T	<p>Class Reading Choice #1</p> <p>Assignment Due: Analytical Paper (4-6 pages)</p>
3/23, T	Class Reading Choice #1
3/30, T	<p>Flannery O'Connor, <i>The Violent Bear It Away</i> (Complete novel, pp. 1-243)</p> <p>_____ Biographical Presentation (American Novelists Since World War II: Fourth Series. <i>Dictionary of Literary Biography</i> Vol. 152)</p> <p>_____ Scholarly Presentation (Jane C Keller, "The Figures of the Empiricist and the Rationalist in the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor," <i>Arizona Quarterly</i> 28 (1972) pp. 263-73)</p>
4/6, T	No Class: Follow your typical Monday schedule on this Gregorian-calendar Tuesday.
4/13, T	<p>Class Reading Choice #2</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Today at 4PM is the deadline to apply for course withdrawal.</p> <p>Assignment Due: 1-Page Proposal for Seminar Paper</p>
4/20, T	Class Reading Choice #2
4/27, T	<p>Margaret Atwood, <i>Oryx and Crake</i> (2003) (Sections 1-8, pp. 1-218)</p> <p>_____ Biographical Presentation (<i>Contemporary Authors Online</i> 2009 & Canadian Fantasy and Science-Fiction Writers <i>Dictionary of Literary Biography</i> Vol. 251)</p> <p>Assignment Due: Annotated Bibliography</p>
5/4, T	<p>Margaret Atwood, <i>Oryx and Crake</i> (2003) (Section 9 through the end, pp. 219-374)</p> <p>_____ Scholarly Presentation (Margaret Atwood, "<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> and <i>Oryx and Crake</i> in Context" <i>PMLA</i> 119.3 (May 2004), pp. 512-517)</p> <p>_____ Scholarly Presentation (Earl G. Ingersoll, "Survival in Margaret Atwood's Novel <i>Oryx and Crake</i>" <i>Extrapolation</i> 45.2 (Summer 2004), pp. 162-175)</p>
Finals Week	Assignment Due: Seminar Paper (10-12 pages) & Presentation (10 mins.) If you would like your final work returned to you over the summer, provide a Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope with your assignment.