CORE UA 400 (Section 30): Foundations of Contemporary Culture (Texts and Ideas)  Fall 2017

“Making Sense of Doubles and Masks”

Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:45  Cantor Room 101

Professor Judith Miller  
13-19 University Place, Room 619  2-9505  
Office Hours: Thursday 2:00-5:00

Preceptors: Aubrey Korneta, Gabriella Lindsay, Claire Reising
(sections 31, 32) Gabriella Lindsay  
Office hours: 4-5 Thursday or by appointment, 13-19 University Place

(sections 33, 34) Claire Reising  
Office hours: 12:30-2:30 Wed., 13-19 University Place

(sections 35, 36, 37) Aubrey Korneta  
Office hours: 2:00-4:00 Tues., 13-19 University Place

Discussion Meeting Times:
Section 31: Friday 8:00-9:15 Room: 12 Waverley Place, Room L114
Section 32: Friday 9:30-10:45 Room: BOBST LL146

Section 33: Friday 8:00-9:15 Room: 25 W 4th Street C18
Section 34: Friday 9:30-10:45 Room: 45 W 4th Street B04

Section 35: Friday 11:00-12:15 Room: 45 W 4th Street B07
Section 36: Friday 2:00-3:15 Room: Waverly 570
Section 37: Friday 3:30-4:45 Room: Waverly 570

The mask hides; the mask exposes; the mask denaturalizes; the mask compensates; the mask approaches the truth. Masking is a complex phenomenon. The double reveals and conceals, distorts, and foregrounds. Doubling allows us to see our multiple selves.

Description: Among the more significant activities of human beings is that of giving shape to fears and desires through art. All cultures participate in this form of emotional exteriorization, including creating through myth and literature “doubles” and through sculpting in textures and words various types of “masks.” In this CORE course, we will concentrate on doubles and masks in several different cultures. We will see that there has been a movement through time, particularly in what we call the West, to understand doubles and masks through the lens of psychology rather than metaphysics. After looking at an exemplary African mask, we will chart the meaning and impact of the archetypal masked figures of the commedia dell’arte in French and Italian theatre; the explosion of the “carnivalesque” in South American magical realism; the obsessive concern with the grotesque (the monstrous mask) in French romanticism and Victorian novels; the possible role of animal doubles in fairy tales; and aspects of zombification and ghostly doubles in North American literature and ethnographic film. We will build a repertory of approaches to interpreting and uncovering the layers of masking and doubling by engaging with readings in anthropology, psychoanalysis, and literary theory (Bakhtin, Freud, Bettleheim, Morrison, Caruth). While being interested in the masks and doubles “peopling” cultures today, we will stay especially alert to the different ways in which human beings, and especially creative artists at various points in time, have used masks and doubles to portray their cultures and their histories.
Course goals:
-To create a community of thinkers open to various cultural forms that human imagination has created to express what it means to be human
-To delve into both Western and non-Western approaches to doubles and masks in order to see similarities and differences in “instrumentalizing” and understanding these forms
-To advance skills in analytical writing, in critical thinking, and in oral expression and presentation

What is the underlying philosophy of Texts and Ideas?
Texts and Ideas should enhance your understanding and appreciation of what it means to be engaged in a humanistic endeavor: that is attending through intellectual work and dignified discussion to the values and needs of human beings, assessing the mind’s ability to grasp, analyze, and represent such needs and values. Fundamental to a liberal arts education, Texts and Ideas helps launch your training as a holistic thinker, able to bring insights and creativity from the course to projects in other disciplines. Your encounters with literary and critical works that have helped shape our world will also help situate how ideas, which orient everything we do, have been debated, developed, appropriated, or rejected. Your future lives will be determined by your ability to ponder and weigh such ideas.

Work required and Grading:
- Regular attendance at all lectures and in the smaller discussion sections; active participation in discussions in the latter; coming prepared to every class 20%
- Four critical papers based on the readings (typed) 40%
- Five commentaries (one page) on the creative or critical work under study 10%
- A mid-term exam (in class, the questions will be distributed ahead of time) 10%
- A final exam (take home, due on the exam date) 20%

N.B. Attendance will be taken; and your grade will suffer if you cut more than three times. (This total includes attendance at lectures and discussion sections.) Specifically, your grade for participation will be lowered by one grade each time you miss, after three absences. You are also expected to come on time.

Some clarifications of process:
- Open laptops (ipads, etc.) and cell phone use will not be permitted during lectures or discussions. You are expected to take notes by hand and to listen carefully. You must also bring your texts to class. (The exception to laptop use will be when materials being discussed are on “NYU Classes.” Laptops may also be used when approved as an accommodation certified by the Moses Center for students with disabilities.)
-You should read materials in advance of the lecture, so as to be best prepared to engage with the questions and issues that are raised.

-Questions and/or information sheets to orient discussions of material will be distributed before the lecture for that or the next week’s work. You will be expected to have worked on mastering the material on these sheets, but you will not be asked to turn them in.

-Commentaries consist of a short discussion of a major idea or textual element. They will be graded as excellent, adequate, not adequate and your collected commentaries will convert to a grade.

-Critical papers consist of your measured and thoughtful engagement with questions, based on the material read, posed by the professor (cf. weekly program). Should you wish to substitute a relevant question of your own making, you may do so after consultation with the professor and or your discussion leader.

-Commentaries and Critical papers will be turned into the preceptor of the discussion section. They are to be well organized, with topic sentences and full paragraphs. Preceptors may require you to rewrite and/or reorganize your paper.

-We will allow you two 24-hour lateness windows to hand in a paper, counting from class to class. Please alert your preceptor if you plan to use this window. We urge you, however, to hand in your papers on the due date. Late papers will be penalized by lowering the grade.

-Please be sure to put your name and the name of your preceptor and the number of your discussion section on everything you hand in.

-Absence from class, lateness due to illness or other personal difficulties will be excused, but must be supported by relevant documentation. If you must miss lecture or discussion section (religious holiday, family emergency, severe illness) and are able to inform your preceptor ahead of time, please do so by email. And for any email you write, please be sure to give your full name, your section number, and a coherent message.

-We may schedule some class activities (cinema, theatre) related to the course. These will be optional, but can certainly enhance your understanding of the material and will garner you extra credit.

**Academic integrity statement:**
Plagiarism (copying without citing the source of someone else’s research, analyses, published thoughts) is a very serious offense. It will result in an F and might jeopardize your career as a student at NYU. To better understand what plagiarism means and why it equates, in fact, to stealing ideas, please read: http://core.cas.nyu.edu/docs/CP/4321/Academicintegrity.pdf : Statement on Academic Integrity and Academic Guidelines.

**How to find academic and other help:**
**The Writing Center:** Located on 411 Lafayette Street, the Writing Center offers individual consultations sessions on strategies for better writing for all NYU
Students (by appointment only). 1 212 998 8866;  www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html

The College Learning Center: This center provides tutoring, academic skills workshops and help with specific classes, paper writing, study skills, as well as review for exams. All sessions are offered on a walk-in basis and feature tutoring by experienced upper-level students. 1 212 998 8085  www.nyu.edu/cas/clc

The Wellness Exchange: Professionals can help you deal with personal and health-related issues. 1 212 443-9999 (24/7 confidential calls)  www.nyu.edu/999

Required Texts (in order of study):

Required Films (in order of viewing):
Delannoy, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1956)
Jean Cocteau, *La Belle et la Bête* (*Beauty and the Beast*) (1946)
Disney, *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

*All books can be purchased the The University Bookstore, 726 Broadway.
*Films can be accessed through YouTube or be seen at Bobst Library in the Avery Fisher Collection.

*Secondary and other materials will be found on “NYU Classes,” notably texts by Bakhtin, Bettleheim, Madame le Prince de Beaumont, Freud, Morrison, and Caruth (see weekly program).
Weekly Schedule (Tuesday and Thursday lectures)-- and Work (**) to be handed in on Friday to your discussion section preceptor:

Sept. 5: Introduction to the CORE, to the course and thus to each other, and to questions of masking and doubles (The African mask and Commedia dell’arte)

Unit I: Psychosocial Reasons for Masking
Sept. 7: *Bakhtin : Rabelais and His World (on NYU Classes)

Sept. 8 **One-page commentary (1) on the meaning of Carnival according to Bakhtin.

Sept. 12: Goldoni, The Servant of Two Masters

Sept. 14: Charlie Chaplin, Modern Times

Sept. 15: **Paper 1: Four paragraphs on a mask or a double that intrigues you and why (e.g. commedia dell’arte figures, the masks for comedy and tragedy, the vampire, the zombie, the devil, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, a super hero, the mermaid, animal doubles, any figure from popular culture, etc.) 5%

(Short meetings with the Professor in her office during the first two weeks.)

Sept. 19: Molière, The Imaginary Invalid

Unit II: All is Carnival
Sept. 21: Marquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude (pp.1-101)

Sept. 22: **Paper 2: Three pages on the evolution of the Harlequin figure; from an analysis of Goldoni’s more traditional interpretation to a discussion of how Molière’s psychological tweaking has changed the Harlequin figure. (10%)}

Sept. 26: Marquez, pp. 103-201

Sept. 28: Marquez, pp. 203-313

Sept. 29: To think about: Why gypsies in Marquez? What do they stand for?

Oct. 3: Marquez, pp. 313-417

Unit III: Romanticism: The Grotesque and the Sublime Self Emerge
Oct. 5: Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris* (Books 1 and 2)

Oct. 6: **One-page commentary (2) on the carnivalesque aspects of the first part of Hugo.**


Oct. 12: Hugo, Books (Books 6-8)

Oct. 13: **Paper 3: Follow one set of characters in Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and show how doubling functions through them. What is the thematic meaning, the philosophical significance of this doubling?** (Four to five pages) 10%

Oct. 17: Hugo (Books 9-11); Disney, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

Oct. 19: *Freud, The Uncanny* (on NYU Classes); Delannoy, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

Oct. 20: To think about: the appropriateness of the ending of the Hugo novel. How is this ending different from the ending of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*? And from the two films of the novel?

Oct. 24: Shelley, *Frankenstein*, pp. 5-146

Oct. 26: Shelley, *Frankenstein*, pp. 147-265

Oct. 27: **One-page commentary (3) on what is monstrous in this novel. Be sure to define monster and monstrous.**

Oct. 31: Jean Rouch, *Les Maîtres Fous*

Nov. 2: Mid-Term Exam

Nov. 3: **One-page commentary (4) on the uncanny doubles in the Rouch film.**

*Unit IV: The Animal Double*

Nov. 7: *Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment; Madame le Prince de Beaumont, Beauty and the Beast* (on NYU Classes)
Nov. 9: *La Belle et la Bête (Beauty and the Beast), Jean Cocteau*

Nov. 10: To think about: anthropomorphism and the uncanny in Cocteau

*Unit V: Ghosts and Doubles Collide in Consciousness*

Nov. 14: *Toni Morrison, Playing the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (on NYU Classes)

Nov. 16: *Cathy Caruth, on trauma theory: Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (on NYU Classes)

Nov. 17: ** Paper 4: Watch Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast*; Fashion a comparative analysis of Cocteau’s version and Disney’s version using insights from Bettleheim and from other psychoanalytic critics we have read. (Five to six pages) 15 %

Nov. 21: Morrison, *Beloved*, pp. 3-100

Thanksgiving break

Nov. 28: Morrison, *Beloved*, pp. 100-200

Nov. 30: Morrison, *Beloved*, pp. 201 to the end

Dec. 1: **One-page commentary (5) on resonances of Caruth in Morrison.

Dec. 5: Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*

Dec. 7: Mouawad, *Scorched*

Dec. 8: To think about: “Who” is Oedipus in *Scorched?* How is the Oedipus character deployed?

Dec. 14: Mouawad, *Scorched*

Dec. 15: Wrap-up of Course

**Final Exam: take-home, to be turned in on scheduled finals date**