**Liberal Studies 420, “Transitions: A Faculty/Student-Guided Seminar”**

**Spring Semester 2013, Period A5, MWF 12:10-1:00 p.m.**

**Hendrix-Murphy Building Seminar Room**

“Transitions” extends the paths students began with "Journeys" and "Explorations” courses in their first semester. This senior- and junior-level course anticipates the transition from college to careers demanding intellectual leadership as well as a lifetime of self-education and growth.

As a culminating educational experience, “Transitions” is also an enjoyable and stimulating exercise of skills acquired at Hendrix College. Four faculty members and up to sixteen students with majors in any field read, study, discuss, and write about several literary works of fiction and non-fiction.

Four units of works will be presented. Each faculty member will lead a unit, present one or more works, and mentor a group of students in leading an additional related work chosen by the class. Students will also write papers for the units. The course offers significant opportunities for collaboration and reflection.

Successful completion of “Transitions” grants a Special Projects (SP) Odyssey credit and a Literary Studies (LS) learning domain. Credit for Writing-Level II (W2) may be granted upon request.

**Selected Works**

The following are the required editions and may be purchased from the Hendrix College Bookstore.

**Introduction:**

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” (available online at the Electronic

Text Center, University of Virginia Library)

Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*, Picador paperback,

ISBN-13: 978-0-312-42013-0

**Section 1:**

**Mark Sutherland** (Biology, DWReynolds 330, 450-1217)

Sheila M. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death: Tuberculosis and the Social*

*Experience of Illness in American History*, Johns Hopkins University Press paperback,

ISBN-13: 978-0801851865

**Student Group 1**

Atul Gawande, *Complications: A Surgeon’s Notes on an Imperfect Science*, Picador

paperback, ISBN-13: 978-0-312-42170-0

**Section 2:**

**Kim Maslin** (Politics, Mills 231, 450-3887)

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, Harvest paperback, ISBN-13: 978-0-15-603035-9

**Student Group 2**

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, Scribner paperback, ISBN-13: 978-0-684-

80154-4

**Section 3:**

**Alex Vernon** (English, American Studies, Fausett office #10, 450-1258)

Kevin Brockmeier, *The Illumination*, Vintage paperback, ISBN-13: 978-0-307-38777-6

**Student Group 3**

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, Vintage paperback, ISBN-13: 978-1-4000-7877-6

**Section 4:**

**Carol West** (English, Africana Studies, Fausett office #8, 450-1240)

Donald Hall, *The Best Day the Worst Day: Life with Jane Kenyon*, Mariner Books

paperback, ISBN-13: 978-0-618-77362-6

**Student Group 4**

Sherwin B. Nuland, *How We Die*, Vintage paperback, ISBN-13: 978-0-679-74244-9

**Course Responsibilities**

**Student-Presented Works**

Four teams of students will each present and teach works selected by the class. Each team will have a faculty mentor and will be responsible for leading class discussion. The works will follow the Hendrix-Murphy Foundation 2012-2013 theme of “Literature and Medicine.”

**Essays**

Students will write four (4) essays, each typically five to seven pages long. Please use standard 1" margins, 12 point Times New Roman font, and double-spacing. The requirements of each essay will be stipulated by the faculty member primarily responsible for that segment of the course. Essays will be read by the faculty member, graded, and returned to students. All essays must be turned in to pass the course.

Common expectations for the essays include:

1. clarity of writing
2. effective organization
3. strong thesis statement
4. solid, relevant support
5. addressing the prompt and not merely surveying the works
6. true comparisons between works indicating how the works speak to each other
7. few problems with lower order concerns (grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.)

No formal writing style (e.g., MLA, APA) is required, but students should be consistent in the use of the one style they select, paying particular attention to the citation of sources consulted and referenced in their writing.

Essays are typically due a few days after the last class on each work (specific dates are indicated below). **Extensions are anticipated only in extreme situations and must be approved by the faculty member in advance.** Essays submitted late will be penalized 5 points per calendar day late.

Students seeking Writing Level Two credit must revise and resubmit one of their essays for regrading. It must be turned in to the appropriate faculty member no later than 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7. The final grade for the essay will be an average of the original essay’s grade and the revised essay’s grade.

**Class Participation and Attendance**

This is a seminar; therefore, class participation is expected and will carry significant weight in the determination of grades. The quality and frequency of individual contributions to group discussions will be considered in evaluating student understanding, analysis, and integration of the selected works.

Regular class attendance is expected. Because “Transitions” is a highly collaborative course, quality group discussions are dependent upon the active presence of members of this seminar. If you must miss a session of “Transitions,” be sure to alert at least two of the faculty members well in advance of the course meeting. Unexcused absences will be reflected in participation grades.

**Grades**

Course grades will be calculated in the following manner:

Essays: All four essays are required (15% each).............................…...…60%

Class participation and attendance...………………………………………….25%

Student presentations...............................………………………………...….15%

**Essay Deadlines**

TOPIC DUE DATE PRESENTER

Rothman/Gawande Mon., Feb. 18th Dr. Sutherland

Woolf/Fitzgerald Mon., Mar. 11th Dr. Maslin

Brockmeier/Ishiguro Mon., Apr. 9th Dr. Vernon

Hall/Nuland Mon., Apr. 29th Dr. West

TRANSITIONS MEETING SCHEDULE

SPRING 2013

Wed., Jan. 16th: Introduction to the course

Fri., Jan. 18th: Group discussion: Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper”

Mon., Jan. 21st: No class: MLK Birthday

Wed., Jan. 23rd: Group discussion: Sontag’s Illness as Metaphor (pages 3-87)

Fri., Jan. 25th: Group discussion: Sontag’s AIDS and Its Metaphors (pages 92-183)

Mon., Jan. 28th: Unit One: Rothman’s Living in the Shadow of Death (Dr. Mark Sutherland)

(The Invalid Experience: pages 13-74)

Wed., Jan. 30th: Living in the Shadow of Death (The Female Invalid: pages 77-127)

Fri., Feb. 1st: Living in the Shadow of Death (Health Seekers in the West: pages 131-175)

Mon., Feb. 4th: Living in the Shadow of Death (Becoming a Patient: pages 179-252)

Wed., Feb. 6th: Gawande’s Complications (Koonce, Cariker, Urbanowicz)

Fri., Feb. 8th: Complications

Mon., Feb. 11th: Complications

Wed., Feb. 13th: Complications

Fri., Feb. 15th: Writing Day

Mon., Feb. 18th: Unit Two: Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway (Dr. Kim Maslin) (Unit One Paper due) (pages 1-

47)

Wed., Feb. 20th: Mrs. Dalloway (pages 47-91)

Fri., Feb. 22nd: Mrs. Dalloway (pages 91-136)

Mon., Feb. 25th: Mrs. Dalloway (pages 136-190)

Wed., Feb. 27th: Fitzgerald’s Tender Is the Night (Newchurch, Williams, Thompson)

Fri., Mar. 1st: Tender Is the Night

Mon., Mar. 4th: Tender Is the Night

Wed., Mar. 6th: Tender Is the Night

Fri., Mar. 8th: Writing Day

Mon., Mar. 11th: Unit Three: Brockmeier’s The Illumination (Dr. Alex Vernon) (Unit Two Paper due)

(“Carol Ann Page” and “Jason Williford”)

Wed., Mar. 13th: The Illumination (“Chuck Carter” and “Ryan Shifrin”)

Fri., Mar. 15th: The Illumination (“Nina Poggione” and “Morse Putnam Strawbridge”)

Mon., Mar. 18th: No class / spring break

Wed., Mar. 20th: No class / spring break

Fri., Mar. 22nd: No class / spring break

Mon., Mar. 25th: The Illumination (class visit with author Kevin Brockmeier)

Wed., Mar. 27th: Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go (Kirkpatrick, Gholson, Bass, White)

Fri., Mar. 29th: Never Let Me Go

Mon., Apr. 1st: Never Let Me Go

Wed., Apr. 3rd: Never Let Me Go

Fri., Apr. 5th: Writing Day

Mon., Apr. 8th: Unit Four: Hall’s The Best Day the Worst Day (Dr. Carol West) (Unit Three Paper

due) (pages 1-63)

Wed., Apr. 10th: The Best Day the Worst Day (pages 64-133)

Fri., Apr. 12th: The Best Day the Worst Day (pages 134-198)

Mon., Apr. 15th: The Best Day the Worst Day (pages 199-258)

Wed., Apr. 17th: Nuland’s How We Die (McMillion, Page, Payne)

Fri., Apr. 19th: How We Die

Mon., Apr. 22nd: How We Die

Wed., Apr. 24th: How We Die

Fri., Apr. 26th: Writing Day

Mon., Apr. 29th: Written Evaluation (Unit Four Paper due)

Tues., May 7th: Revised Papers due (optional)

**Assigned Preparations:**

**Introduction**

F Jan. 18th: Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper”

W Jan. 23rd: Sontag’s “Illness as Metaphor” (pages 3-87)

F Jan. 25th: Sontag’s “AIDS and Its Metaphors” (pages 92-183)

**Prof. Sutherland**

M Jan. 28th: Rothman (pages 13-74)

W Jan. 30th: Rothman (pages 77-127)

F Feb. 1st: Rothman (pages 131-175)

M Feb. 4th: Rothman (pages 179-252)

**Dr. Maslin**

M Feb. 18th: Woolf (pages 1-47)

W Feb. 20th: Woolf (pages 47-91)

F Feb. 22nd: Woolf (pages 91-136)

M Feb. 25th: Woolf (pages 136-190)

**Dr. Vernon**

M Mar. 11th: Brockmeier (“Carol Ann Page” and “Jason Williford”)

W Mar. 13th: Brockmeier (“Chuck Carter” and “Ryan Shifrin”)

F Mar. 15th: Brockmeier (“Nina Poggione” and Morse Putnam Strawbridge”)

M Mar. 25th: Brockmeier visit

**Dr. West**

M Apr. 8th: Hall (pages 1-63)

W Apr. 10th: Hall (pages 64-133)

F Apr. 12th: Hall (pages 134-198)

M Apr. 15th: Hall (pages 199-258)