

HETEROGLOSSIA AND THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES (English 108)

Dr. Crystal Downing
Office Hours: MWF 12-1, and by appointment

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Course Texts:

Kennedy, Introduction to Poetry, Eleventh ed. Brontë, Jane Eyre
Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet Minnemingo Review (Spg 2005)
Brecht, Caucasian Chalk Circle (attend play on Nov. 10, 12, 12, or 17)

Course Description:

Mikhail Bakhtin coined the word “heteroglossia” to describe the multiple voices (or “tongues”) generated in and by a work of fiction. This class will explore four different tongues by which writers speak--drama, novel, poetry and criticism--assessing the interpretive strategies elicited by each. We will also engage a plurality of tongues--those of students, faculty, and published scholars--in order to determine the relevance--intellectually, spiritually, and professionally--of “belles-lettres.”

Course Goals:

1. to engender interpretive acuity in both written and oral discourse
2. to encourage a multiplicity of perspectives through modeling different approaches to interpretation
3. to acquaint students with research tools helpful to English majors
4. to provide an overview of the history of English literature
5. to develop the vocabulary for effective discussion of literature
6. to introduce students to the Messiah English major and its professors

Course Requirements:

	Percentage of Grade
Participation in Discussion, always with <u>glossed</u> text in hand	10%
Papers	24%
Pop Quizzes (questions not repeated for latecomers)	6%
Research Project on “Favorite Poem”	10%
Glosses	25%
Final	25%

Glosses:

Students are required, for designated reading assignments, to generate two copies of a ½ to 1 page typed gloss (single space) which answers the question listed on the calendar and which uses quotations from that day’s reading assignment with page numbers or line numbers.

The gloss should never exceed one sheet of paper, should have your name in the upper left corner, under which appears the date of the assignment, and one copy should be placed on the teacher’s desk at the front of the room before class begins. You will retain one copy to refer to and take notes on during class discussion.

Grading of Glosses:

Rather than grammar or mechanics you will be graded on effort to intelligently answer the question employing examples from the reading. You will be given 10 points for a 1-page gloss, 7 points for half a page, etc., and 2 additional points will be subtracted if no quotations from the reading assignment are used to illustrate your point(s). Because its purpose is to generate heteroglossia in class, you may not turn in a gloss if you do not attend class unless you have a verifiable excused absence that is stapled to the late gloss.

If you get a zero on a pop-quiz (thus revealing you did not read the whole assignment), your Gloss grade will be cut in half. If you get only one right on the quiz, 2 points will be subtracted. I'll drop your lowest Gloss grade. Glosses will not be returned to you, but you can stop by my office to see them.

Discussion:

Because heteroglossia necessitates a multiplicity of voices, it is very important that all students join in the conversation every class period; therefore, each student will be given one point for each day s/he contributes to discussion, whether speaking once or multiple times. Students are encouraged to discuss each other's perceptions, rather than only to respond to the teacher.

38 points = A+ 27 points = B+ 17 points = C+ 7 points = D+

People with difficulty in this area should make an appointment with the teacher by the third week of classes to make alternate arrangements.

Your Unaugmented Tongue: PAPER #1 (3-4 pages, two copies):

In order to assess the writing of new majors, the department has asked that a paper be written early in the semester, so that we know where to place your abilities. Therefore, choose one of the following poems from our book and write what you think the poet is trying to communicate. (You will be most successful if you go for the poem that has something that really grabs you rather than simply choosing the easiest one to understand.) Start with an intro that presents a thesis, then explain how words and phrases from the poem support your thesis. You cannot get higher than a "C" if you have less than 3 pages. Your choices are poems by

Milton - 516 Fulton - 255 Hardy - 488 Hopkins - 179 Stallings - 226 Saenz - 26

Paper Requirements

- All papers should be typed, double space, paginated and stapled. They are late 5 minutes after class starts on the due date; late papers will be penalized.
- Paper grades will be lowered for typos and misspellings, as well as grammatical and mechanical mistakes. Do not use a cover sheet.
- Students are encouraged to attend the Writing Center for help with any stage of the writing process. Some may be required to go.
- Effort should be made to use gender-inclusive language.
- Use NO outside sources; the point is development of your critical abilities.
- Page minimum is absolute, maximum is flexible.

Favorite Poem Project (two copies)

For the year 2000, the Poet Laureate of the USA initiated the “Favorite Poem Project” wherein people registered their favorite poems with the Library of Congress. In the spirit of his project, you will choose your favorite poem from this class: any poem of six lines or more that you read in our textbook. So keep a list of your favorites in the back of the book so that later in the semester you can choose your top favorite to copy on a sheet of paper along with an articulate 3-4 (complex) sentence statement which gives specifics from the poem as to why you like it so much. You will be graded on your ability to articulate specific reasons for liking the poem. You cannot get an “A” unless your short paragraph has no flaws.

Analysis of Scholarship (one copy):

On the day your “Favorite Poem” is due, a librarian will introduce you to special research tools for English majors so that you can assess what scholars say about your poem. (If you find nothing on it, see what’s been written on your poet; if nothing, see what’s been written on your poem’s subject matter.) Like a sociologist analyzing data, you will analyze the types of things being said about your poem/poet/subject from the research descriptors the librarian shows you, organizing the material into types of approaches that you then will write up in a one-page paper (see example following). You need report on only the 20 most recent works, and you don’t need to read the actual essays. As a social science paper, this needs no funnel or conclusion. You will be graded instead on how well you organize and articulate the information, as well as grammar and mechanics.

Final:

A computer-graded objective exam that will assess your knowledge of poetic devices, literary history & criticism, individual poetic styles, history of the English language and R&J details.

Quizzes:

In order to insure that students are doing all the reading, pop quizzes of 3 to 6 questions will be given at the start of some classes with paper provided by students in an 8.5 x 5.5 size (a half sheet of binder paper). You will not be penalized for missing a quiz if you have a verifiable excused absence (as with the glosses). You will be given an automatic ten points for turning in a blank sheet, with two points for each correct question after that.

ADA:

Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines should inform me at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services, Hoffman 101 & 102.

Downing's Pet Peeves:

1) Tardiness; 2) cell phones; and 3) Students who start packing away their books while someone – ESPECIALLY another student – is speaking. It is both anti-intellectual and rude.

What to aim for in this class:

“All languages of heteroglossia . . . are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values.” - - Mikhail Bakhtin

What to avoid in this class:

“Shakespeare was born in the year 1554, supposedly on his birthday. He wrote tragedies, comedies and hysterectomies, all in Islamic pentameter. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet. Romeo's last wish was to be laid by Juliet.” - - A clueless student

Guide to Inclusive Language
Adapted from Martha Kolln, Understanding English Grammar

Here are some of the ways in which you can make up for the pronoun gap when you write and/or revise your own sentences:

1. **USE THE PLURAL**
Every writer should be aware of the power of language when he chooses his pronouns.
Revision: Writers should be aware of the power of language when they choose their pronouns.

2. **USE *HE* OR *SHE* IF YOU CAN USE IT ONLY ONCE.**
Revision: Every writer should be aware of the power of language when he or she choose pronouns.

3. **AVOID *HIS* AS A DETERMINER, EITHER BY SUBSTITUTING ANOTHER ONE OR, IN SOME CASES, DELETING THE DETERMINER:**
The writer of the news story should have kept his opinion out of it.
Revision: The writer of the news story should have kept (all) opinion out of it.

4. **TURN THE CLAUSE INTO A VERB PHRASE, THUS ELIMINATING THE PROBLEM SUBJECT:**
Every writer should be aware of the power of language when choosing pronouns.

5. **REWRITE THE ADVERBIAL CLASUSE AS A RELATIVE (WHO) CLAUSE:**
When a person buys a house, he should shop carefully for the lowest interest rate.
Revision: A person who buys a house should shop carefully for the lowest interest rate.