

**DEREE COLLEGE SYLLABUS FOR:**

**HHU 2203 LE In the Mouth of Madness: Depictions of Insanity in Western Culture**

(same as HSS 2203)  
Updated Summer 2016

Honors Seminar

**US CREDITS: 3/0/3**

**PREREQUISITES:**

WP 1010 Introduction to Academic Writing  
WP 1111 Integrated Academic Writing and Ethics

**CATALOG  
DESCRIPTION:**

An interdisciplinary study of the representations of madness across history, with specific emphasis on film, theatre, literature, autobiography and pop culture. The course will also examine madness in the context of philosophy, politics, critical theory and gender studies, and will explore the formation of individual, social and political identities in classical, modern and contemporary Western cultures.

**RATIONALE:**

This honors seminar will explore the various ways in which madness has been represented in the creative imagination across the ages in a variety of media (theatre, literature, autobiography, film, pop culture etc.) and at the same time pay close attention to specific cultural subtexts offered by these depictions. The issue of the insane has always been a central theme in the arts and in theory (philosophy, politics, cultural theory), and has undergone numerous transformations, reversals, and deconstructions. Using case studies, predominantly contrasting in nature and/or in scope, the course will not only deal with the attraction many artists felt towards madness either as subject-matter or as experience, but also with the political, philosophical and cultural issues that arise from the various representations of madness. The course will explore the motif of madness as a subversive state of being, the mythology surrounding the mentally unstable, the ways in which authors who were diagnosed as insane transcribed their experience in text-form, as well as the interrelationship between gender and mental health. In addition, the course will pay particular attention to the formation of the mythology of the criminally insane in Hollywood and to contemporary tendencies in the depictions of madness in TV and advertising.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to

1. Examine a variety of perspectives on madness through critical reading of a broad range of texts from theatre, literature, film, sociology, and music;
2. Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which historical and cultural contexts have affected philosophical, cultural and political views on madness;
3. Critically discuss key concepts which arise from the course to explore the problem of belonging, identity, and inclusion;

4. Examine artistic representations of insanity in terms of the ways in which they undermine or reinforce traditional views on madness.

**METHOD OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:**

In congruence with the teaching and learning strategy of the college, the following tools are used:

- Textual analysis, class discussion, workshop-style pair work and group work during class meetings;
- Active student-centered teaching approach in the presentation of course material to engage learners;
- Critical-thinking exercises and learning activities designed to help students acquire confidence and benefit from independent study;
- Student presentations of learning material to encourage involvement in the learning process;
- Co-curricular activities, ranging from collaboration with student clubs and societies to debates and event organizing, to encourage students' creative engagement with the material;
- Extensive instructor feedback on assignments and activities;
- Individualized assistance during office hours for further discussion of lecture material, additional reading, and assignments;
- Additional print and audiovisual educational material posted on the Blackboard course template;
- Other relevant educational material placed on reserve in the library.

**ASSESSMENT:**

**Critical Essay** **40%**

A 1,500-2,000-word critical essay dealing with one or more aspects of the course subject. The essay needs to display a firm grasp of the topic at hand, of the issues discussed in the course as a whole, as well as of the relevant bibliography (**use of at least 3-5 scholarly sources**).

**Creative Project** **40%**

Students will deploy a creative medium of their choice to apply their insights on concepts and ideas explored in the course. The creative project includes **a 500-word self-reflective essay** (which articulates the concepts that inform the creative project and relates them clearly to the content of the course), as well as **an oral presentation** of the creative project.

**Participation** **20%**

Each student will be evaluated according to his/her contribution in the class, the preparation of the material and his/her critical ability. Furthermore, each student will be assessed in regards to his/her participation in group activities and discussions that will arise throughout the course.

**The Critical Essay** tests Learning Outcomes 1, 3, and 4

**The Creative Project** tests Learning Outcomes 2 and 3

**READING LIST:**

**Required Material:**

Büchner, G., *Complete plays, Lenz, and other Writings*, Penguin, London, 1993.

Gogol, N., *The Diary of a Madman*, Penguin Classics, London, 2005.  
Kane, S., *Psychosis 4.48*, Methuen, London, 2000.  
Poe, E. A., *The Complete Tales and Poems*, The Modern Library, New York, 1938.

#### **Films**

Forman, M., *One flew over the cuckoo's nest* (1975)  
Hitchcock, A., *Psycho* (1960)

#### **Further Reading:**

Artaud, A., "Letters from Rodez" in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1988.  
Deleuze, G. And Guattari, F., *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1983.  
Gilman, C. P. *The Yellow Wallpaper*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1993.  
Goffman, E. *Asylums*, First Anchor Books, New York, 1961.  
Nijinsky, V., *The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky*, Penguin, London, 1999.  
Schreber, D. P., *Memoirs of my Nervous Illness*, New York Review Books, New York, 2000.  
Shakespeare, W., *Hamlet*, Arden, London, 2005.

#### **RECOMMENDED MATERIAL:**

Arnold, C., *Bedlam: London and its Mad*, Pocket Books, 2006.  
Barber, S., *Artaud: Blows and Bombs*, Methuen, London, 1993.  
Beck, A., *Madness Explained: Psychosis and Human Nature*, Penguin, London, 2004.  
Cross, S., *Mediating Madness: Mental Distress and Cultural Representation*, Palgrave MacMillan, London, 2010.  
Derrida, J., "Cogito and the History of Madness", in *Writing and Difference*, Routledge, London, 2001.  
Derrida, J., "The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation", in *Writing and Difference*, Routledge, London, 2001.  
Dock, J. B. (ed.), *"The Yellow Wallpaper" and the History of its Publication and Reception: a Critical Edition and Documentary Casebook*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania, 1998.  
Durgnat, R., *A Long Hard Look at 'Psycho'*, BFI, London, 2010.  
Felman, S., *Writing and Madness*, Stanford University Press, 2003.  
Foucault, M., *Madness and Civilization*, Routledge, London, 2001.  
Freud, S., *Three Case Histories*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996.  
Gilbert, S. M., *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Literary Imagination*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2000.  
Harper, S., *Madness, Power and the Media: Class, Gender and Race in Popular Representations of Mental Distress*, Palgrave MacMillan, London, 2009.  
Hayes, K. J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002.  
Hitchcock, A., *Hitchcock on Hitchcock*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995.  
Lee, J., *Shakespeare's Hamlet and the controversies of self*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2000.  
Nettle, D., *Strong Imagination: Madness, Creativity and Human Nature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002.

- Ostwald, P., *Vaslav Nijinsky: a Leap into Madness*, Robson Books, London, 1998.
- Panther, B., *Creativity and Madness: Psychological Studies of Art and Artists*, Aimee Press, Burbank, 1995.
- Pine, R., *Creativity, Madness and Civilisation*, Cambridge Scholars Editions, Cambridge, 2007.
- Porter, R., *Madness: a Brief History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003.
- Pye, C., *The Vanishing: Shakespeare, the Subject and Early Modern Culture*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2000.
- Rothenberg, A., *Creativity and Madness: New Findings and Old Stereotypes*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.
- Sass, L., *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature and Thought*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1994.
- Schwarz, A., *Dramatic Theory and the Modes of Tragic Drama*, Ohio University Press, Athens, 1978.
- Silverman, K. (ed.), *New Essays on Poe's Major Tales*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.
- Ussher, J., *The Madness of Women: Myth and Experience*, Routledge, London, 2011.
- Youngson, R.M., *The Madness of Prince Hamlet and Other Extraordinary States of Mind*, Carroll & Graf Publishers, New York, 1999.
- Zizek, S., *Looking awry: an introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1991.

**COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

With the exception of in-class activities, all written work must be word-processed on Word and adhere to MLA guidelines for manuscript format and documentation.

**SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS:**

Microsoft Office, Microsoft Powerpoint

**WWW RESOURCES:**

The course will use a number of materials via the internet, which will be available to the students via the Blackboard template. Students will be encouraged to use the internet to explore representations of madness in film, video, art, music and pop culture, as well as to investigate contemporary uses of madness either as a medical condition or as metaphor.

**INDICATIVE CONTENT:**

- Relationship of madness with the arts
- The development of the social responses to madness
- Philosophical approaches to the issue of insanity
- Madness and politics
- Perceptions of insanity in contemporary culture
- Madness and gender