

DEREE COLLEGE SYLLABUS FOR:

HHU 2205 “Pygmalion’s Creative Dream”: Transformations of the Body from Myth to Modernity

Honors Seminar (New course)
Spring 2013

US credit: 3/03

PREREQUISITES:

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

**CATALOG
DESCRIPTION:**

An interdisciplinary study of changing representations of the body across a variety of periods, genres and media. It aims to explore moral, philosophical, and aesthetic issues associated with the body, as concept, as embodied experience, and as object of artistic representation. Using as a case study the myth of *Pygmalion* in its varied expressions in literature, philosophy, music and the visual arts, the course offers an introduction to the body and its transformations from antiquity to the present. *This course fulfills the General Education Humanities requirement.*

RATIONALE:

The human body has been a perennial object of inspiration for poets, philosophers, artists and scientists alike. Real or imagined, it has fascinated western thought and culture through the ages. This course will approach the question of the body through a seminal myth of western culture: the story of the sculptor Pygmalion and his statue Galatea, which comes alive through Pygmalion’s love. Since its first appearance in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (A.D. 8), the myth of Pygmalion has undergone a number of transformations in literary and philosophical works, drama and opera, painting and sculpture, as well as contemporary mixed-media art and performance. The course will examine the Pygmalion myth through a variety of materials: from opera to modern choreography, from traditional philosophical and literary texts to contemporary art, fiction, and film.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to

- Engage critically with a variety of material, ranging from early modern texts to contemporary art, from opera to literature, from philosophy to modern film;
- Evaluate changing representations of the body from early modern culture to the present;
- Discuss in writing key concepts associated with the body as experience and object of representation;

- Exercise their skills in comparative interpretation.

METHOD OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:

Following the teaching and learning strategies of the college, teaching will include:

- Textual analysis and interactive class discussion
- Active student-centered teaching approach in the presentation of course material to engage learners;
- Student presentations of learning material to encourage involvement in the learning process;
- Co-curricular activities both within and outside the campus 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 50%

A 1,500-word critical essay drawn from one of the major cluster themes of the course. 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 critical bibliography.

Creative project 40%

The creative project for this course consists of **two parts**:

- An **individual portfolio (30%)**: The portfolio, which may be a hard copy or a web-based archive, e.g. blog, website etc, needs to have **a specific theme**, selected by each student, and include material relevant to the Pygmalion myth and its transformations in various media.
- A **group presentation (10%)** of the individual portfolios in a special event organized by the students themselves. The presentation will be assessed as a group project.

Participation 10%

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.

READING LIST:

Indicative Primary Material (long works will be covered selectively):

Literature

Ovid's, *Metamorphoses*: "Pygmalion"
William Shakespeare, *A Winter's Tale*
Petrarch, Rime Sparse 78
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birthmark"
George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*
Carol Ann Duffy, "Pygmalion's Pride"

Films

A Winter's Tale (2013)
Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (1926)
Frankenstein (1931), *Frankenstein* (1994)
Pygmalion (1938), *My Fair Lady* (1964), *Educating Rita* (1983)
Simone, (2002)

Opera/Symphonic Music/Ballet

J-Ph-Rameau, *Pygmalion*, 1745
Marcel Poot, *Pygmalion Suite*, 1952
Trisha Brown, *Pygmalion*, 2010
Richard Dubugnon, *Pygmalion*, 2012
George Benjamin, *Written on Skin*, 2013

Visual Arts:

Etienne-Maurice Falconet, *Pygmalion et Galathea*, 1763
Edward Burne-Jones, *Pygmalion and Galatea in four series*, 1875-1878
Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Pygmalion et Galathea*, 1890
Paul Delvaux, *Pygmalion*, 1939
John de Andrea, *The artist and his model*, 1960
Stelarc, *Prosthetic head*, 2003
Orlan, *Surgical Performances*, 1990's

Suggested Reading:

Lynn Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare*, Cambridge University Press, 2004
Victor Stochita, *The Pygmalion Effect: from Ovid to Hitchcock*, 2008
Paula James, *Ovid's Myth of Pygmalion on Screen: in Pursuit of the Perfect Woman*. Continuum studies in classical reception. London; New York: Continuum, 2011.
Tom Flynn, *The Body in Sculpture*, The Everyman Art Library, 1998
Kenneth Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue*, Cornell

University Press, 1992
Andrew Stewart, *Art, Desire and the Body in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

**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:

<http://www.arenastage.org/shows-tickets/sub-text/2012-13-season/my-fair-lady/pygmalion-and-galatea.shtml>

<http://www.pygmalion.co.za/component/content/article/12-front-page/5-the-spirit-of-pygmalion>

<https://repository.wlu.edu/bitstream/handle/.../McCurdy.pdf?>

INDICATIVE CONTENT:

The course will address the following topics:

The Body as Concept: Ovid's *Pygmalion* Myth and Western Culture

Ancient Conceptions of the Body: Beauty and Desire

Renaissance Pygmalions: Embodied voices, silent bodies

Pygmalions of the Age of Reason: Body, machines, and the modern Self

The Romantic Vision: Creating the New Man/Woman

Pygmalion Revisited I: Gendered Identity and the Role of Education

Pygmalion Revisited II: the Disenchanted Body

