Narratives of Affect/Affective Narratives: Emotion in Modern and Contemporary Literature and Culture

After years of scholarship in twentieth-century studies featuring "waning of affect" (in Jameson's famous phrase about postmodernism), study of emotion, affect, and "feelings" in modern and contemporary literary and cultural texts is again a topic of theoretical and critical attention, with a growing number of conferences, fellowships, books, and journal articles devoted to it. This course will read theories of emotion from a variety of disciplines, and think about their inter-articulation with the shaping of story in texts from Mrs. Dalloway to Love. We'll think especially about literary fiction and narrative shape, the production of readerly affect, and the novel as a site for theorizing emotion.

Syllabus

(Books are available at the University Book Store. Please note that Nightwood is optional, not required. There is also a packet of course readings at the Ave Copy Center, 4141 University Way)

** below signals a session for team-teaching by seminar members in the first hour. See instructions following syllabus.)

Jan 4: INTRODUCTIONS (If you decide not to take the class, please let me know by the end of the day today.)

(Before class on Thursday, get the course packet and EMAIL me (callen@u) three rank-ordered choices for the day on which you’d like to team-teach. If I don’t hear from you, I’ll just assign you to a day.)

Jan 6: INTERDISCIPLINARY THINKING ON EMOTION I:

Jan. 11: INTERDISCIPLINARY THINKING ON EMOTION II:

Jan. 13: AFFECT:

** Brian Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” Parables of the Virtual (Durham, Duke University

Jan. 18: DISCOURSES OF MELANCHOLY:

Jan. 20:

Jan. 25: FICTION AND EMOTION I:
F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

Jan. 27:

Feb. 1: LITERARY/CULTURAL STUDIES AND THE EMOTIONS :
Feb. 3:

Feb. 8: FICTION AND EMOTION II:
Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway

Feb. 10 Mrs. Dalloway (cont)

Feb. 15: IDENTIFICATION AND THE READER/VIEWER:

Feb. 17: ON CRYING:

Feb. 22: FICTION AND EMOTION III:
Monique Truong, The Book of Salt

Feb. 24: The Book of Salt (cont.)

March 1: ON NOSTALGIA:

March 3: READING AND EMOTION

March 8: FICTION AND EMOTION IV:
Toni Morrison, Love

March 10: Love (cont.)

March 14: Seminar papers due in my mailroom box (not by email) at 5pm. Please email me when you have turned it in and always keep a copy of your paper. I will accept papers through 5pm on March 16 without penalty, but I may not be able to comment on papers arriving late.

Oral and Written Requirements (in addition to careful, complete reading and active, lively participation in discussion)

1. Team-teaching hour. For the first 45 minutes of eight sessions (marked on the syllabus**), two seminar members will team-teach the essays assigned for the day. You may teach in whatever way, or combination of ways, you wish, as long as you cover the assigned material, integrate it into the discussions, issues, debates and arguments of the seminar as a whole, and give both team members equal roles in the teaching. The only
thing you cannot do is read to us. If you wish to present a mini-lecture, speak from notes. If you wish to divide the seminar into smaller discussion groups for part of your time, you may, as long as team members lead those smaller groups in discussion. If you wish to bring to the seminar additional context based on research you’ve done beyond the assigned essays, great. We will consider you experts on the assigned articles, so be prepared to answer any questions about the readings that may come up in class. At the conclusion of your session, we should be clear about the essays’ arguments and about how those arguments enter the ongoing conversations we’re having about emotions and affect. THE SESSION PREVIOUS TO YOURS, BRING FOR EACH OF US A TYPED “GUIDE TO THE READING.” IN IT, INDICATE WHAT WE MIGHT THINK ABOUT AS WE READ, WHAT LINES OF ARGUMENT YOU WISH TO PURSUE IN YOUR TEACHING SESSIONS, WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS WE SHOULD PREPARE TO DISCUSS (OR HEAR YOU DISCUSS), AND HOW THEY FOLLOW FROM/RELATE TO PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS AND READINGS. The only exception to this requirement applies to the team teaching on Jan.13: AFFECT. There’s not enough time to prepare the “guide,” so we’ll just go with what you present on that day.

2. Seminar paper. Since emotions have histories, and since various nations, classes, ethnicities, cultures, genders, and sexualities produce different affective narratives, you will be free to select a specific emotion/affect/mood/site/verbal text(s) on which to write your seminar paper, and to situate this writing in a modern/contemporary historical moment and particular culture of your choice. You must, however, draw substantially on the essays we will read in the seminar for part of your context, and supplement them with additional, relevant sources. Your paper should be publication length (18-25 typed pages not including notes), follow MLA style (including parenthetical citations in the text, informational notes where necessary, and a “list of works cited”) and be targeted to a particular scholarly journal or other publication. (Designate your targeted publication in the upper right-hand corner of your first page.) The Suzzallo-Allen periodical section has many journals you can read through to choose the one that might have the most appropriate audience for your essay. Seminar papers are due Monday March 14 in my mailroom box (not by email). I will accept them up through Weds., March 16 without penalty, but I may not be able to comment on those coming in past March 14.