



FIRST ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF STUDENT WRITING

The **Celebration of Student Writing**, a centerpiece of the University's inaugural Writing Week, showcases undergraduate student writing projects. The Celebration encourages students to re-present and display their research and writing in formats other than conventional word-processed letters and lines on the printed page. Some students create video projects; others produce poster presentations or read aloud portions of their writing; still others design models or digital illustrations that present their writing projects in new media.

Writing Week (April 15 - 18, 2009) offers four days of lectures, readings, and special events celebrating writing at the University. Sponsored by the Department of English and the Center for the Study of Writing, CWRU's first-ever Writing Week gathers students, faculty, and alumni to highlight writing accomplishments from the past year. For a full schedule see <http://www.case.edu/writingweek>

The Center for the Study of Writing, established in 2008 to facilitate research and scholarship on writing at the University and in the world, serves three distinct but interrelated roles at the University: to support writing and research by resident and visiting students and scholars; to facilitate exciting new courses and curricula on writing; and to provide an array of practical writing and publishing support services to the University and University Circle communities. For more information, see <http://www.case.edu/writing/csw>

Writing Week and the Center for the Study of Writing are supported by generous gifts from Marilyn McCulloch (FSM '50); from Edward S. Sadar, M.D. (ADL '64, SOM '68) and Melinda Melton Sadar (FSM '66); and from an anonymous donor.

Academic English Writing

Jessica Gerard, Course Instructor (FSCS 150)

Students: Yitao Wang, Di Tang, Wayne Qin, Jiezheng Yu, Jiyong Ryu, Ji Li, Andrea Kim, Yung Mo Cho, Woo Hyen Jin, Vichalya Wisidagama, Yuan Gao

This presentation will showcase the individual and collaborative research and documentation efforts from two SAGES seminars focusing on cross-cultural and computer mediated communication. The students in this class, who are bilingual (and in some cases, multilingual) writers, will present on their original research as well as the collaborative writing projects that they have participated in over the course of the past two semesters.

In the SAGES seminar on Cross-Cultural Communication, students completed pilot studies in which they formulated socially relevant research question in the area of cross-cultural communication, collected data via questionnaires, surveys, and interviews, and then analyzed and wrote up their results in a 3-4 page report. Topics include social taboos across cultures, the dangers of stereotyping, nonverbal behavior, and cross-cultural comparisons of educational systems.

In the SAGES course projects focusing on Computer Mediated Communication, students made use of both low-tech and high-tech means as they collaboratively composed arguments on the positive and negative impacts of increased use of texting, emailing, and social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. In order to closely analyze and learn from this collaborative writing process, students videotaped their co-composing and co-revising sessions. It is clips from these sessions that they hope to share with others at this year's Celebration of Student Writing.

Artists, Athletes, and Activists: Native Americans in Print Media and Film

Susan Dominguez, Course Instructor (USSY 286F)

Students: Rich Doolin, Samantha Friedman, Laura Gabster, Gene Gross, Michael Malone, Fallon McNally, Nichole Norris, Brianna Parks, Candice Pollard, Kenneth Russo, Chelsea Spengler, Eric Street, Ethan Teare, Blaire Volbers, Tianna Xia

What role do images of Indians in Colonial America, and later Hollywood, play in public perception of Native Americans today? Despite strides in economic development in the past 20 years, demographically, Native Americans remain the poorest minority group in the United States, lingering at the bottom of health, education, and welfare statistics. This seminar will meet representations of North American Native peoples, through artists and actors, athletes and activists, from the woods of Colonial America to the thinning arctic ice in Inupiaq territory, Canada. Socially constructed images of American Indians from the exotic to the comic, will be examined in three time periods and genres: 18th-19th Century print media and literature, 20th Century Hollywood films, and 21st Century Indigenous voices in visual rhetoric (including film), scholarly articles and Native American testimony.

The Athenian

Brad Ricca, Faculty Advisor
Andrew Schwirian, Editor

Students: Andrew Schwirian, Paul Hay, Charles Pairan

The Athenian is the humour magazine of Case Western Reserve University. For some reason, it is a duly chartered member organization of the Student Media Board much to the chagrin of the other, more elitist, member organizations. It is officially run by an editor, layout manager graphics designer, and business manager. With only four officers who are as dedicated to producing each issue as I am to finishing this simile, most of the content is written by semi-anonymous writers who may or may not choose to incriminate themselves by having their names associated with the articles they write. Filled with lies and slander that are sometimes referred to as satire, *The Athenian* abuses the right to free speech while pondering why no one has discovered the child laundering and money trafficking operation it is running. Topics found in each issue vary depending on current events; however, SAGES and the meal plan are almost always mocked. Issues are published/strategically littered three times per semester, and are available *gratis* (e.g. for free) at various locations/dumpsters on campus. For added fun, hidden within this abstract is a subliminal message. The first person to find it wins the opportunity to buy overpriced university branded products against their will in the Thwing shoppe.

The Case Reserve Review (Literary Magazine)

Mary Grimm, Faculty Advisor

Students: Jack Rooney, Magda Marcel

The Case Reserve Review is the undergraduate student literary journal of Case Western Reserve University. It provides a forum for student expression in both fiction and poetry. It is a semiannual publication (with both Fall and Spring editions). At writing week, we intend to present copies of recent magazines and discuss our submission policies for future editions with interested students in attendance. We may also share work done by magazine staffers. Topics may include tips on producing effective submissions and gathering ideas for new kinds of written expression to be included in future editions. We shall also discuss the general goal of encouraging literary publication at Case. We represent, after all, the only forum exclusively devoted to this task at the university. We also plan to consider applicants for future membership in the organization and to explain the different jobs available. We offer jobs not only in editing posts but also in possible layout responsibilities and Media Board representative positions. Our basic goals include expanding the organization and fostering and awareness of creative writing possibilities at the university. We feel that our publication offers something unique to students at Case—the chance to see their work published beside that of their peers in a prestigious journal. We are committed to ensuring the enduring power and impact of creative writing at Case.

Case Writes

Kimberly Emmons, Course Instructor (USSY 285P)

Students: Kyle Berkowitz, Alex Bonner, Petey Cooke, Eric Duerr, Jacob Gardener, Sungtaek Gee, Ryan Haskins, Steve LaDelfa, Andy Lonsberry, Jason Luebbers, Hiroko Matsuyama, James Morgan, Kim Schraitle, Nick Steege, Chun Wong, Malcolm Wu, Pat Zhang

Over the semester, students in USSY 285P investigated a variety of questions about writing on campus. We interviewed poet Sarah Gridley and UCITE Director Mano Singham about their “writing lives”; we visited the University Archives to examine university publications and the documentary history of the University; we conducted a survey of Case community members to learn more about their writing attitudes and practices; and we each individually pursued a research question about writing (broadly construed). In each of these projects, we explored the value of particular research approaches: unstructured interviews produced some great conversations; archival explorations turned up new genres and sources of data; a quantitative survey gave us a statistical picture of our community’s writing habits. We present the results of our semester’s investigations on a course website, which includes collaboratively written remediations of our individual essays on Sarah Gridley and Mano Singham, and presentations of our other research projects. Class members will be on hand during the Celebration of Student Writing to discuss their individual and collaborative writing experiences during the semester.

Course Website: <http://www.case.edu/artsci/engl/emmons/ussy285p>

Common Reading

Mayo Bulloch, Director of Educational Services for Students

Beginning in 2002, the Common Reading program at CWRU has selected a book for all entering CWRU undergraduate students to read over the summer. Students receive a complimentary copy of the selected book and are asked to complete their reading before Welcome Days. Students are also invited to participate in an annual Common Reading Essay Contest, the winners of which are awarded prizes, sponsored by the Baker-Nord Center for Humanities, during an all-class assembly during Welcome Days. The author of the Common Reading is always invited to speak on campus. All but one of the authors has been able to visit CWRU, and four have been keynote speakers at the University Fall Convocation the first week of classes.

This table will celebrate the seven books that we have read as well as the student winners of recent Common Reading Essay Contests. The Common Reading Selection Committee will also promote the Common Reading that has been selected for Summer 2009.

Conviction and Fiction

Brandy Schillace, Course Instructor (USSY 285C)

Students: Aphroditis Mamaligas, Marissa Hanthorn, Tyler Petek, Lea Cross, Devin Rodwell, Niccole DeMartini

This course has two objectives: to examine how human beings understand and practice conviction by looking at a few of the world's major religions, and to examine how convictions (belief and faith) are explored through fiction. What can fiction tell us about conviction? How can it help reveal the core beliefs that move us as individuals and as a society? This seminar will seek to understand how authors reflect their beliefs through their writing—how fiction becomes a form of self-expression both for writers and for readers. Students will also be encouraged to think about how their own writing is influenced by belief systems, and to explore how our convictions cannot help but affect our writing and the way we understand our minds, our lives, our inner selves. The project that will be displayed at the celebration is one in which students combine research with creative writing. In class, and throughout the semester, students will examine texts and films in an attempt to unearth the symbols of faith included within. In the final project, students will research a particular aspect of a belief system and write a brief research report using course readings, novels and external sources. Following this, students will create a parable or mythos to exhibit and explain the significance of the chosen belief/system. The creative portion may be accompanied by various media, including short presentation skits. The media, as well as brief synopses of the research and creative portion, will be displayed at the table.

Discussions - The CWRU Undergraduate Research Journal

Aditi Sinha, Editor-in-Chief

Discussions is CWRU's first interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, undergraduate research journal. *Discussions* is a student-run Media Board organization. Student Reviewers majoring in the sciences, engineering, and humanities review submissions and select the most qualified papers. It was started with the realization that our campus, where so many undergraduates do research, needed a way to exhibit the accomplishments of undergraduate researchers. We publish research papers from all fields in our two bi-annual issues each year. Our upcoming issue features immunology, biomedical engineering, and music papers.

We always welcome new reviewers to the journal. Please contact discussions@case.edu if interested. We are happy to train those who do not have reviewing/editing experience. Those interested in submitting papers should visit our website, www.case.edu/provost/source/discussions for submissions guidelines.

Each spring we hold a reception to honor those authors whose works we published. The annual reception is on Thursday, April 23, 2009 in Thwing 1914 Lounge at 11:30am. Please come celebrate the accomplishments of these authors with us on the 23rd, enjoy refreshments, and pick up the new issue of *Discussions*.

Evil Personified

Paulette Goll, Course Instructor (USSY 286D)

Students: Benjamin Abbott, Sultan Ahmed, Andrew Appelbaum, Keisha Bell, Matthew Clemens, John Enevoldsen, Aaron Oppenheimer, Jerome Priest, Adam Rych, Mark Swartz, Ann Wei, Alexander Wendling, Joshua Willis, Kevin Yarosh

Evil Personified invites you to experience pandemonium where you can get up close and personal with the Seven Deadly Sins—Pride, Gluttony, Lust, Wrath, Greed, Envy, and Sloth. Listen to live musical performances of devilish tunes, and witness some of the finest performances ever—“The Devil Came Down to Georgia” [Charley Daniels Band], “Sin” [Nine Inch Nails], “Seven Deadly Sins” [Flogging Molly] and “Night on Bald Mountain” [Mussorgsky].

View the faces of evil in unforgettable movies—*Psycho*, *Se7en*, *Exorcist*, and *Othello*, and hear stories of the damned from some of the world’s greatest writers, Milton, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Goethe, and Twain.

Exploring a Sense of Place: the Doan Brook Watershed & Photography

Elizabeth Banks, Course Instructor (USNA 235)

Students: Nathan Adams, Beth Andrasik, Leah Brow, Thomas Connor, Catherine Dinda, Samer Fakhran, Zachary Hall, Kristen Herdman, Ashwin Jain, Bettina Kaphingst, Marcus Kluczynski, Jacob Luers, Benjamin Pinkie, Julia Sherman, Marika Tapolyai

Having a sense of place, or a rooted understanding of where we live, shapes our identity, actions, and commitment to community. Students in USNA235 went beyond the “campus bubble” to explore the concept of a sense of place by studying and photographing the Doan Brook, our local watershed. Course readings, writing, and discussion focused on Doan Brook natural history, local environmental issues, sustainability, and community-based initiatives. We utilized photography as a primary tool for investigating and “seeing” place. Throughout the course, we developed a deeper understanding of Case’s ecological address and explored firsthand where we are and why it matters. This exhibit shares the students’ journey through the Doan Brook watershed in both photographic and written narrative in hopes of building awareness of the often overlooked—yet vital—watershed that is home to all of us at Case Western Reserve University.

Lies and Betrayal

Katherine Clark, Course Instructor (USSO 286H)

Students: Lauren Bootzin, Michael Bryniarski, Yifan Cai, Andrew Deike, Leonard Hayes, Amelia Horst, Daniel Kaufman, Alexander King, Nicholas Kreps, Marc Kreuzer, Trevor Piecuch, Erica Pizzolato, Mark Richardson, Jessica Robinson, Craig Swallow, Ross Widenor, Evalyn Zimpelmann

In this seminar we will discuss lying in its many manifestations including the reasons and justifications people offer for lying; the consequences of lying; how liars are discovered, and if lying is ever justified. Using the work of philosopher Sissela Bok as our base text, we will explore who lies, why they lie, and the different rationalizations for lying. Through a variety of media including film, hypertext, popular culture essays, fiction, and radio programs, we will explore if there are “good” lies, how to spot liars and con artists, and the potential joys of lying. Our object is that by the end of the semester we will be better readers of texts and more knowledgeable about our interactions with others.

Life of the Mind

Judit Simó, Course Instructor (FSCS 150)

Students: Yi Cai, Steve Sang-Myung Lee, Yi Chen, Ji Young Hwang, Snag-Ook Kim, John Kunwoo Lee, Yae-Rin Lee, Hui Y Li, Ni Su, Se-Jong Yoon

The course is a first seminar continuation class for first-year international students. The poster presentation displays students’ works from the previous semester, which focused on issues in cross-cultural communication. For their projects, students came up with their own research questions, collected data through interviews, surveys, and observation, and finally, analyzed and wrote up the results. Papers include small-scale studies on the different uses of metaphors, proverbs, and speech acts across languages, differences in etiquette and nonverbal communication between cultures, as well as differences in dating habits. One of the projects focuses on the United States and investigates the dialects of this country, while another one investigates Chinese and American students’ attitudes to privacy. Issues with British versus American English are also explored. It is our hope that shedding light on some existing cultural differences in the use of language and in communication in general, will contribute to a better understanding between members of different cultures.

Nature Writing: From the Arctic to the Gulf Coast

Mark Bassett, Course Instructor (USSY 265)

Students: Jimmy Abed, Adam Blake, Sabin Boruz, Mike Czigler, Kayla DeVault, Ben Galada, Phil Heisler, Alex Hogan, Jillian Johnston, Pat Lihwa, Brian Link, Kristina Nagy, Ashley Neme, Abby Reynolds, Paul Smetona, Andy Wang

From the Galapagos to the Arctic, from the Laguna Pueblo to the barrier islands of Mississippi, USSY265 explores the territory of “nature writing,” a category of literary nonfiction that some theorists call “environmental literature.” Our class first read and studied a variety of short works in that genre, from Thoreau to David Quammen. We then began “an American tour” of four books set in different parts of the U.S. and written with different writing styles, topics, and purposes in mind. Outside Madison, Wisconsin we discovered Aldo Leopold’s classic *A Sand County Almanac*, sometimes nicknamed “the environmentalist’s Bible.” With Barry Lopez as our guide and interpreter, we imagined traveling to visit the frozen tundra in *Arctic Dreams*. Next, each of us began to engage in an individual research project—some of which will be explained in our table presentation. After spring break, we puzzled over the moving memoir *Approaching the Magic Hour*, written by the widow of Mississippi artist and amateur naturalist Walter Inglis Anderson. Finally, through reading the poetic novel *Ceremony*, by Leslie Marmon Silko, we experienced an unforgettable visionary journey toward salvation and harmony. Our table presentation will explain what nature writing means to us—and may hint at whether we now view ourselves individually as “armchair observers” or environmental “activists.” Please stop by—to discover unexpected connections between science and art, between poetry and field notes—and perhaps you too will adopt the sustainable habit of reading these and other celebrated works of nature writing.

The Observer

Margaret Grady, Editor-in-Chief

Involved Students: Margaret Grady, Bryan Bourgeois, Cory Hershberger, Joseph Amic, Meredith Collier, Adam Spektor, Greg Meyer, Sara Adler, Michelle Udem, Hunter Sokol, Kyle Niemi, Katie Chioran, Raman Nohria, Denton Zhou, Anna Gunther, James Cash, Shane Lu, Zhaoyang Wang, Lisa Chen, Eva Chan, Bruce Douglas, Steve Cummins, George Jones, Ruchi Asher, Gillian Seaman, Lauren Hennen, Reem Azem

Established in 1968 by the undergraduate students of Case Western Reserve University, *The Observer* strives to represent the student body by providing coverage of news, faculty, and staff, to share opinions, and to debate current issues publicly. Our team consists of 20 senior staff members, selected the spring previous to the current publishing year, and a variable number of staff reporters and columnists. Twelve senior staff members make up the editorial board, which meets once per week to critique the latest issue and discuss ideas for the upcoming issue. *The Observer* in print form is distributed to various buildings on Friday mornings.

Over the past year, *The Observer* has made significant progress in establishing itself as a preeminent publication on campus. As of this fall, staff reporters and columnists are paid for their work. In addition, we have a recently redesigned website (<http://www.cwruobserver.com>) that will allow us to expand into multimedia journalism. On March 20, the newspaper was printed with four full color pages for the first time ever. A major layout change that same week placed the sports section on the highly visible back page. We are constantly looking for new writers with a passion for journalism. While prior experience can be helpful, it is not necessary; we are happy to provide basic training. Interested students should email observer@case.edu to have their names added to a listserv.

Professional Communication for Engineers

Eve McPherson, Course Instructor (ENGL 398)

Students: Elliott King, Ian Mallory, Sorana Pisano, Vivek Sinha, John Smetona, Alex Stibich

Professional Communication for Engineers, English 398 introduces principles and strategies for effective communication in both academic and workplace engineering settings. Through analysis of case studies and of academic and professional genres, this course develops the oral and written communication skills that characterize successful engineers. Students prepare professional documents that specifically communicate academic and technical knowledge to diverse audiences. As part of the course, students develop individual research of product proposals on a topic reflecting professional interests and goals. The proposal's required contents include an abstract, problem statement, description of proposed research, literature review, research plan, qualifications of researcher, budget, and works cited. The proposals are then adapted to a formal oral presentation that distills the proposal's contents into a concise oral argument for research support or product development. For this table presentation, students have been asked to re-imagine their work for an even wider audience by developing a flier or brochure that reflects the most significant contents of the proposal and places an emphasis on visual design as a means of generating interest in their work.

Professional Communication for Engineers

Eve McPherson, Course Instructor (ENGL 398)

Students: Ed Buyniski, Ilya Malinskiy, Katie Wilkins, Michael Payne, Marcella Avery, Josh Hodnichak

Professional Communication for Engineers, English 398 introduces principles and strategies for effective communication in both academic and workplace engineering settings. Through analysis of case studies and of academic and professional genres, this course develops the oral and written communication skills that characterize successful engineers. Students prepare professional documents that specifically communicate academic and technical knowledge to diverse audiences. As part of the course, students develop individual research of product proposals on a topic reflecting professional interests and goals. The proposal's required contents include an abstract, problem statement, description of proposed research, literature review, research plan, qualifications of researcher, budget, and works cited. The proposals are then adapted to a formal oral presentation that distills the proposal's contents into a concise oral argument for research support or product development. For this table presentation, students have been asked to re-imagine their work for an even wider audience by developing a flier or brochure that reflects the most significant contents of the proposal and places an emphasis on visual design as a means of generating interest in their work.

Questions of Identity

Gail Arnoff, Course Instructor (USSO 234)
Samiya Ilmudeen, Writing Liaison

Students: Lauren Geiser, Matthew Colon, Marshall Lucaks, Alison Victor, Loretta Lafitte-Griffin, Rachel Wagner, Christine Opsitnick, Kristen Herdman, Hae Min Hwang, Wonju Shon, Young Yun, Caitlin Dawson, Katherine Sayare

Who we are informs the way in which we act in the world. How we respond to society in the individual, local, and global community is impacted by the way we see ourselves, the way others see us, and the way we see others. Who am I? How do I look at myself in relationship to others? How does the way in which society views me affect the way I think of myself? How have writers, historians, and philosophers dealt with the challenges of self and group identity? Through books, film, and personal accounts of guest speakers, we will study how people have dealt with issues such as religion, ethnicity, race, and sexual identity. In addition to writing several shorter papers, students will research an aspect of their family's heritage in order to gain a better understanding of what contributes to their personal identity.

This presentation seeks to let students explore their identities through visual media. Participants will be handed a black foam square, aptly called the "identity square," and choice of art supplies. Participants' task is to use the foam to answer the question "What is my identity?" A discussion will then follow.

Renaissance Lives

Jerry Findley, Course Instructor (USSY 285H)

Students: Hilary Mohs, So Park, Sarah Christman

Renaissance Lives studies the lives and intellectual legacies of Joan of Arc, Martin Luther, and Galileo Galilei to explore the way they bring about major cultural changes between 1400 and 1650.

To see the way these three lives interrelate to change European civilization, the course begins with the central controversy among those studying the period: Should the period be called "The Renaissance" or "The Early Modern Period"? Those living at the time saw their life and times take new direction because of a renewed interest—a re-birth, a re-naissance—in Antiquity. More recent scholars emphasize that this new interest in the past creates a future that puts in place the basic structures of our Modern and Post-Modern world. More than a re-birth of Antiquity, the period is the birth of Modernity, hence the Early Modern Period.

That the three historic figures embody this dichotomy and controversy is no play on words. Joan of Arc, Martin Luther, and Galileo try to adhere to the traditions and teachings of the Church that they believe are orthodox only to be brought before the Inquisition for heresies that the Church sees destroying its established authority and the coherence it gives to the individual the collective life of Europeans and Europe: Joan of Arc by creating ethnic and national identity giving rise to the nation-state; Luther by making salvation dependent, not on the Church, but on the individual; and Galileo by making experiment and observation, not scripture and received authority, the arbiters of truth. What is lost and what is gained by looking at these three lives from our vantage, seeing them and the period they personify as direct precursors to Modernity rather than from their vantage: our looking back to see them looking back to Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the status-quo?

The Role of Materials Science in Emerging Technologies

Peter Lagerlöf, Course Instructor (USNA 238)

Susan Dominguez, Writing Liaison

Students: Logan Akamatsu, Samuel Alexander, Stephen Fleming, Benjamin Kaufman, Edward Kelly, Kelsey Klatka, Gabriel Kraus, Raymond Lonardo, Nicholas Lorenzo, Amalie McKee, Frank Messina, Kyle Minnich, Anthony Sadler, Andrew Shaver, Joseph Smogard, Sean Snack, Kriste Susinskas, Anthony Turner

The development of engineering applications is, and has historically been, closely related to the development of new engineering materials. In fact, specific civilizations and historic time periods are classified by the materials used for engineering applications (e.g., the Bronze Age). This university seminar will examine the role of materials developments in the past, as well as explore the needs and impact of new materials in emerging technologies.

Materials science and the development of new materials with specific properties play a critical role on the development of new technology, and new technology can have profound societal implications. Thus, the role of materials developments on emerging technologies should have a broad interest spanning many interdisciplinary subject matters.

Poster Project: “Technologies used in the iPhone.” Three groups of 6 students each will research different technologies used in the iPhone: (1) Power supply (Li-ion battery) and the interactive display; (2) Proximity sensors and Wi-Fi technology; and (3) Processor and memory (RAM and flash memory technology).

Sigma Tau Delta Fraternity

Cloe Knaus, Representative

Students: Allyson Whipple, Brian Hickman, Case Hicks, Cloe Knaus, Dawn Richards, Esti Brennan, Ilana Yergin, John Rooney, Jolene Petroc, Jonathan Vesey, Kayla Gatalica, Laura Crawford, Matt Halm, Megan Norr, Melissa Delucchi, Mieon Han, Mikell Yuhasz, Natalia Samman, Nilani Thiyagarajah, Nona Lu, Reem Asaad, Ruchi Sanghani, Sean Lay, Wesley Bruce

Sigma Tau Delta would like to use this opportunity to increase our visibility on campus. We will be providing information about our campus activities over the course of the spring semester, as well as our goals for next fall. During this semester we will be sponsoring an essay/creative writing contest for undergraduate students. We are also working to become involved with Rainbow Babies Hospital. Our members will be volunteering time each week reading to children in the PICU. Next fall we hope to sponsor an essay contest for area high schools in which the top applicants will be invited to an awards banquet here on campus.

Our table will have information about all these events. We will be exhibiting written work from one of our members, Megan Norr, who is currently studying in France. A Powerpoint presentation showcasing excerpts from the French crime novella she is writing will be shown. We will also have members present to discuss what membership in the group entails, and to talk about the ways in which we intend to grow the organization in the coming year. Information on how to become a member will be provided.

System Thinking

Richard Boland, Course Instructor (USSY 204)
Mark Bassett, Writing Liaison

Students: Akshaya Annavajhala, Maximillian Beushausen, Amy Bishara, Austin Bishop, William Boyer, Patrick Chang, Jeffrey Chin, Danielle Daoud, Vedran Dupanovic, Calvin Eiber, Sanchit Goyal, Whitney Huang, Qi Jia, Stephen Johnson, Todd Kaduke, Navaneeth Krishnan, Sean Lojek, Andrew Maibach, Christopher Marquiss, Patrick McLaughlin, Marissa Morgan, Kogulan Nadesakumaran, Abhinav Reddy, Alina Saiakhova, Jacob Schwemlein, Himanshu Sharma, Dana Skold, Cory Smith, Benjamin Sulka, Thomas Tee, Justin Wilkins, Jesse Xu, Denton Zhou

In this university seminar on the symbolic world, we critically examined the language of “system thinking.” System thinking is an example of the way that language is used to “grab onto” the social world. The central idea of system thinking is to focus on relations, not things, when we think about our social and economic reality and ask what it is and how it works. System thinking is used and misused by business leaders, politicians, economists, policy analysts, and media to represent and analyze the situations they are concerned with. It is a prime example of how new language enables a new kind of understanding of our human condition. System thinking has arisen in the last 60 years to become a dominant mode of conceptualizing complex social and economic processes in order to exercise power and control over them.

During the seminar, students read and discussed key works that lay the foundations of system thinking and then applied system thinking techniques to a socio-economic situation of interest to them individually. The emphasis of the discussions was to question the premises of system thinking, surfacing its strengths and weaknesses, and grappling with its ethical implications. Some key ideas related to system thinking that were explored include information theory, cybernetics, hermeneutics, feedback, models, causal loops, self-reference, and meta-language.

The World of African Literature

Mukoma wa Ngugi, Course Instructor (USSY 285D)
Susan Dominguez, Writing Liaison

Students: Akshita Agarwal, Michael Bielawski, Amy Bishara, Desiree Blake, Roy Chiou, Michael DeAgro, Daniel Fecher, Karl Fike, Nastasia Harris, Robert King, Zachary Kloos, Sheri Morgan, Harry Dapaah-Owusu, David Rohlfing, Alyssia Ross, Julieann Stewart

In this seminar, we looked at how a diverse number of African writers have responded, in both form and content, to three periods in Africa’s literary history: the 1960s, or the decolonization period, which produced nationalist literature; the 1970s and 1980s, or the neocolonial period, which produced revolutionary novels; and the 1990s through the present, a period producing literature that contends with globalization.

In an attempt to answer the riddle of what makes an African novel African, we grappled with fundamental questions concerning the origin of the novel; how it came to Africa; African literary traditions; and the language of the African novel. We also used African literature to explore universal questions about politics and literature: What is a protest novel? What is the role of the writer and of art in society? The goal of the seminar has been to increase our appreciation of African literature and literature in general, and at the same time sharpen our analytical, critical, oral and written skills. We have led discussions, engaged in peer critiques, and, through scholarly essays, engaged African literature.