

Writing Seminar II: Art and the Dream Life (K10.0672)
The Gallatin School of Individualized Study, Spring 2009
Instructor: Yevgeniya Traps
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Art and the Dream Life

What is the connection between sleeping and waking life, between dream visions and creativity? Are dreams prophetic or aesthetic? Do they fulfill desire or endlessly frustrate it? Do they reveal or conceal our truest selves? Taking these issues as our starting points, we will consider a variety of texts - scientific, religious, philosophical, literary, visual, and film, as well as our own dreams - as we explore the connections between sleep and aesthetics, between nightmares and trauma, between dreams and beauty. We will think too about the possibilities art offers for reconciling the many paradoxes of dreaming.

Using writing as a way of thinking critically, we will work, throughout the semester, on the process of crafting analytical and literary critical essays, as well as a final research paper.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All texts have been ordered at the NYU Bookstore (18 Washington Place).

- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Reverie*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.
- Berryman, John. *The Dream Songs*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982.
- Carroll, Lewis. *Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2003.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. New York: Oxford UP, 2008.
- McCay, Winsor. *Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend*. Mineola: Dover 1973.
- Plath, Sylvia. *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2001.
- West, Nathanael. *The Dream Life of Balso Snell*. Mineola: Dover, 2004.

You will, on occasion, be asked to print out some additional materials posted on BlackBoard (indicated as BB on the schedule).

COURSE POLICIES

It is essential that you attend class regularly, arrive promptly, and submit all work on time. If you suspect you will need an extension, please let me know well ahead of time so that we can make arrangements. If you need to miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out about missed work and all assignments; I strongly advise you to exchange contact information with at least one classmate, who will be able to fill you in on

anything you might have missed. **Please keep in mind that missing more than three classes will have an adverse effect on your grade; so will persistent lateness.**

All assignments must be typed and printed. Work will not, generally, be accepted via e-mail.

You will be responsible for weekly reading responses, commenting briefly but thoughtfully on each assigned reading. Ideally, the responses will serve to generate ideas, as an opportunity to reflect on the reading you will be doing and to prepare for more formal writing assignments. **You will also keep a dream journal, an ongoing semester-long project, which you will hand in at the end of the course, though we will refer to it periodically.**

You will also be responsible for three formal essays in the course of the semester. We will discuss the particulars of this assignment in the course of the semester. Be advised that we will be approaching writing as a process, and you will be expected to bring in drafts of work in progress for in-class workshops. **Participation in workshops will be part of your final grade.**

Finally, you will be working on a semester-long research project; this project will be completed in several stages, with the final research paper due at the end of the semester. You will propose a topic of particular interest to you, as well as hand in a research proposal and bibliography as part of the research project. **You will have a chance to meet with me to discuss your proposed area of inquiry.**

Participation—both in class discussion and in smaller group work—is an important part of your course grade. Please come to class prepared to ask questions, to comment, to fully engage. **You must bring the assigned readings to each class meeting.**

We will typically devote some portion of our meeting time to in-class writing, as well as discussions of writing techniques and styles.

REMEMBER: Any and all work you hand in this semester must be your own. Whenever you use someone else's words or ideas, you must cite them properly. **Failure to indicate your reliance on outside sources will be perceived as plagiarism, resulting in a failing grade, without a chance to make up the assignment.** Be aware too that you are expected to be working with your own ideas, in your own words; **over-reliance on the ideas of others will affect your grade adversely.**

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

SCHEDULE

The following will be our tentative reading schedule for the semester. The schedule is subject to change—with sufficient notice—depending on the pace we establish. **This schedule should give you a sense of the reading pace; we will be devoting some of our class time to discussions of writing techniques.**

Please note: Formal essays will be handed-in at the beginning of the class meeting following the peer-review workshops.

Tuesday, January 20:	INTRO
Thursday, January 22:	Hans Christian Andersen, “The Sandman” (BB) E.T.A. Hoffman, “The Sandman” (BB) Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” (BB)
Tuesday, January 27:	from Artemidorus’s <i>Oneirocritica</i> (BB) <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> RESPONSE
Thursday, January 29:	<i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i>
Tuesday, February 3:	<i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> RESPONSE
Thursday, February 5:	<i>The Poetics of Reverie</i>
Tuesday, February 10:	<i>The Poetics of Reverie</i> RESPONSE
Thursday, February 12:	First Essay: WORKSHOP
Tuesday, February 17:	<i>First Surrealist Manifesto</i> (BB) <i>Un chien andolou</i> (BB) Salvador Dalí, Rene Magritte, Surrealism, Dada (BB) RESPONSE
Thursday, February 19:	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Kubla Khan” (BB) Allen Ginsberg, “A Supermarket in California” and “Dream Record: June 8, 1955” (BB) Anne Sexton, “The Stand-Ins,” “45 Mercy Street,” and “The Death Baby” (BB) PROPOSED RESEARCH TOPIC
Tuesday, February 24:	Jorge Luis Borges, “The Circular Ruins” (BB) RESPONSE

Thursday, February 26:	<i>Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend</i>
Tuesday, March 3:	Karen Russell, "ZZ's Sleep-Away Camp for Disordered Dreamers" (BB)
Thursday, March 5:	Second Essay: WORKSHOP
Tuesday, March 10:	<i>The Dream Life of Balso Snell</i> RESPONSE
Thursday, March 12:	LIBRARY INSTRUCTION SESSION
Tuesday, March 17:	SPRING RECESS
Thursday, March 19:	SPRING RECESS
Tuesday, March 24:	RESEARCH PROPOSALS: WORKSHOP
Thursday, March 26:	from <i>The Dream Songs</i>
Tuesday, March 31:	<i>Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams</i> : "Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams" and "The Wishing Box" RESPONSE
Thursday, April 2:	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>
Tuesday, April 7:	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> RESPONSE
Thursday, April 9:	Third Essay: WORKSHOP
Tuesday, April 14:	<i>Through the Looking Glass</i> RESPONSE
Thursday, April 16:	<i>Through the Looking Glass</i>
Tuesday, April 21:	RESEARCH PAPER: WORKSHOP
Thursday, April 23:	Film Screening
Tuesday, April 28:	Film Screening
Thursday, April 30:	LAST CLASS