Engl 254H: Writing and Reading Imaginative Literature

Course Description:

Writing and Reading Imaginative Literature -

This course combines critical analysis with creative writing to explore what happens when traumatic experience becomes narrative. It begins with the premise that naming and writing about trauma transforms it into something other than the original experience. To form the basis for our writing in multiple genres, we will read novels, poetry, memoirs, and theoretical essays about different aspects of trauma and its effects. Readings will primarily foreground contemporary multi-ethnic American writers and will address personal traumas of sexual, racial, and domestic violence, as well as communal traumas such as colonialism, war, and genocide. In creating our own narratives (both fictional and non-fictional), we will seek to expand our understanding of narrative possibilities and choices, and attempt to push the boundaries of what narrative is and what it can do. The course will take the form of a discussion-based seminar and interactive writing workshop. A final project will enable you to develop one of the shorter assignments into a longer project involving a written and oral component. By joining this class, you agree to participate actively in and foster a sensitive, encouraging, and respectful community.

Primary readings may include Louise Erdrich's The Roundhouse, Jung Yun's Shelter, Alison Bechdel's Fun Home, Ta-Nehisi Coates' Between the World and Me, Thi Diem Thuy Le's The Gangster We Are All Looking For, poetry by Etel Adnan, Dionne Brand, and Ocean Vuong, and selected films (Moonlight) and artwork.

Season Course Is Offered:  Fall  Spring