The Logic of Dreams
GMST S190/LITR S311/HUMS S221

Yale Summer Session B, 2020 (remote), Mon/Wed/Fri 9am-11:15am
Professor: Paul North
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Office hours: Wednesday, 11:30-12:30

Course Description
One third of your life is spent asleep, and the life of sleep is dreams. And yet the images, sounds, and language of waking life almost totally dominates discussions of human goals, motivations, and meaningfulness. The last century began with a different dream: that dreams, rightly understood, would give us an unprecedented view of the hidden objectives of human behavior. “The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind,” Freud wrote at the turn of the century. This seminar will be a discussion about dreams and an inquiry into what they may still mean, more than one hundred years later. We will take our departure from a careful reading of Freud’s 1899 Interpretation of Dreams, which makes huge claims for the importance and meaning of dreams and proposes methods for their interpretation. Critiques and extensions of Freud’s theory will point up its strengths and limitations. Throughout the seminar we will read literature and watch films in which dreams play a central role. Students are expected to keep a dream journal to record and analyze their own dreams.

Sessions and Activities

6/29 Introductory remarks
9-9:30 Presentation of Syllabus, narrated slideshow, introductions
9:30-10 Read Kafka text aloud in group, sentence by sentence
10-10:30 Breakouts: discuss Kafka text
10:30-11 On google doc, live writing: student questions about dreams; vote on most important questions
11-11:15 wrap up

Ancient Perspectives
7/1 Homeric Iliad; Hebrew Bible, Genesis 37-45; Aristotle, On Dreams
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45 breakouts, 3 groups, students respond to prepared questions, 1 group on each text
9:45-10:30 group discussion, which questions answered by texts, different how
10:30-11 Mini-lecture: history of dream interpretation
11-11:15 wrap up

Interpretation of Dreams
7/3 Freud, Interpretation of Dreams (1899): Prefaces 1-8, “II. The Method of Interpreting
Dreams,” “III. A Dream is the Fulfillment of a Wish,” “IV. Distortion in Dreams”
7/6 Freud, Interpretation of Dreams (1899); “VI. The Dream-Work (A-D + I “Secondary Revision”)”
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45 breakouts, partner work on “Irma’s dream”
9:45-10:30 group discussion, how does Freud interpret the dream?
10:30-11 quick write, google docs — are all dreams wish fulfillments?
11-11:15 wrap up

Extensions and Critiques of Freud
7/8 Film: Hitchcock, Spellbound (1945)
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45 clips and discussion
9:45-10:30 clips and discussion
10:30-11 breakouts, two teams: Team A: Hitchcock does not accept Freud’s theory;
Team B: Hitchcock does accept Freud’s theory
11-11:15 wrap up

7/10 Freud, “Metapsychological Supplement”; Lacan, Seminar II, XI-XIII; Bolas, Ch. 3 and 4
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45 Mini-lecture: models of the psyche, with slides
9:45-10:30 Breakouts. Partner work on Freud’s text, main arguments
10:30-11 Group, Lacan and Bollas’s challenges to Freud
11-11:15 wrap up

Dream and Reality
7/13 Film: Zhou Sun, Zhou Yu’s Train (2002)
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45 Interpretation of film, with clips
9:45-10:30 Interpretation of film, with clips
10:30-11
11-11:15 wrap up

7/15 Descartes, Meditations; Malcolm, “Dreaming and Skepticism” (1956)
First Short Paper Due
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45
9:45-10:30
10:30-11
11-11:15 wrap up

Dreaming and Truth
7/17 Film: Richard Linklater, Waking Life (2001)
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45
9:45-10:30
10:30-11
11-11:15 wrap up

7/20 Calderon de la Barca, *Life Is a Dream*
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45
9:45-10:30
10:30-11
11-11:15 wrap up

**Dreaming and the Past**
7/22 Henri Bergson, “Dreams”; Walter Benjamin, “Dream Kitsch”
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45
9:45-10:30
10:30-11
11-11:15 wrap up

**Second Short Paper Due**
7/24 Andre Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), George Perec, *la boutique obscure*
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45
9:45-10:30
10:30-11
11-11:15 wrap up

9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45
9:45-10:30
10:30-11
11-11:15 wrap up

**Sleep and Art**
7/29 Nikolai Gogol, “The Portrait”
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45 Google doc: students diagram story
9:45-10:30 Breakouts: partner work, questions
10:30-11 Group interpretation
11-11:15 wrap up

7/31 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Kubla Khan”; Jorge Luis Borges, “Coleridge's Dream”
9-9:15 Protocol and student dreams
9:15-9:45 Breakouts, partner work, read poem aloud to one another, follow sounds
9:45-10:30 Mini-Lecture: Romantic theory of the imagination
10:30-11 Group discussion, the way of imagination
11-11:15 wrap up
Films
Films can be streamed on the Canvas site and must be watched before the class session in which they are to be discussed.

Books
Books can be purchased at: [??]

Other readings will be available as PDFs on the Canvas website: https://canvas.yale.edu/.

Coursework
Students in this course are required to keep a private dream journal throughout the semester, which may require making adjustments to sleeping habits. Dream journals are checked before class each Friday. Note: The contents of your dream journals are private. I do not read them, only mark the assignments completed or not completed. Beyond this important work, other more public work for the course will include a protocol, two short papers and a final exam. Protocol: in each class a different student will take notes on the most important thoughts in order to present them at the beginning of the subsequent class. For the short papers students are asked to interpret one or more of the texts we have read and discussed. Prompts are provided. The final exam is cumulative and in essay form. Participating in the conversations during Zoom sessions is also an important part of your experience and your grade.

Grades
Attendance Mandatory, see Summer School policy. No absences allowed.
Participation 20%
Dream Journal 10%
1 Protocol 10%
2 Short Papers (3-5 pages) 20%
Final exam 40%

Academic Honesty
Any work you submit in this class is understood by you and by the instructor to be your own original work and no one else’s. You may want to include in your text some words or ideas written by others, but you may do so only with the proper attribution. This means that you openly and obviously mark the words or ideas of others as taken from their work, whether they be another’s exact words or a paraphrase of their text or a key idea taken from them. It also means that you fully identify the original source in the proper place in your paper, in parentheses or footnotes, and if necessary in a bibliography as well. Submitting another’s work as your own without proper attribution carries serious consequences. Yale’s policy on academic honesty can be found here: http://catalog.yale.edu/first-year-student-handbook/academic-information/introduction-undergraduate-education/academic-honesty/.

Electronics policy [PLEASE READ]: during Zoom sessions you will be using your
device connected to the internet. There are some rules about what you should and should
not access during the class session. From 9am to 11:15am on the days of the class, if you
want to be marked present, you must close all windows and all webpages except those
necessary to do the classwork and stay connected. Usually this will be only four apps or
frequently we will access other sites during the class or use other apps. Please only do
this when instructed. A note on reference materials. Our references during classtime
should be the text or texts we are discussing and our own understanding, memory, and
imagination. We will practice abstinence with regard to Google and Wikipedia. In almost
all situations, this course wants insights and interpretations from you, not answers to
factual questions.