



THE INSPIRATION OF WILLIAM BLAKE
SPRING QUARTER: 2003 **THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE**

Meeting Times:

Thursday 6-10 p.m.
 Upper Division: 4 quarter hours

Location

L 3500
 Reference #: (30220)

Faculty: Rebecca Chamberlain Phone ext. 866-2141 e-mail: chambreb@evergreen.edu

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
 And heaven in a Wild Flower,
 Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
 And Eternity in an hour Auguries of Innocence*

Description:

What makes Blake one of the most challenging writers in English? Poet, artist, printer, visionary, and political activist, Blake's genius embraces contradictions and complexities. A controversial figure in his age, Blake emerged as a leading figure from the Romantic Movement and continues to inspire modern artists, writers, philosophers, musicians, poets and readers. Outraged at the conditions created by the Industrial Revolution and Colonial policies, Blake rages against poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation. At the same time, he is a deeply spiritual visionary whose mysticism is balanced by his practical work as an engraver. No other English writer has so fully explored the relationship between word, sound, color, and image. Participants will be involved in workshops and activities to develop their skills as visual artists, writers, performers, and critical thinkers as they explore and respond to Blake's visionary imagination,

The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.
Marriage of Heaven and Hell

Required Texts:

-Raine, Kathleen. *William Blake*, Thames and Hudson, London: 1999. (ISBN 0-500-20107-2)
-Blake, William, *The Complete Illuminated Books*, Thames and Hudson, London: 2000. (ISBN 0-500-28245-5)

Along with some of Blake's shorter works, we will read *Auguries Of Innocence*, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *Milton*, and your choice of *The Four Zoas* or *Jerusalem*.

Works of art history and literary criticism are on reserve in the library.

He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars.
General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, flatterer; For Art and Science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars. Jerusalem

Expectations:

-Faithful attendance and full participation at meetings, workshops, films, and seminars.
-Assigned reading and writing responses turned in on time.
-Maintaining a portfolio and journal of class handouts, notes, papers, research, and cumulative work for the quarter. These will be reviewed at fifth week and final evaluation conferences.
-Successful completion of individual and group projects, presentations, workshops, or assignments.

Improvement makes strait roads; but the crooked roads without Improvement are roads of Genius.

Marriage of Heaven and Hell

Course Equivalencies: Students can receive a total of four quarter hours credit for college level work in the following areas: literature, writing, art history.

Knowledge of Ideal Beauty is not to be Acquired. It is Born with us, Innate ideas in Every Man. Born with him: they are truly Himself. Discourses on Painting

Goals:

- 1) To experience the challenges of reading, interpreting, understanding, talking, and writing about Blake's works, including: an understanding of Blake's life and historic context, the influences of the Enlightenment and Romantic movement, and various theories of literary and art criticism.
- 2) To develop a deep understanding of Blake's poetic, mythic, and visual language, including: the interplay between word and image, his short lyric poems and longer prophetic works, and the ability to identify ideas, themes, motifs, metaphors, symbols, patterns, images, rhythms, and word-play in these texts.
- 3) To expand your understanding and practice of writing--including poems or lyrics, editing, revision, and various writing techniques.

- 4) To create a manuscript, inspired by Blake, using the tools and influences of our contemporary world to express your vision. A copy of your work will be compiled in a class portfolio.
- 5) To work in groups of individually to research, explore, and develop a short handout that presents some aspect of interpretation, meaning, or literary criticism based on the themes in at least one work that intrigues you.
- 6) To practice basic skills and concepts of oral presentation by reciting a poem or section of a longer work, and by giving a final presentation of your work at the end of the quarter.
- 7) To transfer the abilities and skills learned in this program to your academic, professional, and personal life.

*The hours of folly are measured by the clock; but the hours of wisdom
no clock can measure.*

Assignments

-Reading Responses: Assigned reading response papers turned in promptly at the beginning of seminar (1-2 pages, typed). These papers will allow you to: 1) comment upon the readings, lectures, workshops, and films, and 2) summarize, reflect upon, and integrate program topics, themes, and issues. (See handout, "Guidelines for Reading Responses.")

-Illuminated Manuscript: You will begin a manuscript, inspired by Blake, during in-class workshops. You will have the opportunity to develop your work, outside of class, by using a variety of tools and influences to express your vision. You must make one color copy, at the end of the quarter, for a class Portfolio. (See handout for details.)

-Creative Writing or Research Paper: A final draft, edited and revised during in-class writing workshops of a song(s), poem(s), or other creative piece of writing inspired by Blake, OR an academic essay or research paper on Blake's works (3-5 pages). (See handout for details)

-Recitation: You will recite or give a musical performance of a favorite Blake poem or section from a longer work. The material you choose does not have to be one of the assigned class readings. You will give this presentation during week five. There will be no reading response due this week. (See handout for details.)

-Research Presentation: You will have the opportunity to work individually, or in groups of 4-5 people, to research and develop a handout that presents some aspect of interpretation or literary criticism based on the themes, world-view, or close reading of one of the works we are studying. You will present your findings in a short five-minute presentation, and write-up your research notes in lieu of your reading response for that week. The idea is to press forward into the work of interpretation by going deeply into the complexity of a work that intrigues you. This is an opportunity to explore historic background, information, themes, symbols, motifs, metaphors, or nuances that might go unnoticed. In order to help you with this work, we will have a workshop on doing research on Blake with Sarah Peterson, a member of the Library faculty. A number of influential works of Blake criticism are already on reserve in the Library. This is an opportunity to develop your research skills along with a deeper understanding of Blake. (See handout—Doing Research on Blake-- for details.)

-A final performance and presentation of your creative writing (poem, song, story) or research paper, and your manuscript.

*Each grain of Sand,
Every Stone on Land,
Each rock & each hill,
Each fountain and rill,
Each herb & each tree,
Mountain, hill, earth & sea,
Cloud, Meteor & Star,
Are Men Seen Afar.*

Class Portfolio

Each student is required to keep a class portfolio throughout the quarter. This will be turned in during the fifth week and at the end of the quarter for evaluation conferences. Include your name and a table of contents. **Record the topic and date of each item** in your portfolio. Each section should be arranged chronologically. The portfolio must be kept in a loose-leaf three ring binder with dividers and should contain the following:

Note: Date and chronologically order each entry.

- 1) Table of contents, course syllabus, covenant, and all class handouts
- 2) Class notes: lectures, speakers, and film notes.
- 3) In-class workshops. (Date each entry)
- 4) Seminar notes
- 5) Research notes for individual or group presentations.
- 6) Reading responses and copies of the assignment for required texts. Follow format on reading response handout. (A section of reading notes is strongly recommended.)
- 7) Writing Workshops: In-class writing workshops and notes (date each entry).
Final drafts, early drafts, and editing workshop notes or your creative writing or research paper.
- 8) Self and Faculty evaluations (Three signed copies on official forms at the end of the quarter.)

*I give you the end of a golden string,
Only wind it into a ball:
It will lead you in at heavens gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall*