BASIC PROGRAM of LIBERAL EDUCATION for ADULTS

Autumn Quarter 2023

The Art and Ends of Reading: Reading as kenosis: reduced to zero—Beckett, Three Novels

INSTRUCTOR

Charles and Amy Thomas Elder

INSTRUCTOR

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Instructor can be contacted through Canvas message

DATES AND TIMES

COURSE LENGTH: 10 Weeks
DATES: Sep. 30- Dec. 9 (No class Nov. 25)

LOCATION

Remote Course

DATE OF THE WEEK: Saturday
TIMES: 9:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

COURSE CODE and SECTION: BASC70215 23A1

PREREQUISITE:
At least 2 years of the Basic Program

Remote courses require you to login to Canvas to access the Zoom Classroom. You will receive an invitation to join Canvas about a week before your course begins. Please visit https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts to find Canvas login instructions, Zoom instructions, and student training sessions.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

With the Three Novels of Beckett, we reach a zero point in the development of the novel: here reading is no longer a matter of self-enhancement but rather becomes a kind of kenosis (“self-emptying”).

In the seminar, we look at a couple of seminal reflections on the nature of the novel—Lawrence, “The Novel” and Camus, The Rebel (selection), together with several essays by E.M. Cioran (sometimes regarded as Beckett’s philosophical counterpart) and Susan Sontag’s “Introduction” to his collection, The Temptation to Exist.

In the tutorial, we read Beckett’s “three novels” (not to be called a trilogy): Malloy, Malone Dies, and The Unnamable, in addition to several notable critical commentaries—with a view to tracing not just the dissolution of the modern novel, but (perhaps) the end of Western individualism.

For depressive characters with strong spirits—and also, perhaps, a sense of humor.

REQUIRED TEXTS


Students can purchase books at the Gleacher Center Bookstore online at https://chicagobooth.bncollege.com/shop/chicagobooth/page/find-textbooks using the Textbook order form, or by using the ISBN number to order the correct edition elsewhere.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>AUTHORS</th>
<th>READING ASSIGNMENT</th>
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| 1    | Sep. 30  | Lawrence Beckett | “The Novel,” from *The Later D. H. Lawrence* (pp. 189-202) [Canvas]  
Molloy (pp. 7-65) |
| 2    | Oct. 7   | Camus Beckett | “Rebellion and Art,” from *The Rebel* (pp. 253-277) [Canvas]  
Molloy (pp. 65-123) |
| 3    | Oct. 14  | Ortega Beckett | “Notes on the Novel,” in *The Dehumanization of Art* (pp. 55-103)  
Molloy (pp. 123-176) |
| 4    | Oct. 21  | Ortega Bataille Beckett | Notes on the Novel” (continued);  
“Molloy’s Silence,” from *On Beckett: Essays and Criticism* (pp. 131-139) [Canvas]  
Malone Dies (pp. 179-202) |
| 5    | Oct. 28  | Sontag Cioaran Beckett | Introduction” to his collection, *The Temptation to Exist*  
“Thinking Against Oneself” and “On a Winded Civilization,” in *The Temptation to Exist* (pp. 7-64)  
Malone Dies (pp. 202-246) |
| 6    | Nov. 4   | Cioran Beckett | “Some Blind Alleys: A Letter” and “Style as Risk” in *The Temptation to Exist* (pp. 108-135)  
Malone Dies (pp. 246-288) |
| 7    | Nov. 11  | Cioran Beckett | “Beyond the Novel,” “Dealing with the Mystics” and “Rages and Resignations” in *The Temptation to Exist* (pp. 126-205)  
The Unnamable (pp. 291-331) |
| 8    | Nov. 18  | Cioran Blachot Beckett | The Temptation to Exist” (pp. 206-222)  
“Where Now? Who Now?,” from *On Beckett: Essays and Criticism* (pp. 141-148) [Canvas]  
The Unnamable (pp. 331-375) |
| 9    | Dec. 2   | Frye Iser | “The Nightmare Life in Death” from Bloom, ed., *Samuel Beckett: Modern Critical Views* (pp. 17-25) [Canvas]  
## WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 10</th>
<th>Dec. 9</th>
<th>Beckett</th>
<th><em>The Unnamable</em> (pp. 375-414)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>O’Hara</td>
<td>“Introduction” from <em>Twentieth Century Interpretations of Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable: A Collection of Critical Essays</em> (pp. 1-25)</td>
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<td>Fanizza</td>
<td>“The Word and Silence in Samuel Beckett’s <em>The Unnamable</em>,” from <em>Twentieth Century Interpretations of Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable: A Collection of Critical Essays</em> (pp. 71-81)</td>
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<td>Beckett</td>
<td>Review of <em>Three Novels</em></td>
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Students will receive an invitation to join the Graham School Student Community Canvas Site, a place to read announcements, have discussions, ask questions, and find resources.

**DISABILITY INFORMATION**  
Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class meeting at 773.702.6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu.