ENGL 4384: Senior Seminar
Fakes, Cons and Double-Talkers: Performativity and Literary Deception
Dr. Maria Doyle
MW 5:30-6:50
TLC 1204

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Course Description:
Fiction is, by definition, a fake: an untruth used to represent or reshape our perception of an element of the world of human experience. And yet some texts are more consciously fake than others, purposefully misleading audiences by playing on (and with) their expectations about character, genre and author. What is the value of such fakery, and how does it affect audiences’ interactions with texts? This course will examine characters and authors who are actors in their own lives – not acting as a profession but as a mode of encountering and manipulating the world – from parodic texts to unreliable narrations to characters and authors who are not who they purport to be. During the first half of the semester students will explore several primary texts drawing on theories of textual performance and audience expectations. The class will then use these discussions to define their individual research projects, which they will produce over the second half of the semester.

A catalog description and learning outcomes for this course can be found online at http://www.westga.edu/~engdept/fr/CourseGuid/4384.html.

Required Texts:
William Shakespeare, 1 Henry IV (Longman Cultural Edition)
Margaret Atwood, The Blind Assassin
David Henry Hwang, M. Butterfly
Grey Owl, Pilgrims of the Wild
Theoretical readings (Carlson, Booth, Frow, Garber, Browder, Francis) will be available on CourseDen

Requirements:
Short essays: Students will complete two short essays (3-5 pages) applying elements of theory to texts under discussion in the course. (20%)
Presentations: Students will complete three presentations as part of their coursework
Textual Analysis: Each student will sign up to present on a specific element of one of the primary texts under discussion in the first half of the course. Presentations should draw upon on an area of theoretical inquiry we have discussed in the class and should focus on examining a specific scene, theme or
character in relation to that theory. Presenters should be prepared to offer
discussion questions that will guide the class's exploration of the text. (10%)

Research proposal: Students will present a preliminary description of their
research idea and participate in a question and answer period about their plans for
individual projects. (5%)

Final research presentation: Students will present an overview of their projects in
their final stages including how their research has developed and how the review
and editing process has enabled them to reconsider and/or refine their original
idea. (5%)

Discussion participation: During the first half of the semester (8/20-10/15), students will
be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned theory and primary
text. The success of a seminar course depends on students' active engagement in
discussions: attendance and attentiveness is the minimum expected (minimum =
C), and earning a higher grade requires that you demonstrate that you have read
the material carefully, that you can offer intellectually sound questions and
observations about it, and that you respond thoughtfully and respectfully to the
issues raised by the instructor and by other students. (10%)

Participation in Research Workshops: During the second half of the semester (10/17-
11/28), students will participate in a series on peer review and anthology design
workshops. Active engagement is expected of all students in this process. (10%)

Research Paper: Students in the seminar will produce a fifteen-page research project on a
topic of your own choosing that draws on the theoretical framework of this class.
Your final paper, as the culmination of your work in the course and your time in
the English major, should represent your best work. It should thus demonstrate
that you can make a strong analytical argument, support that argument with
relevant primary and secondary evidence, identify and apply appropriate research
materials and express yourself in writing with stylistic acumen and grammatical
clarity. (40%)

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

All secondary readings (Carlson, Sayre, Booth, Frow, Graff, Garber, Browder and
Francis) are available on CourseDen; print them out or have them available on a tablet or
laptop for class discussions. Students should make sure to have physical or electronic
copies of the other assigned texts and to bring these to class.

8/20  Introduction: Text and Performance and *The Onion*
8/22  On CourseDen: Marvin Carlson, from *Performance* (3 files)
       Henry Sayre, "Performance" from *Critical Idioms for Literary Study*

       Presentations 1-2

9/3   Labor Day: No class meeting
On CourseDen: Wayne Booth, from *The Rhetoric of Fiction*
John Frow, from *Genre* (from Ch. 1 and Ch. 4)
Gerald Graff, "Determinacy/Indeterminacy" from *Critical Idioms for Literary Study*

9/10  Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*
9/12  Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*
      Presentations 3-4

9/17  Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*
      Presentations 5-7
9/19  Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*
      Short Paper #1 due: Papers must include your signed Academic Honesty Statement (found on the top of page 6).

9/24  On CourseDen: Margery Garber, from *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (from Ch. 1 and Ch. 12)
9/26  David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (Acts 1-2)

10/1  Continue discussion: David Henry Hwang, *M Butterfly*
      Presentations 8-9
10/3  On CourseDen: Laura Browder, from *Slippery Characters: Ethnic Impersonators and American Identities*
      Daniel Francis, from *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*

10/8  Grey Owl, *Pilgrims of the Wild*
10/10 Grey Owl, *Pilgrims of the Wild*
      Presentations 10-12

10/15 Grey Owl, *Pilgrims of the Wild*
      Short paper #2 due: Papers must include your signed Academic Honesty Statement (found on the top of page 6).
10/17 Research Workshop I

10/22 No class meeting: work on research proposals
10/24 Proposal presentations and peer review
10/29 Anthology design workshop
10/31 Draft #1 due (5 pages): Peer review workshop

11/5  Individual consultations; work on draft 2
11/7  Anthology design workshop

11/12 Individual consultations
11/14 Draft #2 due (8 pages): Peer review workshop
Nov 19-25: Thanksgiving break

11/26 Final design workshop
11/28 Draft # 3 (12 pages) and final presentations

Exam: Papers due by Dec. 5 at noon: turn in a paper and electronic copy of your final course project along with author biography. Papers must include your signed Academic Honesty Statement (found on the top of page 6).
Class Policies: IMPORTANT!

No extra credit: I do not give 'makeup' assignments, and unless an exceptional opportunity arises that is directly related to the course material, I do not offer 'extra credit' opportunities: you will all be assessed by the same methods on the same assignments, particularly given that this is your capstone course in your major. If you find that you are having trouble with the course material, adjust your study schedule, come to my office hours or make an appointment at the Writing Center to get help with your writing.

Special Needs: If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see me at the beginning of the semester; I will be happy to discuss your situation. If you have a disability that you have not yet registered through the Disabled Student Services Office, please contact Dr. Ann Phillips in Student Development (678-839-6428).

Nonengagement Policy: As part of the University’s RPG (Retention, Progression and Graduation) initiative mandated by the State of Georgia, faculty are required to report students who demonstrate their nonengagement in the first several weeks of the course. Nonengagement includes repeated inattentiveness (i.e. texting, doing tasks not related to this course during class time, sleeping in class), frequent absences or lateness or lack of preparation for class discussion. Students who demonstrate these behaviors will be referred for tutoring or counseling to help them understand the value of individual engagement to their academic success.

Outside Sources and Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty involves any attempt on your part to claim ideas and/or specific phrasing that you have gotten from elsewhere – including, but not limited to, Wikipedia, the dictionary, The New York Times, Sparknotes, an article you found that just sounds "better" than you think you could say it or your Aunt Sally – as your own or to fabricate sources or evidence so as to make your argument sound stronger. Plagiarism thus includes actions such as copying papers or online responses from the internet or other sources (including word-for-word copying and paraphrasing without citation), cheating on exams, turning in work written by someone else or turning in work that you previously submitted for another course.

* All work that you turn in for this course must be your work completed in this semester in response to an assignment for this class; you may develop your final project based on an idea or text drawn from another class, but you must develop your written analysis and your research as original work in response to this particular course topic. Course assignments are designed to help you develop a set of skills, not just produce information, and failure to do your own work both shortchanges you in this skill development process – rather like attempting to play basketball or sculpt a piece of wood without mastering the dribble or learning about your tools – and violates the shared trust of this course.

* Academic dishonesty is a serious offense, and plagiarizing any assignment or part thereof, regardless of the relative value of the assignment in the calculation of your course grade, is grounds for failure of the course. You are all advanced students who understand what does and what does not constitute academic honesty, and you will be held accountable for that knowledge.
* In keeping with departmental and university honor policies, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported both to the Chair of the English Department and to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In short, do your own work and when you use outside information, provide accurate citations for it. For more on the English Department's plagiarism policy, see http://www.westga.edu/~engdept/Plagiarism/pladef.html.

* Students should include a signed copy of the following statement with each written assignment (your short essay and final research project) submitted this semester: "I have read the course statement on academic honesty, and I pledge that the material I am submitting for credit in this class is my own work."

**Deadlines and Late Policy:** Due dates for all assignments are listed on the syllabus; make note of them and plan your schedule accordingly. For the final project, no late papers will be accepted, and students MUST submit both a paper and electronic copy of the final project. For the short papers, a late penalty of one half of a letter grade will be assessed for each day that a paper is late. Papers that are more than four days late (including weekend days and holidays) will receive an automatic "F." Extensions will be granted only if you have a verifiable medical or other sufficiently serious ("seriousness" will be determined at the instructor's discretion) excuse and you request an extension (in person, via email or phone) before the paper deadline. Regardless of your situation, no extensions will be granted beyond the four-day late period. Having papers or exams for other classes, a schedule conflict with work or other responsibilities, or simply being "swamped" are not sufficiently serious excuses and will not result in your being granted an extension. Late penalties for papers turned in outside of class will be assessed based on when I receive the paper, since if you do not hand it to me directly, I cannot verify when you turned it in.

**Paper Format:** All papers should be typed, double-spaced, in a standard 12 point font (preferably Times New Roman) with 1" margins. Big fonts, extra spaces between your paragraphs, and large margins are pretty easy to spot, so stick to the standard size guidelines and use the revision and workshop process to help you generate enough information to present a clear and well-reasoned analysis within the designated space limitations. Papers are required to have inline citations where appropriate and a descriptive title (i.e. not "Oedipus" but "The Chorus as Audience in Oedipus"), and you must number your pages and staple (NOT paper clip, glue, or origami fold) them together. Title pages are unnecessary; simply include your name, the course number and the date in the top right corner of your first page. Include your signed honor statement either at the end of your text or on your bibliography page.