Literature and Hunger  
KHC EN 101  
Fall 2011  
Tuesday/Thursday  
12:30 PM – 2:00 PM  
Room: KHC 107

Professor Rosanna Warren  
Office hours: Wednesdays 2-3 PM, Tuesdays & Thursdays 2-3 PM, and by appointment.  
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*WARNING: I DO NOT CHECK MY E-MAIL EVERYDAY.

Course Description and Objectives  
The course pursues themes of hunger, the consumption of food, the formation of community, and relation to the sacred, through a sequence of readings in the Western tradition. By reading classic works (The Odyssey, selections from The Hebrew Bible and Christian Scriptures, selections from The Divine Comedy, the Letters of St. Catherine of Siena, Paradise Lost), and modern works by Kafka, Simone Weil, Louise Glück, Frank Bidart, and Isak Dinesen, we will examine how different philosophies have imagined the acceptance or rejection of love, life, and the sacred in terms of the symbolism of food. Class work will involve close analysis of literary works, even those in translation; intensive critical writing; and secondary readings in literary criticism, anthropology, theology, and psychology.

Required Texts  
1. The Odyssey, tr. Robert Fitzgerald  
2. The Bible, King James translation  
3. Dante Alighieri, Inferno, tr. Robert Pinsky  
4. Letters of St. Catherine of Siena, course website  
6. “A Hunger Artist,” Franz Kafka, course website  
7. Louise Glück poems, course website  
8. In the Western Night, Frank Bidart,  
9. Simone Weil, selected essays, course website  
10. Anecdotes of Destiny, Isak Dinesen, course website  
11. The Allyn & Bacon Handbook

On Reserve at Mugar Library (some are also on the blackboard site under “Course Documents”):  

1. CLEANTH BROOKS, THE WELL WROUGHT URN  
2. CAROLINE WALKER BYNUM, HOLY FEAST AND HOLY FAST  
3. ARCHIE BURNETT, “SENSE VARIOUSLY DRAWN OUT: THE LINE IN PARADISE LOST”
4. Isak Dinesen, *Anecdotes of Destiny*
5. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*
6. Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, *Hunger and Public Action*
8. Gillian Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord’s Table*
9. Margaret Ferguson and Mary Nyquist, *Re-membering Milton*
11. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*
12. Frances Moore Lappé, *Hope’s Edge*
13. I.M. Lewis, *Religion in Context*
15. Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*
16. Sheila Reindl, *Sensing the Self*
17. Simone Weil, *First and Last Notebooks* and *Attente de Dieu (Waiting On God)*

**Course Requirements:**

- Three short papers, three longer papers, oral summaries in class, and a final exam.

  **Short papers:** one one-page paper, and two two-page papers, to introduce techniques of summary, evaluation, and interpretation.

  **Longer papers:** one four-page paper reading a primary work (the Letters of St. Catherine of Siena) in the perspective provided by a secondary sources on reserve in the Mugar Library. One five-page research paper on *Paradise Lost* in the light of several secondary sources you will find on reserve. The final essay, combining research and interpretation on a subject of your choice from the readings in the course, is to be six pages long, preceded by an annotated bibliography and outline. The sources for this paper will come from the long list of works on reserve and from your own outside research.

  **Format:** please type your papers, double-space. Follow MLA guidelines for citation (See *Allyn & Bacon* 629-651). Number your pages after page one, and on your first page include your name, the name of the course, the date, the professor’s name, and the title of your paper. I will not accept late papers unless you have a serious excuse. If you are ill on the day a paper is due, make every effort to communicate with me and to ask for an extension.

  **Class participation and absences:** It is a serious matter to be absent from this class, since much of the work is communal in nature. More than two unexcused absences will result in a drop in your grade. Late arrivals to class are disruptive and will also lower your grade. You are expected to keep up with the readings and to participate in a lively fashion in class discussion.

  **Oral summaries:** To initiate each class, I will ask a student, randomly chosen, to make an oral presentation of the primary or secondary work that the whole class will have read for that day. You have three to five minutes in which to speak clearly and concisely from notes. Your presentations will initiate class discussion. This means that you must take careful notes on your readings for each class and be prepared to speak to your classmates about the reading.

  **Conferences:** Students should meet with me at least twice this semester. I would be happy to meet with you more often if you find that helpful. I want to review your work in
progress, and consult with you about your choice of a topic for your final research paper. Be sure to meet with me at least once before the Thanksgiving vacation.

**Preparation:** To give you ample time to prepare your final essay, a proposal and an annotated bibliography will be due several days before the paper itself.

**Attendance**
Attendance in class is required

**Academic Dishonesty**
A class is a temporary community built on mutual trust and common intellectual purpose. Plagiarism violates that trust and damages the student’s own education. The Academic Conduct Code booklet defines plagiarism as “an attempt by a student to represent the work of another as his or her own.” Suspected plagiarism in this class will be sent to the Academic Conduct Committee. Students are expected to abide by both KHC and BU’s Undergraduate Academic Conduct Code. The Academic Conduct Code can be found at [http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/)

**Grading**
- Three short papers: 15%
- St. Catherine paper: 20%
- *Paradise Lost* paper: 20%
- Final paper: 20%
- Final exam: 25%

**Course Outline & Readings**

- **9/13** *Odyssey* 4-6. **Paper due**, one page summary of Werner Jaeger’s explanation of the Homeric concept of *arête*.
- **9/15** *Odyssey* 7-9.
- **9/20** *Odyssey* 10-18.
- **9/22** *Odyssey* 19-24. **Paper due:** two page paper on the power of food in *The Odyssey*. Focus on a specific scene.
- **9/27** The Book of Genesis.
- **9/29** The Book of Exodus.
- **10/4** Leviticus. Read also “The Abominations of Leviticus” by Mary Douglas, in *Purity and Danger*, on reserve.


10/25 Letters of St. Catherine, continued. Bynum chapter 5, “Food in the Writings of Women Mystics.”

10/27 *Paradise Lost* Book I. Bynum chapter 6, “Food as Control of Self.”

11/1 *Paradise Lost* Books II and III. **Paper due:** four page interpretive paper on The Letters of St. Catherine. Discuss her use of imagery and techniques of persuasion, relying partly on Brooks, partly on Bynum, and a good deal on your own observation.

11/3 *Paradise Lost* Books IV and V. VISIT FROM DR. APOVIAN, NUTRITION SPECIALIST.

11/8 *Paradise Lost* Books VI, VII, VIII.

11/10 *Paradise Lost* Books IX, X.

11/15 *Paradise Lost* Books XI, XII.

11/17 Kafka, “A Hunger Artist”

11/22 Louise Glück, selected poems. Xeroxes to be handed out. Sheila Reindl, *Sensing the Self*, chapters 1, 2, 5. On reserve.

11/24 THANKSGIVING VACATION: ENJOY YOURSELVES!


12/6 Frank Bidart, “Ellen West.” **Proposal and Annotated Bibliography for final paper due.**

12/8 See the film *Babette’s Feast*, dir. Gabriel Axel, and read Isak Dinesen’s short story “Babette’s Feast” in her *Anecdotes of Destiny*, on reserve. We will view clips of the film in class and discuss it with the story.

12/9 **Final paper due**, six pages. Absolutely no extensions.

12/21 FINAL EXAM, 9-11 a.m.