

Stories of *Deception*:*Lies, Cons, Hoaxes, & Fakes* FALL 2007

Tu Th 2:55–4:10

230 Rockefeller

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Office Hours:

Tu 1–2, Th 11–12, & by appointment

I'm sick and tired of the stories that you always tell
 Shakespeare couldn't tell a story that well
 See, you're the largest liar that was ever created
 You and Pinocchio are probably related
 Full of crisscrossed fits, you lie all the time
 Your tongue should be embarrassed, you're a threat to mankind

— L.L. Cool J, "That's a Lie" (*Radio*, 1985)

Topic

Animals disguise themselves with camouflage and mimicry. Human beings lie and deceive. This seminar explores human deception in two main cultural contexts: China (modern and pre-modern) and nineteenth- to twentieth-century America.

In particular, we will read and think about different ways of talking about deception: Into what categories do people place deceptive acts and language? In what terms do they evaluate it, linguistically, ethically, esthetically and otherwise? Are the replies to these questions universal, or are they local in time and space? And are these questions and answers uniform within a given society or are they specific to subgroups, or to fields of academic inquiry?

Goals

Our principal goals are to *understand* the issues raised and problems addressed in various contexts and fields of study, to *analyze* the treatment of these issues in the works we read, to *synthesize* the points of view and modes of argument we encounter, and above all to *express* these findings—including our own insights, conclusions, and applications—in clear prose.

Requirements

The two fundamental requirements for this class are completion of all writing assignments and participation in the seminar, in person and online.

Participation

Participation means: coming to class on time and having read the assigned material carefully, participating in class discussions, and contributing to the class wiki and discussion forum (see below).

Attendance is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences, or repeated tardiness, *will* affect your participation grade. If you know beforehand that you will not be able to attend (including religious observances, field trips, etc.), notify the instructor beforehand.

For every meeting of the seminar, one student will be designated as note taker; he or she will be responsible for summarizing that day's discussion, announcements, amusing anecdotes, etc., to post on the Blackboard discussion forum. These notes, which may be as brief as a single paragraph, will be a handy reminder of what went on at each session. A sign-up sheet will be distributed at the first meeting.

Writing Assignments

Three short (3–5 page) assignments and one long (approx. 7 page) essay constitute the major writing assignments for the seminar. Most of these will be revised at least once, some repeatedly. Several short writing exercises will be assigned or will be held during class time. Unless otherwise indicated, these not will be graded but are required and handing them in on time will form a part of your writing grade.

You may choose the topic of the long paper in consultation with the instructor. It should have some connection, however loose, with the topic of the course, and will typically involve some outside research.

All writing assignments **must** be submitted by the due date; late papers will not be accepted, except in cases of medical or other documented emergencies. Remember, however, that many due dates are for *drafts*; it is better to submit an imperfect or incomplete draft than nothing at all. Papers may also be submitted early in the instructor's mailbox at 381 Rockefeller Hall (please send an email indicating that you have done so).

Collaborative work and peer review are an important component of the class, so bear in mind that any assignment may be shared with and seen by classmates in peer review sessions as well as the instructor.

Keep all computer files, drafts and comments on your assignments; you will need them at the end of the semester when you compile a portfolio. A binder or file folder would be a worthwhile investment for this purpose.

All written work should be word-processed and printed according to the following criteria:

- single-sided, with pages **stapled** and **numbered**
- all text, except block quotes and footnotes or endnotes, **double-spaced**
- in a standard 12-point font (e.g., Times, Helvetica)
- with standard (1"–1.25") margins
- no cover sheet is needed, but include your **name**, the **date**, and a **title** on the first page
- if an assignment will be or has been revised, indicate the revision state on the first page (e.g., "first draft," "second draft/first revision," "final version")

Electronic submission of papers is *not* permitted without prior permission.

Citations should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* format (see *Writer's Reference*). You may, in consultation with the instructor, choose to follow another format (APA, MLA), especially if that format is the standard in your intended major.

Grading

Final grades will be based on the following components:

Short essays and exercises:	30%
Long essay & final portfolio:	40%
In-class participation:	20%
Online participation:	10%

Many individual drafts will not be graded, only the final version of an assignment. However, effort and improvement during the revision process are considered.

Readings

The following **required** textbooks are available for purchase at the Cornell Store:

- Diana Hacker, *Writer's Reference* (6th Edition)
- Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*
- Harry Frankfurt, *On Bullshit*
- Susan D. Blum, *Lies that Bind: Chinese Truth, Other Truths*

One book is available for **optional** purchase:

- Joseph Williams, *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*

The **required** course reader is also available for purchase from the Cornell Store.

We will also use two online resources extensively, a Blackboard page and a wiki.

You may access Blackboard by logging in to blackboard.cornell.edu with your Cornell ID, then choosing the page for the class. If you do not see ASIAN 102.1 listed, contact the instructor to make sure you are enrolled in the user list (this does not happen automatically when you enroll in a class). The Blackboard page hosts electronic readings, a discussion forum, announcements, and other course information. Finally, some of our readings will be on other websites (links will be on Blackboard).

A Cornell-hosted wiki has been created for the class. It contains course documents and other material that can be viewed and edited by everyone in the class. Unlike well-known wikis such as Wikipedia, this is *not* a public website, and is *not* accessible to “everyone.” It is solely for the use of our seminar and access is password-protected. Some assignments will involve collaborating on or otherwise posting material to the wiki.

The wiki is located here (there is also a link on the Blackboard page): snurl.com/1phql

To find out more about wikis in general, you may look at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki or search.eb.com.proxy.library.cornell.edu:2048/eb/article-9404276

License to Deceive

In keeping with the topic of the seminar, every student will have the opportunity to engage in one act of deception over the semester. To exercise this privilege, you will be able to use a “license to deceive,” one of which will be issued to each student in the class. The procedure for using the licenses will be described when they are issued. At the last meeting of the seminar, the use students made of their licenses will be revealed in a wrap-up session. Until then, the licenses will remain sealed, and no one else, including the instructor, will know for sure how they have been employed.

The use of the license is optional and has no effect on your grade. But this is probably the only time you’ll get to do something like this while you’re at Cornell, so why wouldn’t you?

The license may be used to cover deceptive statements made in any written assignment in the seminar, including essays and other in-class assignments, postings to the Blackboard discussion board, and material on the wiki. It may *not* be used to justify actions that otherwise violate Cornell’s Code of Academic Integrity (cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html), including plagiarism. You may, for example, invent a book or article and “quote” from it, but not quote a real one without an appropriate citation. Plagiarism is an academic crime and will be treated seriously. If you have any questions about citations practices, use of sources, etc., discuss them with the instructor.

Reading Schedule (subject to change)		
Wk	Day	Readings * : course reader BB: Blackboard
1	8/28	
	8/30	Clone Wars (articles from <i>Science</i> and <i>Nature</i> on BB)
2	9/4	* Laughton, <i>Wonder Woman</i> , selections
	9/6	* Marston, <i>The Lie Detector</i> , selections
3	9/11	Alder, "A Social History of Untruth" Department of Labor Fact Sheet #36 (link on BB) FBI File of William Marston (BB)
	9/13	
4	9/18	Frankfurt, <i>On Bullshit</i>
	9/20	Library visit
5	9/25	* Poe, "Diddling"
	9/27	
6	10/2	Conferences
	10/4	Davis, <i>Return of Martin Guerre</i> , preface, 1–61
7	10/9	No class – Fall Break
	10/11	Davis, <i>Return of Martin Guerre</i> , 62–125
8	10/16	* Maurer, <i>The Big Con</i> , selections * <i>New Book of Swindles</i>
	10/18	
9	10/23	* Melville, <i>The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade</i> , selections
	10/25	
10	10/30	Blum, <i>Lies that Bind</i> , Preface & Ch. 1
	11/1	Blum, <i>Lies that Bind</i> , Chs. 2–4
11	11/6	* Murray, "Learning to Deceive" * Burack, "Provoking Nonpileptic Seizures"
	11/8	
12	11/13	Blum, <i>Lies that Bind</i> , Ch. 5–6
	11/15	* "Lan Dingyuan's Casebook"
13	11/20	* Wechsler, "Inhaling the Spore" www.mjt.org
	11/22	No class – Thanksgiving
14	11/27	Conferences and Peer Group Meetings
	11/29	Blum, <i>Lies that Bind</i> , Chs. 7–9

Writing/Revision Schedule (subject to change)		
Wk	Day	WE: Writing exercise WA: Writing assignment
1	8/28	WE #1 assigned
	8/30	WE #1 due
2	9/4	WE #1 returned WA #1 assigned
	9/6	
3	9/11	WA #1 due
	9/13	WE #2 assigned (on wiki)
4	9/18	WA #1 returned WE #2 due (on wiki; posted by class time)
	9/20	Library Visit WA #2 assigned
5	9/25	
	9/27	WA #2 due
6	10/2	Conference #1
	10/4	WA #2 revision due
7	10/9	No class – Fall Break
	10/11	WA #2 returned
8	10/16	WA #3 assigned
	10/18	
9	10/23	WA #3 due
	10/25	WA #2/3 peer review
10	10/30	further revisions on WA #2/3 due
	11/1	WE #2 assigned Topic for Long Paper due
11	11/6	WE #2 due
	11/8	Preliminary Bibliography for Long Paper due
12	11/13	Peer discussion of Long Paper topics
	11/15	
13	11/20	Partial draft of Long Paper
	11/22	No class – Thanksgiving
14	11/27	Group discussions of drafts
	11/29	Collect portfolio, wrap-up discussion
	12/7	Final portfolio due