English 4010 FAO
Blake and Gift Exchange

Course Location: OA 2019
Class Times: Monday & Wednesday 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.
Prerequisites: One FCE in English at the first-year level including at least one of English 1111 or 1112, or permission of the Department. English 2903 and/or 3415 will be advantageous, but are not required.

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Instructor Information:
Instructor: Dr. Alice den Otter
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Office Hours: MWF 11:30-1, TTH 2:30-4 or by appointment.

Course Description/Overview
This is a seminar course focused on the texts (both poetry and art) of William Blake from the perspective of Gift Exchange theory. Blake may be best known for his Songs
of Innocence and of Experience, but some of his most exciting texts are The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, which suggests that changes in perception can give meaningful changes to one’s circumstances, Visions of the Daughters of Albion, which explores the complexities of love, sex, and giving too much, and Milton, which investigates the role of self-sacrifice in art and human relations. Each of these texts involves various relationships that are perhaps best understood through theories of gift exchange. Are gifts necessary to the development of community? What is a good gift? Can a gift be poison (German gif)? Can a gift be too much or too little? Is there such a thing as a pure or free gift? We will be examining various acts of giving, receiving, and returning (or not) in Blake's texts. In the process, we will recognize not only Blake's imaginative variations on social codes of behavior, but also his artistic gifts and our own appreciative responses.

Course Objectives and/or Learner Outcomes
By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- generally articulate and apply theories of gift exchange
- summarize a specific gift theory and present it to the class
- discuss gifts in relation to William Blake’s texts
- critically analyze Blakean texts in terms of style and content
- evaluate the historical/social significance of Blake’s texts
- explicate a Blakean passage
- identify a viable research question, evaluate resources, and develop a strong original argument with respect to one or two Blakean texts.
- present oral and written ideas persuasively, with specific support for claims and clear effective prose.

Course Resources:

Required Course Text(s)


Blake and Gift Exchange Course Pack (CP), including the following articles:


Course Website:
*Desire2Learn*

Course Schedule

**Sept. 8**  Why Consider Blake and Gift Exchange?  
Introduction to the course. During first class read Blake “Introduction [SI]”  

**10**  What are the Dynamics of Gift Exchange?  

**15**  How Complex Are Blake’s Gifts?  
to Know Love from Deceit” M 384; Optional: Glen Vision and Disenchantment 148-64 (CP 12-20).

17 How Do Blake’s Gifts Circulate?

22 What If the Gift Is Not Nourished But Commodified?
Before class read Hyde 32-50; Douglas “Foreword: No Free Gifts” ix- xviii. (CP 29-33); Letter to Trussler N 470-1.

24 How Might a Gift Be Poisoned?

29 How Do Gifts Inspire or Accompany Transformation?
Before class read Hyde 51-71; Ginsberg N 519-523; Blake “Eternity” N 385.

Oct. 1 How Paradoxical Is the Gift of Perception?

6 When Is Gift Exchange a Female Commerce?
Before class read Hyde 121-141; Ostriker N 560-571.

8 When Is It Selfish to Refuse a Gift?
Before class read Blake The Book of Thel N 48-54.

15 How Is Gift Exchange a Social Game?

20 How Do Gifts Control a Relationship?
Before class read Blake Visions of the Daughters of Albion N55-65.

22 How Are Gifts the Contraries of Commodities?

27 Do Angels Give Prolific Gifts?
Before class read Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell N66-82.

29 Is the Free Gift Impossible?
Before class read Hyde 72-95; Derrida “The Time of the King” 6-33 (CP 46-59).

Nov. 3 **How Binding Are Gifts?**
Before class read Blake, “The Mental Traveller” N 397-399.
Last class before the last day to withdraw without academic penalty (Nov 4)

5 **How Does a Gift Relieve Pressure?**

10 **What Excess Does the Lack of Giving Engender?**
Before class read Blake, *The Book of Urizen* N 112-130.

12 **What is the Difference between Gift and Contract?**
Before class read Hyde 96-120; Damon “Hayley” 176-178 (CP 68-69); Letters N481-485; Allen “The Sonnets of William Hayley and Gift Exchange” 383-385 (CP 70-72).

17 **Can One Give Too Much?**
Before class read *Milton* Book 1, pl. 1-15/14 line 9, N 149-162.

19 **How Are Creative Gifts Kept Alive?**
Before class read Hyde 185-207; Bloom N 590-591.

24 **How Is Self-Annihilation a Gift?**
Before class read Blake *Milton* Book I, pl. 15/14 line 10 to pl. 31/29 line 67, N162-185.
Research Essay due.

26 **How Does One Protect the Gift-Sphere?**
Before class read Hyde 356-368; Johnson “Milton and its Contexts” 231-250 (CP 73-83).

Dec. 1 **What Gifts Emerge from the Union of Contraries?**
### Assignments and Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and Participation</td>
<td>Each Week</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3-10 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory Presentation</td>
<td>Select from Schedule</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Preparation Materials</td>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5-7 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>November 24</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9-12 pages</td>
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### Assignment Policies
- All assignments are individual assignments and cannot be completed collaboratively.
- Assignments are due by class time on the dates indicated. If you do not hand in your paper in class, send it as an email attachment to adenotte@lakeheadu.ca and then hand in a paper copy as soon as possible to the instructor’s office (OA 3011). Marking will not begin until the paper copy has been submitted. Keep a copy of all papers you submit in case of accidental loss before they are marked. No plastic covers please.
- If you require an extension, you must ask for one BEFORE the due date. Plan ahead, and let the instructor know if time conflicts arise so that we can negotiate a more workable deadline.
- Late assignments will be marked down half a letter grade each day they are late without permission; that is, an "A" quality paper due on Tuesday will receive an "A-" on Wednesday, a "B+" on Thursday, etc. Plan ahead, and let me know if time conflicts arise so that we can negotiate a more workable deadline.
- All assignments must be in MLA format, double spaced, with 1” margins, and in 12 point font.
- Internet sources are only permitted from academic journals (listed in academic databases, such as MLA Bibliography or JSTOR). Articles must be accompanied by the author’s name(s) and a bibliography. Such sources must be cited and must include the date of publication as well as the date accessed by you.
- All sources used for an assignment, even as paraphrases in your own words, MUST be acknowledged by placing the source reference in parentheses accompanied by page number(s). All direct material quoted from a text, even a single sentence, phrase, or key word, MUST be placed in quotation marks, followed by the source reference in parentheses accompanied by page number(s). See the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. (Basic MLA format details may be found online at [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/)) Failure to properly document sources constitutes plagiarism and will be penalized as per University policies below.
- Exceptions to these policies are allowed only with a doctor’s note or other appropriate documentation.
Assignments

Preparation and Participation (20%):
This is a seminar course, so your full involvement is required, including active listening, stimulating questions, and engaged discussion. It is impossible to do so without having read the required readings before class. In order to assist with preparation and participation, each of you is expected to prepare a question with respect to the readings once a week and post this at least 3 hours before class in the Desire2Learn discussion area. Aim for a question that is open-ended and will generate interesting discussion. Try not to overlap with someone else’s question (although in some cases it might be possible to clarify or deepen it). We will be responding to the questions throughout each class, so before class consider how you might answer your own question (in case no one knows what to do with it). Quality of participation is essential, as is respect for the ideas of others in the class. Length of questions: 3-10 lines.

Theory Presentation (20%)
Each of you will give an oral seminar presentation based on one of the theory chapters by Hyde, Douglas, Bourdieu, Derrida, or Bataille. You will be signing up for one of these articles in the second week of class and will be presenting it at the beginning of class on the date indicated on the course outline. You are strongly advised to consult with me about your theory at least one week prior to the seminar so we can discuss your approach, concerns, and any other issues that arise. For your presentation, you will need to include the following features:

1. a summary of the gift theory (NOTE: Although you are not expected to use secondary material, you must mention any secondary material you consulted at the beginning of the presentation and indicate any direct quotes from such sources used throughout);

2. a one-page handout with the 4-6 most useful quotations from the theory (include bibliographical information at the top and include page numbers for each quotation). Place quotes in quotation marks. I can make photocopies for the class if I receive the handout in time.

3. an explanation as to why you chose these particular quotations (including a rationale for not including any others that might be equally significant);

4. a brief application to one or two Blakean texts studied in recent weeks;

5. a question that you would like the class to explore further in the discussion after the presentation. NOTE: this question replaces your weekly preparation question and should be posted in Desire2Learn at least 3 hours before class.

Your presentation should be no more than 30 minutes long so as to leave lots of time for discussion. Your presentation will be graded according to its accuracy, clarity, usefulness, perception, and ability to stimulate class discussion. Unless you have a documented medical reason, missing a seminar presentation will result in a grade of zero. If you do have a legitimate reason, you will be asked to present your seminar in
the next available time slot. You may be asked to change your theory focus to align with the required theory reading for a later class. If you know your presentation date is not feasible for you, please consult with me as soon as possible so that we can reschedule.

**Essay Preparation Materials (30%) DUE October 15, 2014**

Choose a Blake text that you would like to explore for your essay. (This could be a text studied in class, but it does not have to be.) Then complete the following 5 steps (please ask for help if you are having difficulty with any of them):

1. In 1-2 pages, explicate 10-14 consecutive lines from a key page or plate in your chosen text, paying attention to the following details:
   a. word usage (look up words in dictionary for denotations, connotations, or etymologies)
   b. style (the order of the words, grammatical construction, figures of speech, unexpected or significant omissions)
   c. relevance to gifts (even the lack thereof)
2. In one paragraph, indicate why you personally like this text.
3. In one paragraph, identify which gift theory (or theories) you would like to use to discuss this text and explain your rationale for using it, including a quotation to show the flavour of the theory. Feel free to include a theory (or theories) that we have not studied in class.
4. In a small paragraph or point-form outline, suggest a preliminary argumentative claim that you would like to make about the text and sketch at least three ways that you could support that claim. This will become the working thesis for your essay.
5. In 2-3 pages, provide an annotated bibliography of 10 sources that you could use for your essay. The best place to look for academic books or articles on your chosen work, theory, and/or topic is the MLA Bibliography (found at Lakehead Library, Article Databases). Make sure that at least four sources are from 2005 to the present, at least four sources are from books, and at least four are from literary journals. Some articles will need to be ordered via RACER, which could take approximately 2 weeks to arrive, so begin searching as soon as possible. Each annotation should include the following:
   a. full MLA documentation
   b. one-two sentence summary of the author’s argument
   c. relevance to your essay, including what the author missed (and what your essay will supply as an original contribution).
   d. a quotation from the source that will work nicely either to support your argument or to act as a foil with which you will disagree

Please double space, with 1 inch margins, 12 point font. Length: 5-7 pages. Due October 15, 2014.

**Research Essay (30%) DUE November 24, 2014**
Write an interesting, well-researched, and theoretically-based essay on gift exchange in relation to your chosen Blake text, developing and expanding the ideas presented in your approved proposal. Use critical or contextual sources as well as your own explications of key words and passages to persuade your reader to agree with you. Note that all borrowed sources, even of paraphrased ideas, must be documented (using quotation marks for all direct quotes and references for all paraphrases). This includes internet sources and class notes. When in doubt, ask for help. Use MLA style. Length: 9-12 typed, double-spaced pages, in 12 point font, with 1 inch margins. Due Nov. 24, 2014. Plan ahead. Please see me if unexpected circumstances might warrant an extension. Your paper will be marked according to the English Marking Standards (see below).

Marking Standards

Preparation Questions will be marked for comprehension, insight, clarity, and stimulation of discussion. Participation will be marked for quantity and quality of class contributions. Worth: 20% (10% each).

Theory presentations will be marked for accuracy, clarity, usefulness, perception, and ability to stimulate class discussion. Worth: 20%.

Essay Preparation Materials will be marked for adherence to instructions, insight, grammatical clarity, accuracy, and relevant specificity. The explication will be worth 5 marks; personal reflection, theory, thesis, use of MLA format, and use of required types of sources will each be worth 1 mark (5x1=5); and each annotation (including summary, relevance, and quotation) will be worth 2 marks (10x2=20). Worth: 30% in total.

Research Essay will be marked in accordance with the English Department Marking Standards: https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english/marking-standards. Worth: 30%.

Collaboration/Plagiarism Rules
Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student's work, or working together on an individual assignment, all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you've submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean, who is responsible for judging academic misconduct and imposing penalties. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is
a 0 on the assignment in question. It might also be subject to more severe academic penalties. See the Code of Student Behaviour for more details.

**Course Policies**

1. Attendance is required. Please notify me if you are unable to attend a class. Undue absence will *seriously* affect both your achievement and your enjoyment in this course. If you find yourself struggling in the course, please see me before November 4, which is the last day to drop the course without academic penalty.

2. It is imperative that you read the assigned literature *before* the class in which it is being discussed. If for some reason you are unable to prepare for a particular class, please let me know and COME TO CLASS ANYWAYS. Don’t make a habit of being unprepared.

3. When conducting research, generally avoid using websites accessed through google – use library databases instead, especially the MLA Bibliography. Particularly avoid citing Wikipedia and other internet encyclopedias or dictionaries. The following internet sources are reliable and may prove useful:


4. Make sure that you *give credit to ALL sources* you use for an assignment (even for presentations or powerpoints), even if you paraphrase them. All *direct* material quoted from a text, even a single sentence or phrase, MUST be placed in quotation marks, followed by the source reference in parentheses. Paraphrases should be followed with parenthetical references. See the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Failure to properly document sources constitutes plagiarism and will be penalized, in keeping with the Lakehead University Regulation IX: Academic Misconduct (see Calendar [http://mycoursecalendar.lakeheadu.ca/pg39.html](http://mycoursecalendar.lakeheadu.ca/pg39.html)).

5. Late assignments will be marked down half a letter grade each day they are late without permission; that is, an "A" quality paper due on Tuesday will receive an "A-" on Wednesday, a "B+" on Thursday, etc. Plan ahead, and let me know if time conflicts
arise so that we can negotiate a more workable deadline. I AM willing to grant extensions.

5. Keep a hard copy of all papers you submit, in case of accidental loss. Please do not slip papers under my door: they could suffer damage, delays in marking, etc. No plastic covers please.

**University Policies**

- Students in this course are expected to conform to the Code of Student Behaviour: [https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/student-related/code-of-student-behaviour-and-disciplinary-procedures](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/student-related/code-of-student-behaviour-and-disciplinary-procedures)

- Lakehead University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course.

This course outline is available online through the English Department homepage and the Desire2Learn site for the course.