



RESEARCH

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW CAREFULLY.

- Select a Faculty Sponsor. Design your project in consultation with your sponsor. Write a working draft of pages one and two so that revisions suggested by your sponsor may be incorporated in the final proposal.
- **TYPE** your proposal on this form. Obtain sponsor and academic advisor signatures. Make two copies of the completed proposal one for you and one for your sponsor.
- Submit the *original* to your sponsor's department chair this is *very* important.
- **Notes on deadlines:** independent study proposals are due to academic departments during the registration advisement period for the term in which the independent study will occur. Proposals submitted after published registration deadlines must be accompanied by a written explanation. Proposals received after the end of the drop/add period for the term of the proposed study may not count toward students' financial aid hours.

INDICATE HONORS DESIGNATION (IF ANY)

Honors Degree Program Project? Yes No
(Requires Honors Program Coordinator approval at senior level.)

Honors in the Major Field Project? Yes No
(Requires submission of Honors in the Major contract form.)

NAME: Greg Golden **SSN:** _____

Campus Box: 1338 **Phone:** _____

YOUR CLASS YEAR DURING STUDY:

Sophomore Junior Senior

TERM(S)/YEAR(S) PROPOSED FOR STUDY:

Spring-Fall 2010

SEMESTER HOURS PER TERM: 1 2 3 4 5 6

TOTAL SEMESTER HOURS FOR PROJECT: 8

DEPARTMENT: English

LEVEL: 200 300 400 (determined by sponsor)

ACADEMIC ADVISOR: Dr. Emily Rusell

MAJOR: English

FACULTY SPONSOR(S):

Dr. Emily Russell

COMMITTEE MEMBERS/READERS:

Dr. Paul Reich

Dr. Vidhu Aggarwal

PROJECT TITLE: *The abbreviated title you provide will appear on your transcript; do not exceed the spaces provided. Use one box per character, including punctuation and spacing. A full academic title for the project must also be provided to fully articulate the proposed project.*

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Full Title: The manipulation of language in war novels

PLEASE PROCEED TO SECTION ONE

DEAN OF FACULTY

Rec'd: _____

Rev'd: _____

Dean: _____

Comm: _____

Rtn'd: _____

App'd: _____

OFFICE OF STUDENT RECORDS

Course No: _____

Term: _____

Course No: _____

Term: _____

1. PURPOSE OF STUDY

a) What are your specific objectives? Provide a thesis or brief abstract.

Please see attached

b) How does this research project further your course of study? How are you qualified to undertake it? What specific courses have you taken which prepare you for the work?

It will be an extension of my pursuit of a degree in English, and will further my study of the language of war novels from an essay written in English 304B. I am above the minimum requirements necessary for beginning the project, and will be taking a subsequent English 304B with an emphasis on war novels in the spring of 2010 as a means of becoming more proficient in the subject. In preparation, English 304B has provided me the topic, while each and every course I've taken in my major has prepared me for a high-level project of analysis and writing.

2. REQUIRED ACADEMIC TIME

What activities (conferences, library research, laboratory research, studio work, writing, etc.) will you undertake to meet your objectives? How many hours do you estimate each activity to require during a typical week of the term. To earn four semester hours of credit you should average 9-12 hours of work per week in the fall or spring.

Between reading and annotating my sources, meeting with my sponsor and writing the thesis, I would consider 10-12 hours a week to be a reasonable estimate for the high quality of work I mean to produce.

3. PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Which books, periodicals, journals, primary documents, and other sources will you explore? Use a proper bibliographic form accepted by the discipline in which your project falls. Attach a separate sheet if necessary.

Please see attached

4. MEANS OF EVALUATION

Indicate the criteria upon which your grade will be based. Please estimate the percentage of each category that applies to your study and provide a brief, but specific, description of each (i.e., a 50-page paper, ten journal entries of 250 words, nine laboratories, seven finished sculptures, etc.).

a) 60 % PAPER

A 75-page paper

b) _____ % JOURNAL

c) _____ % LAB/STUDIO

d) _____ % EXAM: ORAL/WRITTEN

NOTE: If the project is for the Honors Degree Program or Honors in the Major Field, indicate in item "d" the percentage of your grade which will be determined by your presentation to the Examining Committee/Readers.

e) 40 % OTHER

Annotations for my sources, thesis defense

5. STUDENT, SPONSOR, AND ADVISOR SIGNATURES

STUDENT: _____

Date: _____

SPONSOR: _____

Date: _____

SPONSOR: _____

Date: _____

ADVISOR: _____

Date: _____

6. DEPARTMENT CHAIR AND PROGRAM DIRECTOR APPROVAL AND SIGNATURE

(To be completed by faculty sponsor's department chair. If the project fulfills a requirement for a special program, e.g., Honors, LACA, International Relations, you must also obtain approval from the program director.)

_____ APPROVED; I certify that a majority of the department's members have approved this study.
(Forward to the Office of Dean of Faculty.)

_____ MODIFICATIONS REQUIRED; list modifications on separate sheet and return proposal to student. If student wishes to pursue the project, s/he must make the modifications required and return the proposal for departmental approval. If subsequently approved, the department chair should initial below that the changes have been made, and forward to the Dean's Office.

_____ APPROVED; I certify that the majority of the members of the department have approved this study as amended.

_____ DECLINED; the department will not reconsider this proposal. (List reasons and return to student.)

CHAIR: _____

Date: _____

PROGRAM DIRECTOR: _____

Date: _____

7. DEAN'S OFFICE APPROVAL AND SIGNATURE

(To be completed by the Associate Dean.)

_____ APPROVED; forward to the Office of Student Records.

_____ MODIFICATIONS REQUIRED; the Academic Affairs Subcommittee and/or Dean of the Faculty will approve this project if you will make the modifications and/or additions specified on the attached sheet and submit them in the form of a written statement to the Assistant Dean of the Faculty within five days. This written statement must be signed by your faculty sponsor and attached to this form.

_____ APPROVED; the Academic Affairs Subcommittee and/or Dean of the Faculty approve this study as amended.
(Forward to the Office of Student Records.)

_____ DECLINED; the Academic Affairs Subcommittee and/or Dean of the Faculty will not approve this project for the reasons specified below. The project will not be reconsidered.

Associate Dean: _____

Date: _____

Greg Golden
English Honors Thesis Abstract
December 6, 2009

Language in War

War often eludes written thought, with the experience proving remarkably difficult to encapsulate, and the associated feelings remaining hard to convey. Authors have drastically different writing strategies to capture the experience, manipulating language itself to allow for new ways of thinking about the violence, values, and thoughts that spring from the horrors and effects of war. While their goal is to provide truth, their efforts to do so through altering standard practices of the written word mirror what military officials do to impress upon the public a view of war that favors militaristic goals. Through indoctrinating phrases like "Glory and War and Honored Dead," the government creates a way for its citizens to digest military deaths. With a catch-all phrase that can be applied to any deaths in any war, the words become the dead, forcing a lost life to become conceptualized as less a loss of a human being than a measure of one's patriotism. In this way, language does not fill one role, proving itself fluid, and yet in some cases, solid, as crystallized in an objectified form. Authors reify abstractions to depict the enormous weight language has on war, solidifying the reality of language's creating and driving the military machine.

In war, an exchange takes place: soldiers are reduced to objects, mere statistics whose value is only in number, ideas become objects, nearly tangible in their weight on events in war and their perception, and objects, being one of the sole distinguishers between one soldier and the next, become humanized. Both propaganda and these authors' works function through reification, turning ideas and abstractions into objects. My primary goal will be to examine how the novels' aspects of reification converse with and complicate one another, centered on the issue of finding what is real in war.

In the introduction I will explore books and articles to assist the creation of the postmodern lens through which I will analyze the selected novels. I will employ a number of theoretical works to assist in analyzing the manifestation of war through postmodernism, including works of Michael Heidegger, James William Gibson, Lauren Berlant, Fredric Jameson, and others. I will first utilize Tim O'Brien's short story "The Things They Carried" to offer a preliminary look at objects in war, including how they become representations of much more through commodification.

Three chapters will follow, each dedicated to examining reification in a different war novel. The first will look at Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, which will offer a view of World War II and the novel's exploration of language as a major manipulative tool in war and military bureaucracy.

Next, Michael Herr's *Dispatches* will allow a striking view of the Vietnam War through his experiences as an embedded reporter. This sets the tone for emphasizing many ideas that contain more than that to which the phrases literally refer; Herr embeds his novel with these reified terms to lay a minefield of startling commentary on the Vietnam War. His manipulation of the form of language suggests that a new language is required to describe and define the Vietnam War.

Then, Tim O'Brien's *Going After Cacciato* will provide another new set of language for the Vietnam War. This novel, about a soldier's journey to escape the war to attend peace talks in Paris, expounds the relationship between and the reality of physical and mental acts, blurring the line between fiction and Tim O'Brien's own war experience.

- Berger, Peter, and Stanley Pullberg. "Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness." *History and Theory*. 4.2 (1965): 196-211.
- Berlant, Lauren. "Cruel Optimism." *differences-A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. 2006.
- Brown, Bill. "Reification, Reanimation, and the American Uncanny." *Critical Inquiry*. Volume 32, Number 2, (2006).
- Chow, Rey. *The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and Comparative Work*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Gibson, James William. *The Perfect War Technowar in Vietnam (Military History Series)*. New York: Atlantic Monthly P, 2000.
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- Heller, Joseph. *Catch-22*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.
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- Hellinger, Marlis. "Language, War, and Peace." *Handbook of Language and Communication: Diversity and Change*. 2007.
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- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, Duke University Press, 1992.
- Jeffords, Susan. "Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War." Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Lakoff, Robin Tolmarch. *The Language War*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001.
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- Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel. "Rethinking Reification." *Theory and Society*. 16.2 (1987): 263-93.
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- Segwick, Eve Kosofsky. "Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity." Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Zizek, Slavoj. *Interrogating the Real*. New York: Continuum International Group, 2006.