Heritage I.

Identity and Culture

Carthage
Fall 1998
Welcome to Heritage Studies

While driving and hiking through Colorado in June, somewhere between Rocky Mountain National Park and the Anasazi cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde, I stumbled upon Merlyn's ancient advice to young King Arthur: "Learn why the world wags and what wags it." Inspired by Rocky Mountain vistas and 1,000-year-old ruins of a mysterious native culture, I tried to remain open to Merlyn's advice, to learn from wondrous worlds far beyond classroom walls.

In T.H. White's retelling of the myth of Camelot, The Once and Future King, Merlyn tries to cheer up a discouraged Arthur by reminding him of the pleasures of learning: "The best thing for being sad . . . is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, . . . you may see the world around you devastated by lunatics, or know your honor trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then--to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the thing for you." Merlyn's advice, I hope, will encourage you at Carthage as it did me in Colorado: Heritage intends to expose you to some of the ways the world wags; and your teachers and I hope that learning will always be the thing for you.

Descending (too rapidly) from my Rocky Mountain highs, however, I found myself increasingly mindful of Victor Frankenstein's ominous warning: "Learn from me . . . how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow." Frankenstein's Creature laments in similar words later in Shelley's novel that "sorrow only increased with knowledge. Oh, that I had forever remained in my native wood . . ."

Insofar as Heritage tries to nudge you, if only through books and music and other artifacts, beyond your native towns and woods, I want you to trust Merlyn. As teachers and students, we usually want to embrace learning as inevitably a source of reassurance and joy, as the unfailing cure for insecurities and sadness. And yet, many of us have come to know, and not just from Frankenstein and his Creature, that sometimes learning can be dangerous, risky, unnerving, discouraging, even sorrowful.

Through Heritage this term, you will, I hope, begin to discover for yourself the wisdom of both Merlyn and Frankenstein--and, perhaps, a few strategies for balancing or negotiating their apparently conflicting claims about learning. Through open-minded engagement with our four core texts and with each other, you can learn something about how the world wags and what wags it.

Interrogated by a younger writer, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke responded: "Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves: . . . Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live with them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer."

I urge you to approach Heritage I: Identity and Culture (and for that matter your entire education) in this spirit: to love the questions, to live the questions as you open yourself to both Merlyn and Frankenstein, both reassurance and risk.

David H. Krause
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for Academic Enhancement
and Director of Heritage Studies
Anticipating Heritage I

This term in Heritage I, "Identity and Culture," you will encounter four texts that have achieved enduring "greatness" because of the compelling ways in which they simultaneously define and call into question our European cultural legacies. Homer's Odyssey (c. 700 BCE), Shakespeare's Twelfth Night (1600), Verdi's Otello (1887), and Shelley's Frankenstein (1818) each exemplify the very best that has been thought and imagined within the complex intellectual traditions of the Western world. They matter to us in 1998, however, not so much because others have anointed them "classics" or "great books," but rather because they invite us into profound conversations about precisely what it means to think and to imagine, about what it means to be fully human. Reading Homer, Shakespeare, and Shelley, watching and listening to Verdi, with open and curious minds and hearts, we can find our own more authentic voices and visions.

A few years ago, the film critic David Denby revisited some of the classrooms and texts he originally encountered as a first-year undergraduate at Columbia University. Reflecting on this revisiting in Great Books (1996), Denby writes: "What can be achieved through culture is the greatest range of pleasure and soulfulness and reasoning power that any of us is capable of. The courses in the Western classics force us to ask all those questions about self and society we no longer address without embarrassment--the questions our media-trained habits of irony have tricked us out of asking. In order to ask those questions, students need to be enchanted before they are disenchanted."

Through rigorous cultural studies, our Heritage seminars aspire to enhance your capacity for what Denby calls the pleasure, soulfulness, reasoning power, and enchantment of genuine learning. Heritage invites--okay, perhaps forces--you to engage fundamental questions about self and society, identity and community. Questioning our own identities (as we will do this term through the four core texts) and questioning our communities (as we will do in Heritage II through such texts as Plato's Apology and Toni Morrison's Beloved) can help us to see the world beyond our boundaries more clearly. Becoming aware of the experiences of others, in turn, can help us to see our selves, our possibilities and limitations, more clearly. By studying unfamiliar perspectives, unfamiliar ways of looking at and responding to the world, you will, we hope, begin a process of rediscovering your selves and your cultures.

Heritage will challenge you--and your teachers--to deepen your powers of observation, analysis, creativity, and expression. You will have opportunities to explore traditional and new ways of knowing, ways of thinking, ways of communicating. By "Heritage," in fact, we mean a dynamic cultural legacy which must be actively constructed and reconstructed through constant negotiations among the past, present, and the future, and between individuals and their communities. "Heritage" is not contained within a prescribed set of sanctioned books or artifacts; "Heritage" cannot simply be transmitted from teacher to student.

Since, unlike David Denby, most of you will probably not have the luxury of returning to your undergraduate classrooms twenty years from now, you would be well advised to make the most of the immediate challenges and opportunities of Heritage I. This booklet offers a preliminary and partial, yet essential, map to the intellectual landscapes you and your classmates will be exploring this term with your Heritage teacher as guide. The odyssey is yours. It begins, aptly enough, with Homer.

Homer's Odyssey marks, admittedly, a formidable point of departure: maybe you've never read an epic poem in twenty-four "books," translated from the ancient Greek. Maybe you're not especially impressed that Homer's work has influenced epics by poets from Virgil (The Aeneid) to the recent Nobel Laureate in literature, Derek Walcott (Omeros), as well as the shape and style and thematic structures of many Western narratives. Nevertheless, once you move beyond the perhaps intimidating heft of the text and allow yourself to listen to Homer's voice--and it is a voice that demands to be heard, not just read--you will hear fundamentally simple human stories about loving and dying, about families, about being "masculine" or "feminine," about what's just or unjust, about leaving home and about trying to return home. The central stories of Odysseus, Penelope, and Telemakhos are all about self-discovery and self-definition: how, in a messy and often threatening world, do we come to know who we really are and who we can become?

Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, despite radical differences in historical context, structure, style,
The image of Dr. Frankenstein creating his "monster" has been appropriated and distorted by popular culture, especially by a series of influential horror films. To recover and appreciate the full text of Mary Shelley's novel you will need to move beyond and through the stereotypes and caricatures it has spawned. Shelley's attitudes towards science in Frankenstein, for example, may surprise you in their complexity, subtlety, and balance. Frankenstein, written when Shelley was about 20, beautifully reframes several of the recurrent themes of Heritage I: including, the dynamics of family, the social constructions of gender roles, justice and injustice, rationality and passion, and potential conflicts between individuals and communities. Shelley's sensitive attention to the education of both Victor Frankenstein and his creature, as well as her concern with what it means to be included or excluded from human communities, makes Frankenstein an effective transitional text into Heritage II: Community and Culture.

Sexuality and desire and self-deception also emerge as controlling themes of Verdi's Otello. In addition, Otello searingly examines our cultural constructions of gender and race, and the sometimes tragic consequences of perceived or misperceived difference. Otello, in a way, is all about the complicated and unsettling ways in which perceptions of racial or cultural differences can generate passions that disrupt personal integrity, self-awareness, self-fulfillment, and civic order. Otello, in a word, is all about passion.

Verdi's music for this great opera represents his passionate response to Shakespeare, his interpretation of The Tragedy of Othello. Arrigo Boito, who wrote the opera's words (libretto), translates Shakespeare's language from English to Italian, though of course not line-by-line. Verdi and Boito collaborate with each other, with Shakespeare, with their musicians, and with their audiences to produce a masterful, extravagant multimedia performance. Both Otello and Twelfth Night will challenge us to respect and analyze performance as text, especially videotaped performance. Both Otello and Twelfth Night will require us to reflect carefully on the nature and value of music. Twelfth Night, the most musical of Shakespeare's plays, insists from its opening line—"If music be the food of love, play on"—that we think about how and why we listen to music when alone or in community.

Finally, as important as each of these four "great" texts may be in its own right, for us they remain primarily means to an end: materials through which we can ground and focus processes of rigorous thinking and questioning and imagining leading to authentic self-discoveries and self-expression. These processes, which constitute real learning within the traditions of liberal arts studies, depend, in the end, on you. Learning through Heritage requires not just "great books;" it always requires you—your intellect, your imagination, your heart.
Heritage Studies Seminars: 1998-1999 Catalog

These courses, taken in sequence by all students, introduce them to higher education at Carthage and help them develop competencies in cultural studies and writing, as well as thinking, reading, speaking, and listening, and cultural and intercultural studies. Heritage provides a common academic culture at Carthage. The Heritage sequence is taught collaboratively by faculty from academic departments across the college and takes an integrated approach to learning. Typically, the three courses are completed during a student's first two years at Carthage.

Heritage I (105): Identity and Culture 4 credits
This first seminar in the Heritage sequence engages some of the most basic questions of being human: who are we? how do we come to know and understand ourselves? how is self-knowledge constructed, used, and valued? The course also begins to engage questions about the nature and construction of culture itself that will be pursued throughout the sequence: what does it mean to have or belong to a culture? what does it mean to inherit or transmit a cultural legacy, a heritage? Texts will emphasize the traditions of the West; however, students will be challenged to approach the central questions about human identity through multiple intellectual and cultural perspectives. Assignments will emphasize close reading of texts and the writing of narrative and analysis. Offered during the fall term.

Heritage II (106): Community and Culture 4 credits
The second Heritage seminar, deepening the inquiries of Heritage I, engages questions about the construction, use, and value of community: How and why have men and women, in various times and places, lived together? What are the sources and consequences of social contracts? How do the arrangements for living together enhance or compromise individual identity and values? How do communities promote or inhibit liberty, justice, equality? This seminar examines multiple and sometimes competing models for living with others: for example, as family members, as religious believers, as citizens. Texts will continue to emphasize the traditions of the West; however, students will again be challenged to approach the central questions about human community through multiple intellectual and cultural perspectives. Assignments will emphasize comparative and analytical reading and writing, with attention to argumentation, use of evidence, and independent research. Prerequisite: Heritage I (105). Offered during the spring term.

Heritage III (205) Cultural Encounters 4 credits
This third and final Heritage seminar focuses on encounters between individuals and communities from different cultures. Examining what it means to have a cultural legacy—a heritage—within a complex global community, students are challenged to make personal and intellectual sense of one or more cultures beyond the borders of the West. The course intends to foster global thinking, problem-solving, understanding, and communication, by engaging questions of individuality and community, tradition and innovation, order and change, rationality and spirituality, conflict and cooperation. Texts will represent multiple world cultures. Assignments will emphasize complex analysis and synthesis, with attention to sustained independent research. Prerequisites: Heritage I (105) and II (106). Offered both fall and spring terms.
Competencies and Goals

A. Our Cultural Studies goals for Heritage I (105) are:

1. That students explore and explain how our historical and cultural positions are similar to and different from those of people from other places and times.

2. That students develop an understanding of culture as assumptions, ideas, values, and practices shaping human community; that they practice recognizing, analyzing, explaining, respecting, and questioning cultural patterns and changes.

B. Our Writing goals for Heritage I (105) are:

1. That students recognize, respect, and value voice and style in writing, including their own, and that they work on cultivating and controlling their voices.

2. That students practice techniques for constructing narratives, to learn how their own experiences can be told in ways that not only connect with the themes of the Heritage seminars, but reflect and illuminate the central ideas being examined.

3. That students practice various techniques for written response to texts and experiences—by recording observations, expressing reactions, asking questions, making connections, and developing summary statements; that students learn the processes of writing.

4. That students stress analysis in all their writing, whatever form it takes.

C. Our Reading goals for Heritage I (105) are:

1. That students recognize that the knowledge and experience they bring to a text can help them engage, question, and process what they are reading, but also that they must test their assumptions against patterns of evidence.

2. That students practice ways of using a text’s structure and organization to locate key ideas, understand relationships within the text, and understand what is most important in it.

D. Our Oral Communication goals for Heritage I (105) are:

1. That students listen carefully to what others say, taking other voices seriously.

2. That students converse openly, honestly, and with a sense of purpose.

3. That in speaking students will be sensitive to context, use reliable sources, generate ideas and judgments, and use various media effectively.

E. Our Thinking goals for Heritage I (105) are:

1. That students develop the capacity to think actively and interactively, not just react passively.

2. That students become more self-conscious in understanding how they and others view the world.
Writing in Heritage I (105): Opportunities, Assignments, and Portfolios

Heritage 105 students will write frequently, both in and out of class. Over the course of the term, students will generate a considerable body of written work. The processes by which students generate their writing matters as much as their products. Student writing will be assessed on the basis of how well it exemplifies purposeful, reasoned, and imaginative inquiry.

Students will also practice discovering and trusting their own voices in a variety of writing situations; engaging texts through careful, disciplined reading and inquiry, often accompanied by informal writing; making, explaining, supporting, and testing judgments through writing; focusing, developing, and sustaining inquiry through writing; editing and revising their own writing; recognizing, explaining, and assessing their own writing processes.

Students will maintain a complete record of their written work in a folder called a process portfolio. At the end of the term, students will organize their essays, along with the response writing and drafts that led up to them, for inclusion in an exemplary portfolio. They will also construct a self-assessment of their writing processes. This Heritage portfolio provides students and teachers with a continuing record of progress throughout the sequence.

Heritage I (105) students will practice strategies for clarifying and testing their responses to texts and experiences through writing. Writing assignments will include opportunities to record observations, express reactions, make connections, develop summary statements, and question. Students in Heritage 105 will also be expected to give focused attention to basic composition skills, as necessary. Teachers will help students become comfortable with using Write for College to help avoid errors and enhance their style.

Resources available through the Writing Center will be explained to students.
Through their response and process writing, all Heritage I (105) students should shape the equivalent of three brief, distinct essays, totalling approximately 12 to 15 pages (word-processed).

Each of these essays should show evidence of serious attention to one of the major texts of the course.

One essay should demonstrate that the student can construct a narrative in response to one of the major texts.

Another essay should demonstrate that the student can explain something significant about an episode, character, or idea through text-based analysis.

Another essay should demonstrate that the student can make and sustain a judgment about something significant in a major text, supporting that judgment with ample reasoning and evidence.

Careful planning throughout the writing processes will be essential. Firm due dates will be set by individual teachers, whenever possible in consultation with students. Once deadlines have been established, students have a responsibility to their classmates, their teacher, and themselves to meet them.

In addition, all students in Heritage I (105) will be expected to write an essay examination on Wednesday, December 16. In some meaningful ways, this examination should be comprehensive, giving students opportunities to engage texts they have not dealt with at length in other writing, and to make connections. A one-hour essay question will be common to all sections.

Norms:

For a more detailed statement of program-wide expectations for writing in Heritage I, see pages 11-13 of this booklet.

Oral Communication in Heritage I (105):

Most importantly, Heritage 105 fosters listening and speaking skills that enable students to participate responsibly on a range of subjects.

In addition, each student should expect at least two formal speaking opportunities (usually at least 5-10 minutes each).

Many of the same strategies practiced in writing should be cultivated and valued in speaking.

Students should be challenged both to plan what they want to say and to be extemporaneous, which is why some instructors suggest that notes for certain kinds of speaking assignments be limited to one 3x5 index card.

At least one of these speaking opportunities should be individualized; a panel discussion or other group presentation is entirely appropriate for the other opportunity, as long as each student is expected to be a full and active participant.
Collaborating

“Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one’s own ideas and responding to others’ reactions improves thinking and deepens understanding.”

“Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.”

—Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

Your Heritage seminars remain deeply committed to these two fundamental principles for good practice in teaching/learning from The Wingspread Journal. Full participation includes in-class writing, speaking, and workshops, conversations based on course materials, and occasional out-of-class programs and activities. No notes, handouts, or make-up work can adequately compensate for your absence. This means, then, that each of you carries certain responsibilities to class:

1. To attend class regularly:
   Attendance is necessary and assumed.
   (Students who miss class frequently, or who do not prepare and participate fully, may fail the course.)

2. To come to class well prepared;

3. To listen;

4. To question;

5. To converse openly and with a sense of purpose;

6. To help create a learning environment in which you and other students feel encouraged and challenged to cooperate;

7. To respect the idea that each of you has unique talents, unique ways of learning, and unique perspectives to share;

8. To respect each other’s differences in culture, ethnicity, gender, lifestyle, beliefs, values.
A Note on Assessment

Please don't mistake a letter grade for full or final assessment of your work. Because we all may be conditioned to see a letter grade as a stamp of approval or disapproval that marks the completion of a task, your teacher may be reluctant to shut down or short-circuit your process of critical inquiry by assigning such a grade prematurely.

However, you should expect your teacher to:

respond directly and in detail to the strengths and limits of your work;

suggest strategies for improvement;

give you a clear sense of just how effectively you are progressing toward achieving the goals of a particular assignment and of the course as a whole.

A Note on Academic Integrity

Since we are, in fact, interested in what you think and why you think it, be sure to emerge from all your course preparations and research with ideas and ways of expressing them that are recognizably your own. So that you will learn when, how, and why to cite sources, we will pay attention to the principles and styles of documentation in oral and written communication. Read the section “Academic Honesty Guidelines” in the Student Community Handbook (pages 93-94).

Heritage Scholarships

To recognize the accomplishments of disciplined and imaginative students, and to encourage and celebrate the ideas of Heritage, the College established a scholarship program in the spring of 1991. This scholarship program is administered by the Heritage faculty in cooperation with the Vice President for Enrollment. Watch for an announcement of procedures and deadlines. The criteria for selection, determined and articulated by Heritage faculty for 1999-2000 awards, will reflect the philosophy, purposes, and practices of the Heritage Program.

Required Heritage I Texts

Fall 1998-1999

The Odyssey, Homer

Twelfth Night, William Shakespeare

Otello, Giuseppe Verdi

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley

Write for College

The American Heritage College Dictionary (3rd Edition)
Heritage I (105):
IDENTITY AND CULTURE
Reading Calendar

PROLOGUE

Meeting twice during New Student Orientation gives Heritage I classes a chance to establish special relationships and unique dynamics for learning. Because Heritage classes are conducted primarily as seminars—that is, as conversations—it is essential that students and teachers know, trust, and respect each other. The relationships you begin to form with your classmates and teacher during these opening sessions will create a space for you to take intellectual risks necessary for real learning throughout the course. In addition to learning how to see and hear each other effectively, you will begin to come to terms with the expectations and practices of the Heritage Program as outlined in this booklet and translated into practice by your instructor.

UNIT ONE: The Odyssey, by Homer

Please re-read the appropriate section of "Anticipating Heritage I" to help yourself frame some good questions. A few additional and representative questions to consider: How do Odysseus, Penelope, and, perhaps especially, Telemakhos see themselves and how are they seen by others? What do you make of their preoccupation with public reputation or fame, what the Greeks called kleos? What do you make of their familial relationships: that is, how do Penelope and Odyssey interact with each other as husband and wife? Penelope and Telemakhos as mother and son? Odysseus and Telemakhos as father and son? What values seem to shape Ithaka and the other communities represented in the narrative? What happens when individuals from different communities, or even different families, encounter each other? How do societies determine what they consider noble, heroic, just, or civilized? And what happens when two societies with differing assumptions about nobility or heroism or justice or civilization collide? Do you notice an obsession with protocol, etiquette, hospitality (xenia)? How does Homer seem to represent home in The Odyssey—and what happens to individuals when they leave home, stay home, or try to return home (nostos)? What do you make of the various journeys? Does Telemakhos manage to come of age? How will Penelope and Odysseus continue to survive? What seems to be the relationship between the characters' command of language, their ability to tell stories, and their self-awareness?

T 9/15: Odyssey, Books I through IV
R 9/17: Odyssey, Books V through VIII

T 9/22: Odyssey, Books IX through XII
R 9/24: Discovery Day

T 9/29: Odyssey, Books XIII through XVI
R 10/1: Odyssey, Books XVII through XX

T 10/6: Odyssey, Books XXI through XXIV
R 10/8: Discovery Day

UNIT TWO: Twelfth Night, by William Shakespeare

Please re-read the appropriate section of "Anticipating Heritage I" to help yourself frame some good questions. Here are some questions worth considering: How can the transition from adolescence to adulthood be successfully negotiated? What might it mean to be a twin? Is it possible for us to know the truth about who we are? Could we tolerate such self-knowledge? How can we recognize, accommodate, and transcend our illusions? How much control do we have over shaping our own identity? Are there differences between men and women? How do communities and cultures shape gender roles? What happens to individuals who don't conform to the constructions and expectations of their communities? How do we come to know what we want, what we desire? What is love? What strategies for satisfying needs and desires are available, appropriate? How do communities respond to madness? to reason? How do we cope with growing old? with loss? What makes us laugh? Is laughter incompatible with seriousness, and with a sense of the tragic? What are the boundaries between the play world and the real world?
ties of the scientist? How does Victor’s relation-
ship to his creature compare to the relationship
between God and Adam in Genesis? What are
the responsibilities of a creator to his or her cre-
ation? of parent to child? What roles does his
family play in shaping Victor Frankenstein’s
outlook on life? What roles do women play?
How and why do we sometimes create “mon-
sters” of others or of ourselves? What happens
d When dreams turn into nightmares through the
misuse or abuse of knowledge or power? Do
the following questions faced by Frankenstein’s
creature sound familiar? —Who am I? Why am
I different from everyone? How do I learn to fit
into society? Should I try to fit in at all? What
do I do to develop my own powers of imagina-
tion and humanity? How do I endure rejection,
failure? Am I alone? Where is my life taking
me? What does it mean to be human?

UNIT THREE: Otello, by Giuseppe Verdi

Please re-read the appropriate section of
“Anticipating Heritage I” to help yourself frame
some engaging questions. Many of the issues
that will have surfaced during your study of
The Odyssey and Twelfth Night will continue to
be relevant to Otello, though they may take on a
more somber shading. Additionally, it will be
important to come to terms with the ways in
which this opera subverts or reinscribes cultural
constructions of “race.” You may have opportu-
nities to examine various implications of cultur-
al translation: what happens to a narrative
when it gets translated across cultures, and
across genres? And, though limited mostly to
video and audio recordings, we will certainly
engage this text as performance: how does its
performance as music, dance, and spectacle,
give new dimensions to its meanings and new
responsibilities to us as audience members?

UNIT FOUR: Frankenstein, by Mary Shelley

Please re-read the appropriate section of
“Anticipating Heritage I” to help yourself frame
some effective questions. Additional lines of
inquiry include: What perspectives on educa-
tion does Frankenstein offer us? What are the
dangers of questing, perhaps too ardently, after
knowledge? What are the ethical responsibi-

EPILOGUE

Please consider this examination an invitation
to consolidate and express what you have
learned about the four core texts—and about
yourself. All Heritage I students will write for
one hour on a common open-ended, but text-
based essay question. The second hour of the
final examination will be designed by individ-
ual instructors in ways appropriate to the
dynamics and needs of students in particular
sections.

W 12/16: 3:35-5:45 FINAL EXAMINATION for
all sections
Program Norms for
Heritage I Writing Assignments
1998-1999

Superior narratives will be distinguished by an engaging/engaged point of view; an authentic and consistent sense of voice, audience, and context; rich and appropriate details; a coherent and effective structure; and a compelling sense of purpose. Superior narratives will do more than record a personal anecdote: through story, they will make a significant point about one or more of the questions about identity raised by course content and discussions.

Superior examples of text-based analysis will demonstrate the writer's ability to read closely and perceptively and to develop a focused interpretation of some significant feature of a major text. The most successful kinds of analysis will ordinarily show the student's willingness to "dig in" to some specific part of a larger text with the explicit purpose of showing how that text works, what it means, and why it matters. They often respond to such questions as: "What, if anything, does Odysseus learn during his visit to The Nations of the Dead" (Book XI)? or "What's the significance of the DeLacy family to the moral development of the creature in Frankenstein?" The best textual analyses use specific and apt references, risk drawing out reasonable and original inferences, and remain free of plot summary that is not immediately relevant to the point being made. Superior interpretations move beyond description or summary toward judgment.

Superior essays incorporating judgment will be distinguished by the writer's willingness to take a stand on an issue raised by the course materials, to stake out a position, and to support that position with ample reasoning and evidence. While some or even all of the evidence may be drawn from the texts, often the most compelling essays of this kind will move beyond the course readings, making relevant connections between the texts and materials, ideas, or experiences encountered in other contexts. (Provoked by Frankenstein, for example, a student might make the judgment that our popular culture too often promotes a distorted and damaging image of the scientist.) Superior essays of judgment will not only engage a point that is genuinely debatable (that is, a point that could legitimately provoke an alternative or opposing judgment), but will articulate and sustain a logical argument. The very best essays in this category may incorporate elements of narrative (for example, a clear, confident point of view) and elements of textual analysis (using an example from the reading to support or illustrate the judgment).

Superior examples of process writing will clearly document the student's understanding, in principle and practice, that writing is a process, that an effective essay emerges through carefully sequenced and rigorously developed stages of inquiry and composition. Typically, superior process writing will begin with a relatively informal record of observations, reactions, questions, or connections in response to a "text." This initial response will then be extended, amplified, narrowed, or tested through focused, guided revision. Further informed by suggestions from the teacher and/or peers, revision continues as ideas and judgments come into focus and shape through continuing amplification or "burrowing." The best examples of process writing will include one or two full drafts, thoroughly revised and edited (but not just edited), leading up to the final product.
Heritage I Portfolios:
Criteria for reading completed course portfolios
Fall 1998-1999

5: Superior
The most accomplished portfolios will contain three distinct, well-conceived, and well-organized essays (totalling approximately 12 to 15 word-processed pages). Multiple drafts and related short pieces will be included to illustrate careful processes of writing and rewriting: there will be clear and ample evidence of planning, revising, and editing. These superior portfolios need not be without minor flaws, and all three pieces need not be equally successful. However, each essay must address the assignment fully and explore the issues thoughtfully. On balance, the best portfolios must convincingly demonstrate the writer's ability to control the conventions of effective composition (including word choice, sentence structure, paragraph development, transitions) with confidence and grace. Superior portfolios will typically document the writer's progress toward increasingly mature insights and style(s). This documentation will include the writer's self-evaluation of the writing represented in the portfolio. Variety and creativity will be rewarded.

4: Good
These portfolios will contain all the components described in category 5, and will also clearly address all assignments responsibly and with considerable success. There will be evidence of some depth and complexity of thought, but less consistently in the "5" portfolios. In general, each piece is effectively organized, fairly well-developed. These portfolios demonstrate the writer's ability to express ideas clearly, but with somewhat less maturity, sophistication, subtlety, elegance, or style.

3: Competent
Typically, these portfolios will suggest some potential for the successes evident in "Good" or even, occasionally, "Superior" portfolios. However, they will be limited by superficiality or unevenness. One or two of the pieces may be too brief, underdeveloped, or lacking preliminary writing and drafts. The reader may want "more" to be fully convinced of the writer's ability to handle the various writing assignments successfully and to use language effectively. On balance, the thinking or expression may seem pedestrian (that is, ordinary or "uninspired").

2: Below Average
Weaknesses clearly predominate over strengths. Two or more of the pieces may be either too short, too abstract, too vague, or disorganized or misguided. The writing tends to be simplistic or clumsy. Some of the writing may seem relatively clear and focused, even without glaring mechanical errors; nonetheless these portfolios remain thin in substance, underdeveloped, and undistinguished in style. There may be mostly generalizations without supporting detail or detail without generalizations. Instead of genuine textual analysis, for example, these portfolios contain only plot summary.

1: Marginal or Unacceptable
These portfolios seem to have been put together with very little care and thought. They compound inadequacies in one or more of the areas noted in characterizing the "Competent" (3) or "Below Average" (2) portfolios.