Heritage III:

Cultural Encounters

Carthage

Spring 1999
"The questions which one asks oneself begin, at last, to illuminate the world, and become one's key to the experience of others."

–James Baldwin

James Baldwin, whose writing many of you encountered last year in Heritage, nicely articulates the spirit of inquiry shaping our three-course Heritage sequence. Questioning our own identities (as we’ve done through such texts as The Odyssey and Hamlet) and questioning our own communities (as we’ve done through such texts as The Communist Manifesto and Beloved) can help us to see the world beyond our boundaries more clearly. Becoming more aware of the experience of others, in turn, can help us to see our selves, our possibilities and limitations, more clearly.

Several of the texts in Heritage I and II, perhaps most explicitly Achebe’s Things Fall Apart, challenged us to encounter an unfamiliar culture. Now in Heritage III, our consistent focus will be on the complex dynamic of cross-cultural encounters. Just as our brief encounter with Achebe taught us at least as much about ourselves as it did about Nigerian culture, our more sustained encounter with Japanese and Chinese cultures this term will teach us much about our own cultural identity, values, and assumptions. We will continue the process of trying to illuminate ourselves and the world by asking questions: questions about who we are, about how and why we live together in communities, and about what happens when we encounter others whose experiences or world views are different.

At the core of Heritage III are the following primary texts: The Art of War, Silence, The Samurai’s Garden, Snow Falling on Cedars, and The Selected Poems of Li Po.

Sun Tzu’s The Art of War is one of the most widely read Chinese “classics.” Despite its title, this text is not so much a primer on war as it is an attempt to understand the nature and the management of conflict.

The Art of War is essentially a Taoist text. Taoism did originate in China, but it also traveled from China to many parts of Asia. Outside of China, the influence of Taoism is mostly felt in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. As such, The Art of War is more than a Chinese text. Its Buddhist and Taoist elements provide insight into not only Chinese but also Japanese culture. This is not to suggest that the Chinese and Japanese cultures are similar, for in many ways they are not. As Taoism and Buddhism traveled throughout Asia, they have been adapted to their new “homes.” This text is important because it will clearly illustrate the nuances in Asian cultures, making it easier for us to discern and to understand the complexity of cultural encounters.

Many of the elements covered in The Art of War will provide considerable insight into the texts that follow it: Silence, The Samurai’s Garden, and Snow Falling on Cedars. First, this text highlights the complexity (and the difficulty of translation) of the terms “war” and “warrior”. It provides the means by which we can begin to understand the characters Inoue (Silence), Matsu (The Samurai’s Garden), and Kabuo (Snow Falling on Cedars). Second, The Art of War provides a number of ways in which numerous Chinese and Japanese concepts may be understood (humanism, syncretism, adaptability, harmony, change, and so on).

The Art of War has gained much popularity in the West, in the last decade or so, primarily because its insights and its wisdom may be applied to any discipline or to any situation. We will find in its pages clues to understanding both Chinese and Japanese culture, as well as our own personal motivations.
The Selected Poems of Li Po represents somewhat of a departure from our usual focus on prose. Li Po’s poetry is considered among the best from the High Tang era (the eighth century C.E.), a period of rich cultural development in China. Much of Li Po’s world-view is based on Buddhism and Taoism, philosophies that eventually made their way from China to Japan. Li Po’s poems will provide a window from which to examine both of these philosophies. They will also provide ways to experience and appreciate the clarity and the beauty of the poetry itself. The rhythms, language, and images of Li Po’s poems provide the opportunity to see how other cultures define art, beauty, nature and life.

Shusako Endo’s Silence, one of the most highly-regarded novels of the twentieth-century, dramatizes the encounter between European missionaries and traditional Japanese culture during the 17th-century. For many of you it will resonate in surprising ways with Things Fall Apart; and it raises compelling questions about moral choices and individual responsibility that transcend cultural boundaries.

The Samurai’s Garden, a novel by Gail Tsukiyama, is set in 1937-1938 Japan and centers around its principal character, Stephen, a twenty-year-old wealthy Chinese university student who travels to Japan’s seashore in order to recover from a bout of tuberculosis. While in his grandfather’s home in Tarumi, Stephen develops profound and lasting friendships with Matsu, Sachi, and Keiko, residents of the village and of nearby Yamaguchi. These bonds are forged within the context of, and despite, the war raging between China and Japan. The novel illustrates the subtle cultural differences between China and Japan and helps its readers discover beauty where it is least likely to be found. For example, Sachi and the other members of the Yamaguchi leper colony challenge Stephen’s and our own notions of beauty.

Stephen’s presence in Japan at this particular time also serves to illustrate a number of important issues. First, the novel points to subtle differences between Chinese and Japanese aesthetic and artistic sensibilities, and between Chinese and Japanese notions of propriety and manners. Second, the characters in The Samurai’s Garden are confronted with situations created by the war itself: the need to differentiate between Chinese and Japanese; the growing tendency to see the “other” as the enemy; and the shift of power from China to Japan as the war drags on and as China crumbles and bows before the Japanese military.

David Guterson’s Snow Falling on Cedars, a recent critical and popular success, is essentially a murder mystery: in 1954, off San Piedro Island in Puget Sound, a local fisherman is found suspiciously drowned, and a Japanese American is charged with his murder. Why is the community so quick to assume that a citizen of Japanese descent is guilty? Guterson tells us the stories of an island haunted by memories of what happened to its Japanese residents during World War II, when an entire community was sent into exile.

Even as the program enters its tenth year, Heritage remains and should remain a work-in-progress, a sequence of courses accommodating diverse teaching and learning styles. And yet we believe that the program must be defined for students and faculty in ways that go beyond fairly broad statements of goals and competencies.

We need to be able to explain with some consistency what students should expect to do in each Heritage course in the sequence, whoever the instructor might be.

These pages continue the process of explanation and invite you into our conversations about identity, community, culture, and learning.
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

In this year of continuing curriculum renewal, the Heritage faculty reaffirms its commitment to five competencies that have been central to Heritage since 1989: Cultural Studies and Writing, as well as Reading, Oral Communication, and Critical Thinking.

A. Our Cultural Studies goals for Heritage III (205) include:

1. That students continue to practice recognizing, analyzing, explaining, judging, and questioning multiple historical and cultural perspectives; that they continue to analyze continuities and discontinuities between our own positions and those of other times and places.

2. That students increase their awareness of global human conditions; that they be challenged to think critically about these conditions and to take thoughtful, responsible, moral stances on issues of global significance.

3. That students prepare themselves for entering global communities by examining how cultures work and interact.

4. That students deepen their recognition and respect for the pluralism of society within the United States; that they cultivate some of the competencies necessary for full civic participation within pluralistic societies and organizations, including cross-cultural communication, interdependence, collaboration, and consensus decision-making.

B. Our Writing goals for Heritage III (205) include:

1. That students practice strategies for discovering and formulating the points and judgments they want to make.

2. That students practice tightening and amplifying focus in their writing by generating both short and extended essays.

3. That students develop strategies for supporting, illustrating, analyzing, and testing their judgments, including techniques for conducting and incorporating the results of independent research (for example, the discovery and use of appropriate sources).

4. That students gain experience in evaluating their own processes of writing; that they assess and re-assess their own successes in saying what they want to say; that they practice judging how well their writing fulfills their own intentions and their audience’s needs.
C. Our Reading goals for Heritage III (205) include:

1. That students recognize that different authors, different genres, different periods, different cultures expect readers to approach texts in different ways.

2. That students will develop competence and understanding in strategies through which active learners make sense of texts by recognizing, analyzing, and engaging historical, social, political, intellectual, and other contexts for particular texts.

3. That students continue to discover that learning to read in different ways allows them to enjoy a wider range of texts and to gain new perspectives on their cultural assumptions.

4. That students practice explaining and supporting the ways in which they make sense of texts; that they practice assessing for themselves the accuracy and appropriateness of their own interpretations of texts, as well as those of others.

D. Our Oral Communication goals for Heritage III (205) include:

1. That students practice strategies for speaking extemporaneously, developing an argument orally, presenting information and ideas through panel discussions, debating, and assessing themselves and each other through mutually agreed upon criteria.

2. That students practice making judgments about credibility and authenticity in various oral communication contexts.

3. That students practice strategies for collaboration through interactive speaking and listening techniques.

E. Our Thinking goals for Heritage III (205) include:

1. That students practice viewing situations empathetically from different perspectives.

2. That students practice distinguishing between fact and opinion, between what we know and what we believe.

3. That students practice strategies for exploring the implications and consequences of ideas, actions, values, and beliefs.

4. That students distinguish how and when to think for themselves; how to maintain a healthy sense of skepticism, while recognizing and respecting appropriate kinds of tradition and authority.
Writing in Heritage III (205):
Opportunities, Assignments, and Portfolios

In Heritage 205, as in Heritage 105 and 106, 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.

Norms
For a more detailed statement of expectations for writing in Heritage II, see pages 13 and 14 of this booklet.

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, 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. See page 15 for checklist.

Heritage III (205) students will continue practicing 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 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;
- discovering, interpreting, and incorporating the results of independent research;
- focusing, developing, and sustaining inquiry through writing;
- editing and revising their own writing;
- recognizing, explaining, and assessing their own writing processes.

Students in Heritage 205 will also be expected to give focused attention to basic composition skills, as necessary. Teachers will help students become comfortable with using Hacker's A Writer's Reference 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 III (205) students should shape the equivalent of two sustained, distinct essays, each approximately 8 pages long (word-processed).

Both of these essays should show evidence of serious attention to one or more of the major texts and/or themes of the course.
Ordinarily, the first essay should be completed by the week of March 8, and the second by the week of April 26.

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 III (205) will be expected to write an essay final examination during the assigned period. 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.

**Oral Communication in Heritage III (205):**

Most importantly, Heritage 205 continues to foster 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 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.

Ordinarily, 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 Code Book.

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 III Texts
Spring 1999

The Art of War, Sun Tzu

The Selected Poems of Li Po, Translated by David Hinton

Silence, Shusaku Endo

The Samurai’s Garden, Gail Tsukiyamsa

Snow Falling on Cedars, David Guterson

A Writer’s Reference, Marilyn Hacker
(students should have retained text from Heritage I)
HERITAGE III (205):
CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS
Reading Calendar

February

W 2/3 Introduction
F 2/5 Introduction

UNIT ONE: Sun Tzu's The Art of War, translated by Thomas Cleary

There are a number of advantages to having The Art of War as the first text in the Heritage III sequence. This is primarily a Taoist text, but it is also inspired by Buddhism, and as such will give us a clearer view of both Chinese and Japanese culture. The Art of War is a very flexible text which cannot be pigeonholed into any particular discipline. It may be used to understand science, history, business, society, or literature. Students across the disciplines should have little, if any, difficulty relating to this text and its possible applications or implications either to their studies or to their personal lives. The Art of War also examines a number of important questions concerning cultural encounters: What is the nature of conflict? How does knowledge make conflict unnecessary? How does the appreciation of various points of view lead to understanding and to resolving conflicts?

M 2/8 The Art of War, Translator's Introduction, pp. 1-38
W 2/10 The Art of War, pp. 41-56
F 2/12 The Art of War, pp. 57-83

M 2/15 The Art of War, pp. 84-113
W 2/17 The Art of War, pp. 114-142
F 2/19 The Art of War, pp. 143-172

UNIT TWO: The Selected Poems of Li Po, translated by David Hinton

Since Li Po's poetry and The Art of War were written within the same philosophical contexts—Taoism and Buddhism—these texts will complement each other while deepening our understanding of Taoism and Buddhism. Also, the poems selected and translated by Hinton provide excellent opportunities to appreciate poetry in and of itself. While poetry is a more difficult craft to master, this text offers greater possibilities for close textual reading, and for an appreciation of the beauty, lyricism, and precision of language.

M 2/22 The Selected Poems of Li Po
W 2/24 The Selected Poems of Li Po
F 2/26 The Selected Poems of Li Po

UNIT THREE: Silence, by Shusaku Endo

Silence is set in seventeenth century Japan, at the beginning of the Tokugawa period. Tokugawa Japan is characterized by the establishment of a strong shogunate and by attempts to solidify the power of the Japanese government. The efforts of the shogun and the samurai to unify Japan politically, socially and culturally, were continuously challenged by both internal and external forces. In the seventeenth century these external forces consisted primarily of European traders and Christian missionaries. As such, this text offers a glimpse into the dynamics of cultural encounters. First, Silence provides important insights into the numerous and diverse ways in which Japanese culture(s) reacted, responded and adapted to Christianity. The novel's Japanese characters—Inoue, Kichihiro, and the Christian converts—respond in quite different ways to Christianity. This illustrates that there is not one uniform Japanese "way" of reacting to foreign ideas or influences. Second, Silence shows us that ideas, religions, or belief systems are "translated" and "transformed" when they "travel" outside their origi-
nal contexts. For example, both Father Rodrigues and Father Ferreira have redefined their own notions of Christianity in order to suit the Japanese context. But this process takes place also because Japanese culture itself has forced both European priests to re-examine their own belief systems.

M 3/1 Silence, Prologue, pp. 1-12
W 3/3 Silence, Chapters 1-3, pp. 13-46
F 3/5 Silence, Chapter 4, pp. 47-78

***FIRST ESSAY DUE THIS WEEK***

M 3/8 Silence, Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 79-120
W 3/10 Silence, Chapters 7 and 8, pp. 121-171
F 3/12 Silence, Chapters 9 and 10 and Appendix, pp. 173-201

SPRING BREAK

M 3/22 The Selected Poems of Li Po
W 3/24 The Selected Poems of Li Po
F 3/26 The Selected Poems of Li Po

UNIT FOUR: The Samurai’s Garden by Gail Tsukiyama

This novel is set in 1937 and 1938, at the height of the war between China and Japan. It examines the ways in which a young Chinese man, Stephen, encounters Japanese culture through his friendships with Matsu, Sachi, and Keiko. These friendships allow Stephen not only to compare his own Chinese cultural background to that of his Japanese friends, but also to examine the ways in which, over the centuries, Japan has "borrowed" ideas from China only to transform them into its own versions of them. While spending a year in Japan, Stephen, a painter, discovers beauty in the most unexpected places, and finds artistry in the most simple lines of Sachi’s and Matsu’s gardens. The Samurai’s Garden also points out the difficulties in forming friendships with people others might classify as outsiders or as enemies.

M 3/29 The Samurai’s Garden, Autumn, pp. 3-37
W 3/31 The Samurai’s Garden, Autumn, pp. 37-70

EASTER BREAK

W 4/7 The Samurai’s Garden, Winter, pp. 73-113
F 4/9 The Samurai’s Garden, Spring, pp. 117-159
M 4/12 The Samurai’s Garden, Summer, pp. 163-182
W 4/14 The Samurai’s Garden, Autumn, pp. 185-211
F 4/16 The Samurai’s Garden, Conclusion
M 4/19 The Selected Poems of Li Po

UNIT FIVE: Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson

This mystery novel takes us home to the United States of America in the years immediately following World War II. The quest to determine whether or not Kabuo killed Carl Heine points to a number of assumptions, stereotypes, and prejudices which lie barely beneath the surface on the island of San Piedro. At the heart of the novel is also the “impossible” love story of Hatsue and Ishmael, a love story that attempts to transcend cultural differences and barriers.

W 4/21 Snow Falling on Cedars, Chapters 1-5, pp. 3-59
F 4/23 Snow Falling on Cedars, Chapters 6-8, pp. 60-112

***SECOND ESSAY DUE THIS WEEK***

M 4/26 Snow Falling on Cedars, Chapters 9-12, pp. 113-176
W 4/28 Snow Falling on Cedars, Chapters 13-19, pp. 177-285
F 4/30 Snow Falling on Cedars, Chapters 20-23, pp. 286-337

M 5/3 Snow Falling on Cedars, Chapters 24-26, pp. 338-386
W 5/5 Snow Falling on Cedars, Chapters 27-32, pp. 387-460
F 5/7 Snow Falling on Cedars, Conclusion

M 5/10 The Selected Poems of Li Po
W 5/12 The Selected Poems of Li Po
F 5/14 Conclusion
FINAL EXAMINATION

Dates for Final Examination:

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<tr>
<th>Class Days</th>
<th>Exam Dates and Times</th>
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<tr>
<td>MWF 8:00-9:05</td>
<td>T 5/18 8:00-10:00</td>
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<td>MWF 9:15-10:20</td>
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<td>MWF 2:30-3:35</td>
<td>M 5/17 10:30-12:30</td>
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NOTE: One hour of the final examination will consist of a common essay.
Program Norms for
Heritage III Writing Assignments
Spring 1999

Superior researched essays will be distinguished by the writer’s ability to take a stand on a specific point or judgment on an issue raised explicitly or implicitly by the course materials. This judgment will be richly supported by sound reasoning and a pattern of evidence drawn from sources beyond classroom texts. In selecting such sources, the student will have demonstrated the ability to locate appropriate evidence, to evaluate it critically, to incorporate it successfully into his or her work, and to document it with accurate citations. Superior essays will devote considerable attention to analysis of this evidence, rather than simply transmitting it, and the best work 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 other writing styles, such as narrative (for example, a clear, confident point of view) or textual analysis (using an example from the reading to support or illustrate the judgment).

Superior examples of sustained text-based analysis will demonstrate the writer’s ability to develop a focused, sustained, and perceptive interpretation of some significant feature of a major text (or, even better, will integrate this sort of sustained inquiry through two or more texts). The most successful kinds of analysis will usually show the student’s willingness to “dig in” to some specific theme or aspect running through a text or texts, with the explicit purpose of showing what it means and why it matters. They often respond to such questions as: “How do perceptions of the “other” shape the contours of Silence, The Samurai’s Garden, and Snow Falling on Cedars?” The best textual analyses will 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 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 instructor and/or peers, revision continues as ideas and judgments come into focus and shape through continuing amplification or “burrowing.” The best examples of papers generated through process writing will include one or two full drafts, thoroughly revised and edited (but not just edited), leading up to the final product.
Heritage III Portfolios:  
Criteria for reading completed course portfolios  
Spring 1999

5: Superior  
The most accomplished portfolios will contain two distinct, well-conceived, and well-organized essays (totaling approximately 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 both 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 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 than 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 both pieces may be too brief, underdeveloped, or lacking preliminary writing and drafts. The reader may want “more” to be convinced fully 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. One or both of the pieces may be too short, too abstract, too vague, or too 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 may contain only plot summary.

1: Marginal  
These portfolios compound inadequacies in one or more of the areas noted in characterizing the “Competent” or “Below Average” portfolios.
Heritage III Portfolio
Spring 1999

Checklist

This portfolio contains.

two distinct essays
(if more or less than two, indicate how many

one essay emphasizing research

one essay emphasizing sustained text-based analysis

other: ______________________

data examples of brief response writings or “think pieces’

_____ ample some none

evidence of planning for essays (for example, outlines or proposals)

_____ ample some none

evidence of revision (one or more preliminary drafts)

_____ ample some none

student’s self-assessment of portfolio and writing process