Metaphor and Meaning
IDSEM-UG 1341, Fall 2015
1 Washington Place, Room 501
Professor Stacy Pies
Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

SYLLABUS

E-mail: stacy.pies@nyu.edu
Office: Gallatin, 1 Washington Place, Room 509
Office hours: Tuesday, 10:00-11:00 a.m. by appt.; Thursday, 12:30-2:00 p.m. by appt.;
Thursday, 2:00-3:30 p.m. and 4:45-5:45 p.m.
Telephone: (212) 998-9156 (voice)
Mailbox: Gallatin, 5th floor

Course description Since ancient times, poets and philosophers have written about
metaphor and its power, while visual artists have transposed the techniques of figurative
language from the verbal to the visual. Metaphor has been employed in texts as
ornamentation, as a means of introducing new ideas and concepts, and as a way of
imitating the working of the mind itself. "Metaphor" in the title of this course is itself a
metaphor. Throughout the term, we will investigate how metaphor influences our
processes of thinking, creating, and innovating. And we experiment with making our own
metaphors, in words and pictures.

Course objectives In this class, our aim is to observe, feel, think and write about
metaphor in action rhetorically, poetically, philosophically and visually. I hope that you
will gain a sense of the history of metaphor through both a survey of some main theories
of metaphor and attentive reading of examples in texts across time. I also hope that you
will become more attuned to the roles of metaphor and figurative language in your fields
of interest and your forms of expression.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at NYU bookstore, possibly Shakespeare and Company,
and on reserve in Bobst Library)
Poetry and other handouts (also posted on NYU classes site).

Course requirements The work for the class combines class participation, reading, and
various types of writing. Class discussion will enable us to make connections between the
material we are studying and your areas of interest. Please feel free to propose readings
and activities and to bring any additional material to the class that you feel might make it
more meaningful.

Important Ground Rules: Attendance is required, and more than two unexcused
absences may adversely affect your grade in the course. You are expected to have
completed the readings before the class for which they are assigned. Papers are due on
deadline. Please no laptops, cell phones, PDA's etc. in class. Just bring your books, brain,
heart and imagination.

REQUIRED WRITING
- Observations (300-500 words) (see schedule below)
- Essays: #1 (1500 words), #2 (1800-2000 words)
- Miscellaneous metaphors, sonnet, concrete poem

Grading
Attendance and participation 15%, Observations and Misc writing 50%, Essays 35%

Academic Integrity
As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars
who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual
respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to
severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of
behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include
plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please
consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website for a full description of the academic
integrity policy
www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html

SCHEDULE
9/3 Introduction

9/8 Reading due: Homer's Iliad, Book 18 (handout)

9/10 Reading due: Homer's Iliad (handout); W.H. Auden's "The Shield of
Achilles" (handout)
Writing due: Observation #1

9/15 Reading due: Homer's Iliad (handout); W.H. Auden's "The Shield of
Achilles" (handout); Aristotle, Poetics, ch 1-4
Writing due: Observation #1

9/17 and 22 Classical ideas about metaphor and rhetoric
Reading due: Aristotle, Poetics

9/24 and 29 Aristotle, Poetics, and Rhetoric, Book 3, chapters 1-12 (inclusive)
Writing due: Bring two metaphors to class, one metaphor from your daily
life or from a text, and one metaphor that you write.

10/1 Further discussion of Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics. We will pay close
attention to the role of metaphor in rhetoric and to Aristotle's ideas about
what makes metaphor work well in rhetorical speech (and writing).

**Writing due:** Observation #2 about a metaphor that you notice in Aristotle's *Rhetoric.* Analyze how the metaphor works in the text.

10/6

**Modern Thoughts about Premodern Poetics**

**Reading due:** Review the articles by Booth and Ted Cohen. Also read I.A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, lectures 3 and 4.

**Writing due:** Observation #3—Thoughts on Booth, Cohen, Richards and Aristotle. Bring in a metaphor you notice in these essays and think about its role in its text.

10/8

I.A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, lectures 5 and 6 and sonnets (handout).

Bring in an idea for essay #1.

10/13

NO CLASS (Fall break)

10/15

**Reading due:** Sonnets of Drayton, Campion, Shakespeare (handout). Discussion of Richards' ideas about the interanimation of words, metaphor and thought, and what you see happening in the sonnets.

**Writing due:** Observation #4: In a paragraph or two, find a metaphor in one of the sonnets and explain how it works.

10/20

Further sonnetizing.

**Writing due:** Write a sonnet and bring it in to read (I will give you instructions!).

10/22

**Even More Modern Theories of Metaphor**

**Reading due:** Max Black, "More about Metaphor" (handout). Bring in your own explanation of Black's ideas. You could use examples from sonnets to explain. Bring in questions, too.

10/27

**Yet More Modern Theories of Metaphor**

**Reading due:** From *On Metaphor*: Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean" and Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling" and Black's and Harries's responses in the "Afterthoughts" section.

10/29

Further discussion of Ricoeur.

**Writing due:** Essay #1.

11/3

**Metaphor and Modern Poetics: Romanticism**

**Reading due:** Wordsworth, "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads" and poems (handout). **Writing due:** Rewritten sonnet.
11/5 Metaphor and Modernism
Reading due: More poems, old and new (handout).
Writing due: Observation #5 of a poem in handout.

11/10 Visual Metaphors
Reading due: Shiff, "Art and Life: A Metaphoric Relationship" in On Metaphor. Concrete Poetry; Arnheim, Visual Thinking, TBA.

11/12 Visual Metaphors
Reading due: Concrete Poetry; Essays by W.J.T. Mitchell.
Visual people: Bring in one or two examples of visual metaphor

Writing due: Write a concrete poem and bring it in

11/19 Reading due: "Six Significant Landscapes" and other poems (handout).
Writing due: Observation #5
Discussion of Metaphorium projects and essay #2.

11/24 Woolf, To the Lighthouse

11/26 No class. Thanksgiving Break.

12/1 Woolf, To the Lighthouse
Writing due: Observation #6 and paper thoughts.

12/3 Woolf, To the Lighthouse

12/8 Woolf, To the Lighthouse

12/10 Woolf, To the Lighthouse and Metaphorium

12/15 Metaphorium and conclusion
Writing due: Essay #2 (1800-2000 words)