Course Description: The Human Fact 2

This course in the craft of fiction involves textual analysis and is an ongoing fiction workshop for graduate students in the humanities. Lionel Trilling wrote that the true job of the fiction writer is to reveal “the human fact” in its veil of circumstances. The human fact that Trilling refers to is more than character, more than verbal portraiture or any specific figurative representation of an individual—more, even, than a reaffirmation that there is no such thing as an ordinary life. He was writing about revelation, in fiction, of the unspoken yet ever-present sensation of life. Arguably, literary narrative in all of its forms may be gathered under the umbrella of this definition. This course is an exploration of the writer’s craft with an emphasis on the above notion.

Class time will include discussions of fiction (in a course packet) by contemporary and modern writers. Students are expected to produce two stories or chapters for the workshop. In addition, they may be asked to write short creative responses to the readings. Students’ creative writing will be analyzed in a workshop format, drawing on and extending the insights into craft provoked by the assigned readings.