

University of Southern Maine
LEWISTON-AUBURN COLLEGE
Fall 2004

HUM/SBS 399: Transforming Words: Poetry and Psychologies of Change

Essay: Due October 20th

In more ways than one, Hirsch introduced this course. Wrapping up the Preface to his book, he commented, *“I’d like to believe that the ongoing initiation into art deepens our capacity for experiencing ourselves as well as others, thereby deepening our capacity for personhood, our achievement of humanity”* (p. xiii). Use this essay assignment to reflect upon and present the most compelling case you can for the ways art – in this case, specifically, poetry – can facilitate the deepening of these capacities. This topic provides an important opportunity to “bridge” our readings from the humanities and psychology. Both sets of disciplinary readings in the course can be used to address, for instance, obstacles and routes to “deepening our capacity for experiencing ourselves and others” and for our “personhood”...

In constructing your essay, make direct use of specific points from our course readings to illustrate and build your positions. Be sure to clearly identify and cite any quotations. While you should not aim at drawing every one of our readings into your essay, do not restrict your considerations of readings exclusively to Hirsch. You should bring in material from at least four other authors assigned for our course readings (up until October 13th), including from at least two of the “psychological” selections assigned either September 15th or September 22nd.

Length: 4 to 5 double-spaced typed pages