

ENG 3010/sec. 13C9
MWF 4
TUR 2346
Spring 2015

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Modern Criticism and Theory

Course Description and Goals

This course is an intensive introduction to the intellectual history of departments of literature since the mid twentieth century. Though we will read the work of some late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thinkers who have proved important for modern criticism and theory (e.g. Marx and Engels, Freud, Nietzsche, de Saussure, T.S. Eliot), our focus will be primarily on developments since the rise of the New Criticism in the 1930s and 1940s, and more particularly on texts written during the heyday of theory—from the mid 1960s to the beginning of the current century. Our trajectory will lead us through readings of formalist, structuralist, poststructuralist, reader-response, Marxist, psychoanalytic, feminist, critical race, queer, postcolonial, and posthuman theories and critical practices. However, we will be less concerned with identifying the schools to which texts belong than with carefully reading and assessing the arguments of the texts we encounter. On the one hand, we will work to appropriate the crucial terms of arguments and to understand how those arguments unfold; on the other hand, we will discover perspectives from which to critique these arguments. At the same time that we aim to become more astute critical readers of arguments, we will try to understand the modern history of the discipline within which we work, and to make ourselves more resourceful critics of the literary and cultural texts we read beyond this class.

Text

Vincent B. Leitch *et al* (Eds.), *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 2nd ed. (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010) ISBN 978-0-393-93292-8

Office Hours

I will set aside Mondays 2:00-4:00pm as office hours for this course. If those hours are inconvenient, I am happy to make appointments to meet with students at other times.

Attendance (10% of final grade)

Attendance is required. You will be expected to arrive on time with the course textbook and whatever other materials may be required for class. Anyone who arrives more than 10 minutes late for class, and who has not previously alerted me to a compelling reason for such tardiness will be marked absent for the entire session. Anyone who arrives for class without the textbook will similarly be marked absent since there is no way that s/he will be able to participate in the class without the textbook.

Students will be permitted to miss 3 50-minute class sessions without excuse or penalty. Each of the next three unexcused absences will entail a 10-percentage point penalty in the assessment of an attendance grade. Students who have more than 6 total unexcused absences will fail the course.

Absences will be excused in conformity with university policy as outlined at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx#absences>.

While serious illness or a family emergency may be grounds for excusing absences, students cannot expect that they will be able to pass the course if they are absent for prolonged periods. Certainly, even if your absences are excused, you should expect that 9 absences or more would cause you to fail the course.

Preparation and Participation (10% of final grade)

Active participation will be required of all students. I take active participation to include:

(a) Preparation

Students must come prepared for class. Being prepared for a discussion involves reading the material carefully and developing a thoughtful response to it. The materials for this course present arguments that are often challenging in one way or another—at times they are densely complex, at times audacious in their claims. In order to read these materials fully, you must read them actively, taking notes, preparing yourself to be able to summarize their arguments, and thinking about possible objections you might raise or potential applications you might pursue.

(b) Involvement in Discussion

Students must involve themselves in our discussions as energetically as possible, and with as much tact and discretion as possible. Although some students are more reticent than others, education is a public and collective process, and part of that process entails engagement in public debate. Students must, therefore, participate on a regular basis, and must be willing to pursue the implications of their differences in a serious fashion.

Preparation Pages (10% of final grade)

On two occasions in the course of the semester, each student will submit what I am calling a preparation page for the rest of the class to consider as a prompt to discussion of assigned texts. The preparation page should *briefly* summarize the argument of the text assigned for discussion, and then pose questions for discussion keyed to passages in the text. Preparation page will be evaluated on the cogency of their summaries of the texts to hand, and on the basis of the productivity of the questions posed.

Mid-Term Examination (20% of final grade)

There will be a mid-term examination on Friday, February 20. Students will be asked to provide information about passages drawn from the readings of the first

7 weeks of the semester (author, title, etc.). They will also be asked to define terms from the readings, and to fill in blanks in statements about the readings. Other kinds of short-answer questions are possible. There will be no essay questions on the mid-term exam.

Should illness or emergency prevent you from sitting the mid-term examination at the time set aside for it, you will need to notify me at least 24 hours in advance. I will arrange for an alternate time for you to sit the examination.

Panel Discussions (20% of final grade)

Each student will participate on a panel that will lead class discussion for 25-35 minutes of class time. The panels will be evaluated on the basis of plans for the discussions that they submit in advance of the discussions, and on the basis of the discussions themselves.

Final Examination (30% of final grade)

There will be a final examination on April 29. Roughly 3 weeks in advance of the examination, I will distribute questions for the long-answer portion of the examination. Students will be asked to submit the responses to the long-answer questions at the beginning of the examination period. The responses to the long-answer questions will be evaluated on the basis of the arguments they present as well as on their strengths as samples of writing. In the examination period, students will respond to short-answer questions on texts drawn from the whole of the semester.

If you have a final examination conflict, the Registrar's Office will determine which examination has priority in the final examination period, and, if need be, I will arrange for an alternate exam period for you.

Student Disability Services

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

UF Grading Policies for Assigning Grade Points

See <http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Academic Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by the Honor Pledge that states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work

submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with instructor of this class.

Statement on Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

Cell Phones

During class, students should have cell phones turned off.

Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <http://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Final Grade Appeals

If you want to appeal the final grade you receive for this course, you should contact Professor Stephanie A. Smith, Associate Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator of the English Department. You will submit your course materials for evaluation by a committee assembled by Professor Smith. The committee may decide to raise, lower, or leave unchanged your final grade for the course. Its decision is final.

Schedule of Classes

The schedule below provides an initial plan for the semester. Should we need to adjust the schedule at a later moment, I will provide sufficient advance warning.

Week 1

W Jan 7: Introduction—syllabus, policies, etc.

F Jan 9: Terry Eagleton, "The Rise of English" (2140-2146)

Week 2

M Jan 12: Gerald Graff, "Taking Cover in Coverage" (1962-1970)

W Jan 14: T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (955-961) and "The Metaphysical Poets" (961-968)

F Jan 16: Cleanth Brooks, "The Heresy of Paraphrase" (1217-1229)

Week 3

M Jan 19: MLK Holiday

W Jan 21: Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy" (1232-1246) and "The Affective Fallacy" (1246-1261)

F Jan 23: Ferdinand de Saussure, from *Course in General Linguistics* (850-866)

Week 4

M Jan 26: Roman Jakobson, from *Linguistics and Poetics* (1144-1152) and "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles" (1152-1156)

W Jan 28: Tzvetan Todorov, "Structural Analysis of Narrative" (2023-2030)

F Jan 30: J. L. Austin, "Performative Utterances" (1289-1301)

Week 5

M Feb 2: Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" (764-774)

W Feb 4: Jacques Derrida, from *Of Grammatology* (1688-1697)

F Feb 6: Jacques Derrida, from "Plato's Pharmacy" (1697-1734)

Week 6

M Feb 9: Jacques Derrida, from "Plato's Pharmacy" (continued)

W Feb 11: Paul de Man, "Semiotics and Rhetoric" (1365-1378)

F Feb 13: Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" (1322-1326) and "From Work to Text" (1326-1331); Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" (1475-1490) **Panel Discussion**

Week 7

M Feb 16: Stanley Fish, "Interpreting the *Variorum*" (1974-1992)

W Feb 18: Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, "Against Theory" (2491-2506)

Panel Discussion

F Feb 20: **Mid-Term Test**

Week 8

M Feb 23: Sigmund Freud, from *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Chapters 5 & 6 (814-824) and "The Uncanny" (824-841)

W Feb 25: Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage" (1163-1169) and from "The Agency of the Letter" (1169-1181)

F Feb 27: Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism" (841-845); Jacques Lacan, "The Signification of the Phallus" (1181-1189)

Week 9

M March 2-F March 6: Spring Break

Week 10

M March 9: Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, All Selections (651-676)

W March 11: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" (1051-1071)

F March 13: Max Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno, from *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1110-1127) **Panel Discussion**

Week 11

M March 16: Louis Althusser, from "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1335-1361)

W March 18: Michel Foucault, "The Carceral" (1490-1502)

F March 20: Fredric Jameson, from *The Political Unconscious* (1822-1846) **Panel Discussion**

Week 12

M March 23: Virginia Woolf, from *A Room of One's Own* (896-905); Monique Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman" (1906-1913)

W March 25: Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (2084-2095)

F March 27: Michel Foucault, from *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (1502-1521)

Panel Discussion

Week 13

M March 30: Gloria Anzaldúa, from *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (2098-2109)

W April 1: Gayle Rubin, from "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" (2377-2402)

F April 3: Judith Butler, from *Gender Trouble* (2540-2553) **Panel Discussion**

Week 14

M April 6: W.E.B. DuBois, "Criteria of Negro Art" (870-877); Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression" (1010-1023)

W April 8: Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory" (2128-2137); Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Talking Black: Critical Signs of the Times" (2430-2438)

F April 10: Paul Gilroy, from *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (2556-2575) **Panel Discussion**

Week 15

M April 13: Edward Said, From *Orientalism*: "Introduction" (1866-1888)

W April 15: Homi K. Bhabha, "The Commitment to Theory" (2353-2372)

F April 17: Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, from *Empire* (2621-2635) **Panel Discussion**

Week 16

M April 20: N. Katherine Hayles, from *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (2165-2187)

W April 22: Franco Moretti, from *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (2441-2464)

W April 29: 3:00-5:00 **Final Exam**