

ENG 3011/class 21444  
MWF 6  
TUR 2334  
Spring 2023

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### Theorists: From Plato to *Practical Criticism*

#### Course Description

This course is a prequel to ENG 3010 The Theory and Practice of Modern Criticism. In it, we will read literary criticism and theory drawn from classical Greece to the early twentieth century. We will be especially concerned with the ways in which the texts we read situate their own work and that of the literature they consider in relation to social and political concerns.

While we may not address them all, and we may address others, the *kinds* of questions we will ask might include: Why did Plato banish poets from his Republic? What is the purpose of the catharsis that Aristotle contends the audience of a tragedy should experience? Why does Sir Philip Sidney argue that poetry is more valuable to the social order than philosophy or history? Why should a concern with purportedly neo-Aristotelian rules for drama have preoccupied the seventeenth century? What, according to David Hume, is involved in establishing a “standard of taste?” How can Percy Bysshe Shelley conclude that poets are the “unacknowledged legislators of the world?” What missions does Matthew Arnold propose for poetry and criticism in the midst of nineteenth-century industrialization and Philistinism? Is it something more than mere hyperbole when Oscar Wilde declares that “all art is quite useless?” How does Alain Locke’s development of a “New Negro” aesthetic challenge W.E.B. DuBois’ emphasis on the propagandistic function of art in the 1920s? What kind of relation does Virginia Woolf propose between the material conditions of a woman’s life and the activity of her imagination? Why does I.A. Richards argue in *Practical Criticism* that cultivating the art of reading poetry will combat the baleful influences of “mechanical inventions, with their social effects, and a too sudden diffusion of indigestible ideas?”

#### Texts

The following texts have been entered at the textbook adoption website:

Gavin Alexander, *Sidney’s “The Defence of Poersy” and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (London and New York: Penguin Classics, 2004)

I. A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1929, rpt 1956) ISBN 978-0-156-73626-8

D.A. Russell and Michael Winterbottom, *Classical Literary Criticism* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1972, reissued 2008) ISBN 978-0-19-954981-8

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (New York: Harcourt Inc., 1929; Harvest edition, 1989) ISBN 978-0-156-78733-8

## **Office Hours**

In order to fulfill my responsibilities as the English Department's undergraduate academic advisor, I am available in my office most of the time when I am not teaching or preparing to teach. Although meetings or other appointments will sometimes take me out of my office, you should generally be able to find me in my office MWF 2:00pm-4:00pm, TR 9:30am-12:30pm and 1:15pm-4:00pm, and you are welcome either to drop by or to make an appointment to see me. Please do not hesitate to come to talk with me about any questions you have regarding the course, the readings, or the assignments. I am more than happy to meet with you.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Attendance (5% of final grade)**

Attendance is required. You will be expected to arrive on time with the readings 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 readings will similarly be marked absent since there is no way that s/he will be able to participate in the class without them.

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. While serious illness or a family emergency may be grounds for excusing additional 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.

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

### **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 Page (10% of final grade)**

Each student will submit a preparation page for consideration by the class prior to class discussion of an assigned text. The preparation page will summarize the argument of the assigned text, and then propose terms for discussing that text. Proposing terms for discussion may involve posing questions or articulating problems. When a preparation page proposes terms for discussion it must refer to specific passages in the text being discussed. The preparation page will be due by the beginning of the class session before the one at which the assigned text will be discussed.

**Mid-Term Examination (20% of final grade) & Final Examination (20% of final grade)**

The mid-term examination and the final examination will consist of passages requiring identifications. Students will be expected to provide the name of the writer and the title of the text from which the passage is drawn. Full names and full titles will be required. Partial credit will be given for partial information.

Should illness or emergency prevent you from sitting the mid-term examination or final 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.

**Major Essay (25% of final grade)**

An argumentative essay of 8 pages will be due on Thursday, April 6 by 11:59pm. Details to follow.

***Practical Criticism* Colloquium Panels (10% of final grade)**

In weeks 14 and 15, we will read and discuss I. A. Richards' *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*. Each student will participate in a panel that will direct discussion of one day's assigned readings for approximately 25-30 minutes. Each group will submit a plan for the discussion prior to the start of class on the day of the discussion.

**Grading Scale**

A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73;

D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; E = 0-59

**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 the instructor of this class.

## **Statement on Harassment**

It is the policy of The University of Florida to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff and visitors to promptly report sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about the University of Florida policies regarding harassment, see the University of Florida Student Conduct Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/conductcode.php> and policies regarding harassment at <http://wwwhr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>.

## **Student Disability Services**

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://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.

## **Cell Phones and Laptops**

During class, students should have cell phones turned off, and stashed away. Students may use laptops to take notes, but if students are found to be using laptops for other purposes, they will be marked absent for the class meeting in which they have misused their computers.

## 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 Kenneth Kidd, Associate Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator of the English Department. You will submit your course materials for evaluation by a committee assembled by Professor Kidd. The committee may decide to raise, lower, or leave unchanged your final grade for the course. Its decision is final.

## Schedule of Classes

The following schedule of readings is a working plan. If it becomes necessary to alter the schedule, I will give ample warning.

### Week 1

M Jan 9: Introduction—syllabus, policies, etc.

W Jan 11: Preliminary Questions—no assigned readings

F Jan 13: Preliminary Questions—no assigned readings

### Week 2

M Jan 16: Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

W Jan 18: Plato, "Ion" (CLC 1-13)

F Jan 20: Plato, *The Republic*, Books 2-3 (CLC 14-35)

### Week 3

M Jan 23: Plato, *The Republic*, Book 10 (CLC 36-50)

W Jan 25: Aristotle, *Poetics* (CLC 51-90)

F Jan 27: Aristotle, *Poetics* (CLC 51-90)

#### Week 4

M Jan 30: Horace, "The Art of Poetry" (CLC 98-110)

W Feb 1: Longinus, "On Sublimity" (CLC 143-187)

F Feb 3: Plutarch, "On the Study of Poetry" (CLC 192-216)

#### Week 5

M Feb 6: George Gascoigne, "Certain Notes of Instruction" (Alexander 237-247); Henry Peacham, From *The Garden of Eloquence* (Alexander 248-253); William Webbe, From *A Discourse of English Poetry* (Alexander 254-259); Sir John Harrington, From *A Brief Apology of Poetry* (Alexander 260-273)

W Feb 8: Sir Philip Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy" (Alexander 1-55)

F Feb 10: Sidney continued

#### Week 6

M Feb 13: George Puttenham, From *The Art of English Poesy* (Alexander 55-204)

W Feb 15: Puttenham continued

F Feb 17: John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy"

#### Week 7

M Feb 20: Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, No. 4 (On Modern Fiction) and "Preface to *Shakespeare*"

W Feb 22: David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste"

F Feb 24: William Wordsworth, "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*"

#### Week 8

M Feb 27: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "On Poesy or Art," Selections from *Biographia Literaria*

W March 1: Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry"

F March 3: Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet" and "Shakespeare; Or, the Poet"

### Week 9

M March 6: Margaret Fuller, "American Literature: Its Position in the Present Time, and Prospects for the Future"

W March 8: Mid-term Identifications Test

F March 10: Matthew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" and "The Study of Poetry"

### Week 10

M March 13- F March 17: Spring Break

### Week 11

M March 20: Henry James, "The Art of Fiction"

W March 22: Walter Pater, "Introduction" and "Conclusion" from *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*

F March 24: Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist" and "Preface" to *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*

### Week 12

M March 27: T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and "The Metaphysical Poets"

W March 29: W.E.B. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art;" Alain Locke, "The New Negro," "Art or Propaganda?"  
"Beauty Instead of Ashes"

F March 31: Locke continued

### Week 13

M April 3: Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

W April 5: Class Cancelled

R April 6: Major Paper Due

F April 7: Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* continued

### Week 14

M April 10: I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*, 3-58

W April 12: I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*, 59-112

F April 14: I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*, 113-170

#### Week 15

M April 17: I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*, 173-222

W April 19: I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*, 223-274

F April 21: I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*, 275-329

#### Week 16

M April 24: Final Identification Test

W April 26: Conclusions & Evaluations