

**Critical Theory and Methodology**  
**ENGL 385**

Professor Rashna Richards

Office: 307 Palmer

Office Hours: T 12:15-2:15 and R 12:15-1:15

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Semester: Spring 2015

Class: TR 11:00-12:15

Room: 205 Palmer

***Course Description***

What is literature? How do we interpret it? What is its relationship to reality? How does it represent the self and the world? This course will take on such fundamental questions from multiple, sometimes contradictory, theoretical perspectives. We will examine major developments in literary criticism and critical theory and explore how they can be used for literary analysis. This course is designed to prepare English majors for advanced research.

***Course Policies***

<p><b>Note 1:</b> These policies will be applied without exceptions. In the interest of fairness to fellow students, please don't expect or ask for special accommodations or exemptions.</p>
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<p><b>Note 2:</b> Failure to remember or follow any of these policies will result in severe penalties to your professionalism grade.</p>
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**Attendance:** You are required to attend all classes. Do not email me about your absences. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get information and/or handouts from a classmate. You are allowed three absences over the course of the semester, no questions asked. Save these absences for athletics, extracurricular activities, or medical/personal emergencies. After the third absence, each subsequent absence will result in a deduction of 20 points from your final course grade. After six absences, you will fail the course.

**Tardiness:** You are required to be on time. Habitual tardiness, even if it's only a couple of minutes, will hurt your participation/professionalism grade.

**Late Work:** I do not accept late work. Paper copies of all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the deadline. Computer glitches or printing problems are not legitimate excuses for late work. If you do not plan on being here when an assignment is due, it must be in my mailbox before the deadline. You will receive a zero on an assignment if it is not turned in when it is due. Please note that you are required to complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade.

**Class Participation:** You are required to come to class prepared with the assigned reading for that day. I expect constructive verbal contribution to each class meeting. Fair warning: if you do not volunteer, you will be called on to contribute to class discussions. A student who disrupts class or in any way creates a hostile environment will be subject to disciplinary action. A student who reads or does homework for another class, chats with a neighbor, leaves the classroom, or

simply dozes off should expect a very low participation grade. I will likely say nothing at the time of the incident, but disruptive behavior will adversely affect your professionalism grade; you may also be marked absent for that day.

**Electronic Devices:** The use of all electronic devices is forbidden in this class. You should turn off all electronic devices, including laptops, before class begins. If you are observed texting, you will be marked absent for that day.

**Food or Drink:** I don't mind if you bring something to drink, but please avoid bringing any food into the classroom.

**Consultation:** I'll be happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns you have about the class. You don't need to make an appointment to stop by during my office hours. If those times don't work, see me before or after class so we can set up another time that is mutually convenient. Appointments cannot be made by email.

**Email:** It is always preferable to meet in person to discuss any questions or concerns, since the impersonal medium of electronic communication is a poor substitute for a genuine face-to-face conversation. Email should only be reserved for emergencies, when your question cannot wait to be answered until the next time we meet. Please regard email correspondence as formal communication and abide by rules of professional etiquette. Email is absolutely not the medium for negotiating special requests, addressing grade concerns, or discussing ideas for assignments; those issues must be handled in person.

**Format of Assignments:** All written assignments need to be typed and double spaced, in 12 pt. font, using Times New Roman, with one-inch margins on all sides. The format and citations must conform to MLA specifications, or the assignment may not be accepted. You do not need a title page; instead, include your name, my name, course name/number, and date in the top left corner of the first page. Be sure to number and staple your pages; also, proofread your work before printing up the final draft. I do not accept any assignments via email.

**Intellectual Honesty:** All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, google or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. You are advised against posting your work on the internet, since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. You are also advised to save drafts of your work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and, if convicted, the student will receive an F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, please consult me.

**Disability Issues:** Students with documented disabilities may be entitled to specific accommodations. Please contact the office of Student Disability Services for more information. In every case, it is your responsibility to provide me with an official letter from SDS.

## *Course Evaluation*

### Grade Distribution

Participation/Professionalism	15%	150 points
Essay #1 (2-3 pages)	15%	150 points
Essay #2 (4-5 pages)	20%	200 points
Essay #3 (4-5 pages)	20%	200 points
Research Paper (10-12 pages)	30%	300 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

**Assignments** (Additional guidelines will be provided when each assignment is introduced.)

**Participation/Professionalism:** You are required to contribute comments and questions that further class discussion. Simply agreeing or disagreeing with your classmates and/or the readings is not enough. You are expected to add thoughtful ideas to the debate by engaging with the texts in a sophisticated manner. Participation will be evaluated in terms of quantity and quality. Active engagement will be rewarded, and disengaged behavior will be penalized. From time to time, you will be quizzed or asked to respond to specific short-answer questions on the week's reading. Quizzes are always unannounced, and they cannot be made up. Failure to follow any course policies or guidelines will hurt your professionalism grade.

**Essays:** Three essays will evaluate your understanding of the theoretical material. You will be given specific questions and/or asked to use theory for literary analysis.

**Research Paper:** The final paper for the class will be a self-designed research paper that engages substantially with two or more theoretical approaches. Research guidelines will be provided.

### Grading Guidelines

**A** = 100-94; **A-** = 93-90; **B+** = 89-87; **B** = 86-84; **B-** = 83-80  
**C+** = 79-77; **C** = 76-74; **C-** = 73-70; **D+** = 69-67; **D** = 66-64; **D-** = 63-60  
**F** < 60

**A range (100-90):** Excellent work; exemplary in argument and organization; professionally presented; free of mechanical errors.

**B range (89-80):** Good, solid work; substantive in argument and organization; meets all requirements, but needs some revisions; no more than five mechanical errors.

**C range (79-70):** Satisfactory work; addresses the assignment adequately, but requires some significant revisions of content and/or mechanics.

**D range (69-60):** Below average work; misses one or more central aspects of the assignment; inadequate focus and/or development; awkwardly written; requires extensive rewriting.

**F range (< 60):** Unacceptable work; fails to meet the requirements of the assignment; incomplete or irrelevant material; lack of focus or development.

### *Course Materials*

- Leitch, Vincent B. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010. Print.
- Additional essays—listed as handout in the schedule

### *Course Schedule (subject to change)*

#### **Week 1: Introduction**

**Thurs., Jan. 15** Introduction to the course

#### **Week 2: Classical Theory**

**Tues., Jan. 20** Plato (41-44), From *Book VII* (60-64) & From *Book X* (64-77)

**Thurs., Jan. 22** Aristotle (83-87), From *On Rhetoric* (115-19)  
Introduction to Essay #1

#### **Week 3: Romantic Theory**

**Tues., Jan. 27** Wordsworth (556-58), Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (559-79)

**Thurs., Jan. 29** Wollstonecraft (493-95), From *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (496-504)  
Emerson (613-16), "Self-Reliance" (handout)

#### **Week 4: From Humanism to Modernism**

**Tues., Feb. 3** Arnold (691-93), From *Culture and Anarchy* (714-21)

Pater (721-23), From *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (724-30)

**Thurs., Feb. 5** Eliot (951-54), "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (955-61)

#### **Week 5: New Criticism**

**Tues., Feb. 10** Ransom (969-71), "Criticism, Inc." (971-82)

**Thurs., Feb. 12** **Essay #1 due**

Wimsatt and Beardsley (1230-32), "The Intentional Fallacy" (1232-46) & "The Affective Fallacy" (1246-61)

#### **Week 6: Marxism**

**Tues., Feb. 17** Marx and Engels (647-50), From *The Communist Manifesto* (657-60) & From *Capital, Volume I* (663-74)  
Introduction to Essay #2

**Thurs., Feb. 19** Gramsci (998-1001), "The Formation of the Intellectuals" (1002-08)  
Althusser (1332-34), From "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1335-61)

#### **Week 7: Structuralism**

**Tues., Feb. 24** Saussure (845-49), From *Course in General Linguistics* (850-66)

**Thurs., Feb. 26** Lévi-Strauss (1273-76), From *Tristes Tropiques* (1277-86)

**Week 8: Poststructuralism and Deconstruction**

- Tues., March 3** Derrida (1680-85), From *Of Grammatology* (1688-97)  
**Thurs., March 5** Barthes (1316-19), "The Death of the Author" (1322-26)  
 Foucault (1469-74), From *Discipline and Punish* (1490-1502)

**Week 9: Spring Break****Week 10: Psychoanalysis**

- Tues., March 17** Freud (807-12), From *The Interpretation of Dreams* (814-24) & "The Uncanny" (824-41)  
**Thurs., March 19** **Essay #2 due**  
 Lacan (1156-62), "The Mirror Stage" (1163-69)

**Week 11: Feminism**

- Tues., March 24** de Beauvoir (1261-64), From *The Second Sex* (1265-73)  
 Introduction to Essay #3  
**Thurs., March 26** Gilbert and Gubar (1923-25), From *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1926-38)  
 Cixous (1938-41), "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1942-59)

**Week 12: Gender and Sexuality Studies**

- Tues., March 31** Sedgwick (2464-65), From *Epistemology of the Closet* (2470-77)  
 Butler (2536-38), From *Gender Trouble* (2540-53)  
**Thurs., April 2** No classes: Easter Recess

**Week 13: Critical Race Theory**

- Tues., April 7** Hughes (1190-92), "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1192-96)  
**Thurs., April 9** hooks (2507-08), "Postmodern Blackness" (2509-16)  
 Introduction to Research Paper

**Week 14: Postcolonialism**

- Tues., April 14** **Essay #3 due**  
 Fanon (1437-39), From *The Wretched of the Earth* (1440-46)  
**Thurs., April 16** Said (1861-64), From *Orientalism* (1866-88)

**Week 15: Cultural Studies**

- Tues., April 21** Bhabha (2351-52), "Of Mimicry and Man" (handout)  
**Thurs., April 23** Hall (1779-81), "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (handout)

**Week 16: Transnationalism**

- Tues., April 28** Jay, "Beyond Discipline?" (handout)  
**Thurs., April 30** No class: Optional Conferences  
**Fri., May 1** **Research Paper due by noon—leave in box on my office door (307 Palmer)**