

English 485, sec. 2
Fall 2002
P hour
210 Palmer

Professor Marshall
316 Palmer x3980
marshall@rhodes.edu
Office hours: MWF 11:30-
12:30; TTh 1-2

Senior Seminar: Critical Theory and Methodology

COURSE DESCRIPTION: One purpose of this course is to explore questions related to reading, writing, and the production of meaning. A second purpose, which is also a means to accomplish the first, is to become conversant in some recent developments in literary and cultural theory. We will begin by considering the basic terms in the literary event--author, text, and reader--and how their interaction produces meaning. Then we will explore structuralism and how it led (some say inevitably) to deconstruction; next we will see this pattern repeated in the areas of psychoanalysis, materialism, feminism, and race theory. Along the way various theoretical ideas will be tested in relation to selected literary texts. In the concluding unit, groups of students will consider works of contemporary fiction from the perspectives of various critical and theoretical positions.

TEXTS:

Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, ed. Vincent B. Leitch, 2001. (N)
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism*, ed. Susanne L. Wofford, 1994. (H)
Rahna Rizzuto, *Why She Left Us*, 1999.
Dai Sijie, *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*, trans. Ina Rilke, 2002.
Ali Smith, *Hotel World*, 2001.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Participation

15%

Since this class is a seminar, each member's participation is vital to the overall disposition and accomplishment of the group. The participation grade will be based on the regularity and quality of attendance and contributions to discussion. Comments that help to advance discussion and that enable all class members to contribute are highly valued. Another important component of the participation grade will be your pre-class questions: on five occasions of your choice, you should submit a question about the assigned reading. Send your question through email, at least 24 hours before a class meeting; I will reproduce and distribute them through email to the class, and we will use them as prompts for discussion.

Presentation and paper

15%

Each student will be responsible for one in-class presentation of 10-15 minutes. These must be delivered on the scheduled date. Reports should both summarize and critique the reading. An essay of 1000 words (3-4 pages) on the subject of the report will be due one week after the presentation date.

Group project

15%

Working in groups, students will lead class discussion of a work of contemporary insights and class readings to enable a multifaceted encounter with the text.

fiction (by Rizzuto)

Three essay / examinations

55%

You will be assigned topics on which to write papers due on 10/3, 10/31, and 12/10.

Please refer to the statement of Expectations and Policies of the Department of English for other relevant guidelines.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS: All writing and reading assignments are due on the date listed. Please bring the appropriate text to class.

- 8/29 No class
- 9/3 “Introduction to Theory and Criticism” (N)
Arnold, “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” (N)
- 9/5 Wimsatt and Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy” (N)
Brooks, “The Well Wrought Urn” (N)
- 9/10 Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (N)
E. D. Hirsch, “Objective Interpretation” (N)
- 9/12 Fish, “Interpreting the *Variorum*” (N)
Iser, “Interaction between Text and Reader” (N)
- 9/17 no class Unless I inform you otherwise, regular class sessions will be cancelled this week while I am on jury duty. I will be accessible by email and can arrange to meet with students any day after 5 p.m.
- 9/19 no class During the week you should read *Hamlet* and review course materials covered so far.
- 9/24 De Saussure, “Course in General Linguistics” (N)
- 9/26 Barthes, “Mythologies,” “The Death of the Author,” “From Work to Text” (N)
- 10/1 Foucault, “What is an Author?” (N)
- 10/3 DUE: Essay/Exam 1
Wofford, “A Critical History of Hamlet” (H)
- 10/8 Culler, from *On Deconstruction* (handout)
- 10/10 Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” (handout)
“What is Deconstruction?” (H)
- 10/15 Freud, “The Interpretation of Dreams,” “The Uncanny,” “Fetishism” (N)
- 10/17 Adelman, ““Man and Wife Is One Flesh”” (H); “What is P/A?” (H)
- 10/22 no class – fall break
- 10/24 Lacan, “The Mirror Stage” (N)
Garber, “Giving up the Ghost” (H)
- 10/29 Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” (N)

- Deleuze and Guattari, "A Thousand Plateaus" (N)
- 10/31 DUE: Essay/Exam 2
Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," "German Ideology," "Capital, vol. 1, chap. 1, sec. 4"
- 11/5 Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
Bourdieu, "Distinction" (N)
- 11/7 Bristol, "'Funeral-Bak'd Meats'" (H); "What is Marxist Criticism?" (H)
Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" (N)
- 11/12 Gilbert and Gubar, "The Madwoman in the Attic" (N)
Kolodny, "Dancing through the Minefield" (N)
- 11/14 Cixous, "Laugh of the Medusa" (N)
Showalter, "Representing Ophelia" (H); "What is Feminist Criticism?" (H)
- 11/19 Barbara Smith, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" (N)
bell hooks, "Postmodern Blackness" (N)
- 11/21 Baker, "Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature" (N)
Gates, "Talking Black" (N)
- 11/26 Jameson, "Political Unconscious" (N)
- 12/3 Group project
- 12/5 Group project
- 12/10 DUE: Essay/Exam 3
Group project

ENG 485, sec. 2
Fall 2002
Dr. Marshall

Return this sheet to me by Thursday, 5 Sept., indicating your top three choices and letting me know of any readings on which you would *not* like to report. Multiple readings by one author will be assigned to a single student (who may negotiate on which readings to discuss). When two authors are listed for one date, two students may give reports.

- 9/10 Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (N)
 E. D. Hirsch, "Objective Interpretation" (N)
- 9/12 Fish, "Interpreting the *Variorum*" (N)
- 9/26 Barthes, "Mythologies," "The Death of the Author," "From Work to Text" (N)
- 10/1 Foucault, "What is an Author?" (N)
- 10/17 Adelman, "'Man and Wife Is One Flesh'" (H)
- 10/24 Garber, "Giving up the Ghost" (H)
- 10/29 Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (N)
 Deleuze and Guattari, "A Thousand Plateaus" (N)
- 11/5 Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
 Bourdieu, "Distinction" (N)
- 11/7 Bristol, "'Funeral-Bak'd Meats'" (H)
- 11/12 Gilbert and Gubar, "The Madwoman in the Attic" (N)
 Kolodny, "Dancing through the Minefield" (N)
- 11/14 Cixous, "Laugh of the Medusa" (N)
 Showalter, "Representing Ophelia" (H)
- 11/19 Barbara Smith, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" (N)
 bell hooks, "Postmodern Blackness" (N)

11/21

Baker, "Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature" (N)
Gates, "Talking Black" (N)

