This course will function as a true seminar: that is, its purpose will be to pose questions, and its method will be the active and critical reading and discussion of a variety of texts. In this case, the questions we ask will have to do with our presuppositions about literature, reading, and writing; and about the function and place of literature, the study of literature, and even the concept "literature" in our culture. The texts we look at will not for the most part be works of imaginative literature. In some cases they are not even clearly about an identifiable work of literature, though all are centrally important to the way discourse about literature is currently being conducted. They demand, and repay, careful reading and rereading; and so do I. Your presence, fully prepared and alert, is assumed; your active participation in the discussions is required.

TEXTS:

Course Pack (CP)
Davis, Robert Con, and Ronald Schleifer, eds. Contemporary Literary Criticism, 4th ed. (CLC)
Freud, Sigmund, Five Lectures
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, The Scarlet Letter, Ross C. Murfin, ed. (SL)
Shakespeare, William, The Tempest, Gerald Graff and James Phelan, eds. (Tem)

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Midterm Exam 15%
Report (including paper) 15%
Term Paper 25%
Final Exam 25%
Participation 20%

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS (tentative):

Jan.
14 Th  Introduction to course
      Arnold, "Dover Beach" (CP)

19 Tu  The Victorian Crisis
      Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (CP)

21 Th  Mimesis and Evaluation: The New Criticism
      Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy" in The Verbal Icon (CP)
      Plato, The Republic (Book X), Ion (Handout)

26 Tu  The New Criticism Applied
      Brooks, "The Language of Paradox" in The Well-Wrought Urn (CP)

28 Th  The Critic and the Canon: The New Criticism and Beyond

Feb.
  2 Tu  Beyond the New Criticism: Structuralism
        Plato, The Republic (Book VII, “The Allegory of the Cave”), handout
        de Saussure, selections, CLC pp. 265-79

  4 Th  Barthes, “The Structuralist Activity” (CP)
        Barthes, “What Is Criticism?” CLC pp. 280-83
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<th>Week</th>
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<tr>
<td>9 Tu</td>
<td>Shakespeare, <em>The Tempest</em> (including Introduction and Critical History)</td>
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| 11 Th | **Beyond the New Criticism: Reader-Response**  
  *Fish, “Interpreting the *Variorum,”* CLC pp. 181-96 |
| 16 Tu | Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (including Introduction, pp. 3-19, and Critical Background, pp. 205-22) |
| 18 Th | **Reader-Response Criticism Applied:**  
  *SL pp. 252-74 |
| 23 Tu | **Midterm Exam** |
| 25 Th | **Beyond the New Criticism: Psychoanalytic Criticisms**  
  *Freud, Five Lectures* |
| March 2 Tu | **Psychoanalytic Criticism Applied:**  
  *Tem pp.  
  *SL pp. 223-51 |
| 4 Th | **Psychoanalytic Criticism Applied II:**  
  “Dover Beach” (CP)  
  Aristote, *Poetics* (on catharsis), handout  
  *Norman Holland, The Dynamics of Literary Response*, pp. 104-33 (Reserve) |
| 6-14 Spring Break |
| 16 Tu | **Versions of Poststructuralism: Deconstruction**  
| 18 Th | **Deconstruction Applied:**  
  *Belsey, “Constructing the Subject: Deconstructing the Text,”* CLC pp. 377-92  
  *Tem pp.  
  *SL pp. 304-29 |
| 23 Tu | **Deconstruction Meets Psychoanalysis:**  
| 25 Th | **Some Versions of Feminist Criticism**  
  *Schweickart, “Reading Ourselves . . .,”* CLC pp. 197-219  
  *Fuss, “Reading Like a Feminist,”* CLC pp. 580-91 |
| 30 Tu | **Feminist Criticism Applied:**  
  *Tem pp.  
  *SL pp. 275-303 |
| 1-4 Easter Break |
| 6 Tu | **Marxism and the New Historicism**  
  *Bakhtin, “Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art,”* CLC pp. 470-88  
  *Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,”* CLC pp. 489-501 |
| 8 Th | **The New Historicism Applied, II:** |
*Foucault, “What Is an Author?” CLC pp. 364-76

13 Tu **The New Historicism Applied:**
*Howard, “The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies” (CP)
*Tem pp.
*SL pp. 330-58

15 Th **Symposium on the Canon:**
*Robinson, “Treason Our Text . . .”, CLC (2nd ed.), pp. 615-28 (Reserve)
*Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, pp. 336-82 (Reserve)
*Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, pp. 1-53 (Reserve)

20 Tu **Cultural Studies**
Hebdige, “From Culture to Hegemony,” CLC pp. 655-62
Hall, “Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms,” CLC pp. 663-78

22 Th Greenblatt, “Towards a Poetics of Culture,” pp. 1-14 in Veeser, ed. (Reserve)

27 Tu **Cultural Studies Applied:**
Tem pp.

29 Th **Some Conclusions**

**Term Paper Due**

**FINAL EXAM:** Monday, May 3, 5:30-8 p.m.
*Denotes possible report topic. **All students will read the selection; one student will be responsible for presenting the selection and leading the discussion. A 5-8 page paper on the report is due one week after the oral presentation.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

1) Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day assigned unless other arrangements are made ahead of time. A penalty of 10% per day will be assessed on all late papers. Papers more than one week late will not be accepted.
2) Reports may not be deferred or made up.
3) Habitual tardiness or absence will be penalized.
4) All work in this course will be fully pledged under the Honor System.

**RESERVE LIST**

Bloom, Allan, *The Closing of the American Mind*

Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*


Holland, Norman, *The Dynamics of Literary Response*

Interpreting Grades

A: Reserved for papers showing the highest quality of insight, organization, and style. It presents sophisticated ideas in an interesting way, with a clearly articulated thesis generating a logically developed argument and employing a style capable of expressing complex ideas in clearly and effectively. It should be virtually error-free.

B: Typically, a paper that presents sound ideas in an effective way, and employs a clear, mature style appropriate to college-level writing. It should have few if any errors.

C: Usually, a paper that expresses competently ideas that fail to go beyond the obvious or the commonplace. Often a C paper is one that gives the impression of “going through the motions.” It will fail to engage the reader because it has failed to engage the author. It may contain some errors, but not many and not serious ones.

D: A paper that lacks a clear point of view or fails to develop an argument, often because the author’s grasp of the material is at best superficial. Usually the style is also ineffective and may be marred by mistakes of a relatively serious nature.

F: An unacceptable paper, either because it shows a failure to understand the subject, because it is poorly written, usually with many mistakes, or both. Often it is the product of obvious haste, written without any serious thought or effort.