Critical Theory and Methodology  
ENGL 385  

Professor Rashna Richards  
Office: 307 Palmer  
Office Phone: 843-3399  
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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  

| Note 1: 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. |
| Note 2: Failure to remember or follow any of these policies will result in severe penalties to your professionalism grade. |

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Professionalism</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #1 (2-3 pages)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #2 (4-5 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #3 (4-5 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper (10-12 pages)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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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**

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= 100-94; \quad A+ = 93-90; \quad B+ = 89-87; \quad B = 86-84; \quad B- = 83-80 \\
C+ &= 79-77; \quad C = 76-74; \quad C- = 73-70; \quad D+ = 69-67; \quad D = 66-64; \quad D- = 63-60 \\
F &< 60
\end{align*}
\]

**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

- 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)

**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)**