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, and feminism. 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:
Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer, *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*, 4th ed., 1997 (CLC)
Sigmund Freud, *On Dreams* [1901], 1980
Graham Swift, *Last Orders*, 1996
Packet of course readings available at bookstore (R)

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:
Participation 15%
Since this class is a seminar, each member’s participation is vital to the overall discussion and that enable all class members to contribute are highly valued. Another component of the participation grade will be your pre-class questions: you are required to submit (at least) five questions about the assigned reading, through email, at least 24 hours before a class meeting.
Presentation and paper 15%
Each student will be responsible for one in-class presentation of 10-15 minutes. These must be your pre-class questions: you are required to submit (at least) five questions about the assigned reading, through email, at least 24 hours before a class meeting.
Group project 15%
Working in groups, students will lead class discussion of a work of contemporary fiction (R)
Three essay / examinations 55%
You will be assigned topics on which to write papers due on 24 Sept., 27 Oct., 24 Nov.

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.


1 Sept.  Frye, “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” (CLC)
         Graff, “Introduction: The Humanist Myth” (CLC)
         Barthes, “What Is Criticism?” (CLC)

3 Sept.  Wimsatt and Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy” (R)
         Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (CLC)

8 Sept.  Fish, “Interpreting the Variorum” (CLC)
         Coleridge, “Kubla Khan” (handout)

10 Sept. Schweickart, “Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading” (CLC)

15 Sept. De Saussure, Selections from Course in General Linguistics (CLC)

17 Sept. Barthes, “The Structuralist Activity,” “The World of Wrestling,” and “From Work to Text” (R)

22 Sept. Foucault, “What is an Author?” (CLC)

24 Sept. First Essay/Exam due
         Hamlet: Wofford, “A Critical History of Hamlet” (H)


6 Oct.  de Man, “The Resistance to Theory” (CLC)

8 Oct.  Ferguson, “Hamlet: Letters and Spirits” (R)
         Frost, “Road Not Taken” (handout)

13 Oct.  Freud, On Dreams

         Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (CLC)
20 Oct.  FALL BREAK

22 Oct.  Adelman, “‘Man and Wife Is One Flesh’” (H); “What is P/A?” (H)
         Skura, “The Historicity of Psychoanalysis” (R)

27 Oct.  Second Essay/Exam due

29 Oct.  Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory” (CLC)

3 Nov.  Bristol, “‘Funeral-Bak’d Meats’” (H); “What is M?” (H)

5 Nov.  Howard, “The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies” (R)
         Coddon, “‘Suche Strange Desygn’s’” (H); “What is NH?” (H)

10 Nov.  Armstrong, “The Occidental Alice” (CLC)
         Showalter, “Representing Ophelia” (H); “What is F?” (H)

12 Nov.  Kristeva, “Stabat Mater” (R)

17 Nov.  bell hooks, “Postmodern Blackness” (CLC)
         Diana Fuss, “Reading Like a Feminist” (CLC)

19 Nov.  Cornel West, “Black Critics and the Pitfalls of Canon Formation” (CLC)
         James Clifford, “The Translation of Cultures” (CLC)

24 Nov.  Third Essay/Exam due

26 Nov.  THANKSGIVING

1 Dec.   Group project

3 Dec.   Group project

8 Dec.   Group project
Schedule of reports

3 Sept    Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”
8 Sept    Fish, “Interpreting the Variorum”
10 Sept   Schweikart, “Reading Ourselves”
17 Sept   Barthes, “The Structuralist Activity”
22 Sept   Foucault, “What is an Author?”
13 Oct    Freud, *On Dreams*
15 Oct    Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”
22 Oct    Adelman, “Man and Wife is One Flesh”
          Skura, “The Historicity of Psychoanalysis”
29 Oct    Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory”
3 Nov.    Bristol, “Funeral Bak’d Meats”
5 Nov     Howard, “The New Historicism”
          Coddon, “Suche Strange Desygns”
10 Nov.   Armstrong, “The Occidental Alice”
          Showalter, “Representing Ophelia”
12 Nov    Kristeva, “Stabat Mater”
17 Nov.   hooks, “Postmodern Blackness”
19 Nov.   West, “Black Critics and the Pitfalls of Canon Formation”