

## Critical Theory and Methodology

Professor: Jason Richards  
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Course: ENGL 385 Sections 1 & 2  
 Time: TR 12:30-1:45 & 3:30-4:45  
 Room: Clough 313 & Palmer 210  
 Semester: Spring 2010

This course examines selected developments in critical theory and their impact on the teaching and study of literature.

### Required Texts

Leitch, ed., *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* = (TC)  
 Bausch and Cassill, eds., *Norton Anthology of Short Fiction* (Shorter 7th ed.) = (SF)

### Grade Breakdown

Participation/Professionalism	15%
Exam 1 (5-7 pages)	25%
Exam 2 (5-7 pages)	25%
Research Paper (10-11 pages)	35%

**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

**Participation/Professionalism:** While I will often begin class with a lecture, this course relies heavily on discussion. You are expected to have all the readings done for the day they are assigned and come prepared to discuss them, and you must always bring the text(s) we are discussing to class. Participation will be evaluated in terms of quantity and quality. Finally, know that a lack of professionalism (e.g., not following course policies, rude behavior, inattentiveness, checking your cell phone, and so on) will negatively affect this portion of your grade.

**Written Work:** You are required to write two out-of-class essay examinations and one research paper for this course. You will receive handouts with instructions for each of these assignments.

**Evaluation:** Exams/papers are evaluated on the following criteria: 1) significance of your thesis; 2) quality and quantity of your textual analysis; 3) quality and quantity of your textual support; 4) quality and quantity of your research (when applicable); 5) clarity, style, focus, specificity, and organization; 6) grammar, spelling, mechanics, and so on; 7) appropriate documentation; 8) strength of your conclusion; 9) overall integrity of your argument.

**Late Work:** All work must be turned in on time. If you will not be in class when a paper is due, it must be in my mailbox before the deadline. A late paper will lose one percentage point for each day it is late (e.g., 84% becomes 83%, and so on).

**Submission of All Work:** All major assignments are integral to the goals of the course. Failure to complete any major assignment will result in a grade of F for the course.

**Mode of Submission:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class. All assignments must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced, with 1-inch margins on the top and bottom and 1.25-inch margins on the sides. Please use printer ink that produces a copy dark enough to be easily legible. Place your name, instructor's name, course number, and date in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. Your last name and page number should appear in the upper right-hand corner of all pages. Do not include a title page. Place your title above the text on page one and double space above and beneath it. Your title should not be underlined. Be sure to staple your assignment. You may lose points for not following these guidelines. **Note: I do not accept assignments by 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 the instructor's prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, the internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Students are advised against posting their work on the internet since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. Students are advised to maintain drafts of their work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of 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 the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult me.

**Attendance:** While I expect you to attend every class, you are allowed two absences during the semester. After two absences, every additional absence will lower your final grade by one percentage point (e.g., 80% becomes 79%, and so on). If you miss more than six classes, you will fail the course. **Note: If you do miss class, please don't contact me to ask what you missed. Instead, you should exchange contact information with other classmates and ask them what we covered in class.**

**Tardiness:** Please do not come late to class. Tardiness disrupts the flow of class and distracts other students. If you have a scheduling conflict, you are advised to drop the class. Tardiness will lower your participation grade.

**Disability Issues:** Students with documented disabilities should meet with me at the beginning of the semester to discuss appropriate accommodations. Please contact the office of Student Disability Services for more information. In all cases, it is your responsibility to provide me with an official letter from SDS.

**Email Policy: The best way to address questions about our class is by meeting in person.** I am always happy to talk with you during my office hours, by appointment, or after class. That said, I am available by email for **simple and succinct** queries. I typically respond to email once a day between 9am-5pm Monday-Friday. If you do need to email, here are some rules to follow:

- Email correspondence should be treated as formal communication
- Email is not the place to discuss grade concerns or negotiate any kind of special request
- Email is not the place to seek feedback on your writing or ideas; that must be done in person
- Do not email at the last minute (e.g., the night before an assignment is due) asking for help
- Do not email with a question that can be answered by our syllabus or College website
- Do not email if you plan to visit during office hours; I'll be there, unless otherwise stated
- Do not email about your absences, unless you are missing two or more classes in a row

**Appointments:** If you cannot meet with me during my office hours or after class, we can set up an appointment at a time that is mutually convenient. If you need to make an appointment, please plan to do so at least 24 hours in advance.

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

**Note:** Read the headnote for each author

#### **Week 1**

Jan 14: Introduction to Course

#### **Week 2**

Jan 19: Plato, *Republic*, Books VII and X (TC)

Jan 21: Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (TC); Arnold, Headnote (TC)

#### **Week 3**

Jan 26: Ransom, "Criticism, Inc." (TC); Eliot "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (TC)

Jan 28: Emerson, from "American Scholar" (TC) and "Self-Reliance" (handout)

#### **Week 4**

Feb 2: Hegel, Headnote (TC); Marx and Engels, Selections (TC 767-75); Gramsci, "Formation of Intellectuals" (TC)

Feb 4: Althusser, from "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (TC)

#### **Week 5**

Feb 9: Melville, "Bartleby" (SF)

Feb 11: Saussure, from *Course in General Linguistics* (TC)

#### **Week 6**

Feb 16: Derrida, from *Of Grammatology* (TC); Clips/Discussion: *Derrida*

Feb 18: Barthes, "Death of the Author" and "From Work to Text" (TC)

#### **Week 7**

Feb 23: Foucault, from *Discipline and Punish* (TC); Kafka, "Hunger Artist" (SF)

Feb 25: **Exam 1 Due**; Presentations

#### **Week 8**

Mar 2: Freud, from *Interpretation of Dreams* (TC); Faulkner, "Rose for Emily" (SF)

Mar 4: Freud, "Uncanny" (TC); Clips/Discussion: *Psycho*

**Week 9**

Mar 9: Lacan, "Mirror Stage" (TC); Poe, "House of Usher" (SF)

Mar 11: Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" (SF)

**Week 10**

Mar 16: Spring Recess

Mar 18: Spring Recess

**Week 11**

Mar 23: Cixous, "Laugh of Medusa" (TC); Chopin, "Story of an Hour" (SF)

Mar 25: Gilbert/Gubar, from *Madwoman in the Attic* (TC); Gilman, "Yellow Wallpaper" (SF)

**Week 12**

Mar 30: Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (TC); Clips/Discussion: *Rear Window*

Apr 1: Easter Recess

**Week 13**

Apr 6: Butler, from *Gender Trouble* (TC); Kincaid, "Girl" (SF)

Apr 8: **Exam 2 Due**; Presentations

**Week 14**

Apr 13: Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art" (TC); Lecture: Blackface Minstrelsy; Clips/Discussion:  
*Bamboozled*

Apr 15: Hughes, "Negro Artist" (TC); Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" (SF)

**Week 15**

Apr 20: Said, from *Orientalism* (TC); Clips/Discussion: *Not without My Daughter*

Apr 22: "Exotic/Exoticism" and "Hybridity" (handout); Divakaruni, "Clothes" (handout)

Apr 23: Optional Conferences: Office Hours: 9:00-12:00 and 1:00-4:00

**Week 16**

Apr 27: Research Day; Optional Conferences: Office Hours: 12:30-4:45

Apr 29: "Agency" and "Mimicry" (handout); Thiong'o, "Minutes of Glory" (handout)

Apr 30: **Research Paper Due by 3:30pm (leave in my office mailbox)**