

English 382: Literary Theory



Spring, 2013

Instructor: Dennis Allen

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Office Hours: TH: 4:00-5:30 and by appointment

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Course Purpose: This course is intended to provide you with an overview of the schools of literary theory that are currently used to analyze literary and cultural texts, ranging from post-structuralism to Gender Theory and Cultural Studies.

Course Requirements: Course grades will be based on a midterm (35%), a final exam (35%), and three two page response papers (30%).

The Response Papers: Should consist of a two page typed analysis of an essay from the course reading assignments. These should not summarize the reading but should engage it intellectually. In other words, a response to a particular essay should do one or more of the following: critique the essay, apply it to a literary or cultural text, or relate it to previous reading in the course. Also, if an essay proves exceptionally difficult, your response paper on that essay could present some focused, specific questions on points that you did not understand.

Attendance: You are allowed three absences. If you miss class a fourth time, you will fail the course.

Text: Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan, eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Second Edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004)

Assignments:

Tues., January 15: Course Introduction

Thursday, Jan. 17: Introductory Lecture: Structuralism and Semiotics

Poststructuralism and Deconstruction:

Tues., Jan. 22: Ferdinand de Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics," pp. 59-71

Thurs., Jan. 24: Jacques Derrida, "Semiology and Grammatology," pp. 332-339

Tues., Jan. 29: Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," pp. 365-377

Response 1 Due

Thurs., Jan 31: Application Day

Psychoanalysis:

Tues., Feb. 5: Jacques Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter..." pp. 447-454

Thurs., Feb. 7: Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter..." pp. 454-461

Tues., Feb. 12: Luce Irigaray, "Women on the Market," pp. 799-811

Thurs., Feb. 14: Application Day

Marxism/Materialist Criticism:

Tues., Feb. 19: Day Off

Thurs., Feb. 21: Karl Marx, "Wage Labor and Capital," and "Capital," pp. 659-672

Response 2 Due

Tues., Feb. 26: Alan Sinfield, "Cultural Materialism," pp. 743-750

Thurs., Feb. 28: Alan Sinfield, "Cultural Materialism," pp. 750-762

New Historicism:

Tues., March 5: Stephen Greenblatt, "Shakespeare and the Exorcists," pp. 592-605

Thurs., March 7: Stephen Greenblatt, "Shakespeare and the Exorcists," pp. 605-620

Tues., March 12: Application Day

Thurs., March 14: **Midterm**

Feminism, Gender Studies, and Queer Theory:

Tues., March 19: Judith Butler, "Performative Acts," pp. 900-911

Thurs., March 21: Eve Sedgwick, "Epistemology of the Closet," pp. 912-921

Spring Break

Tues., April 2: Michel Foucault, "The History of Sexuality," pp. 892-899

Thurs. April 4: Day Off

Ethnic Studies/Postcolonial Theory:

Tues., April 9: Toni Morrison, "Playing in the Dark," pp. 1005-1016

Thurs. April 11: Ania Loomba, "Situating Colonial and Postcolonial Studies," pp. 1100-1111 **Response 3 Due**

Tues., April 16: Alan Lawson, "The Anxious Proximities..." pp. 1210-1223

Thurs., April 18: Application Day

Cultural Studies:

Tues., April 23: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art..." pp. 1235-1241

Thurs., April 25: Michel de Certeau, "The Practice of Everyday Life," pp. 1247-1257

Tues., April 30: Review Day

Thurs., May 2: **Final**