

**Carleton University
Winter 2016
Department of English**

ENGL 2005B: Theory & Criticism

Prerequisite: 1.0 credit in ENGL at the 1000 level

Monday / 8:35 – 11:25 a.m.
Location: 402 SA Please confirm on Carleton Central

Instructor: Dr. Janne Cleveland
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Office: 1913 DT
Office Hours: TBA or by appointment

Course Outline:

This course is designed to be a practical guide on how to use a variety of literary theories as tools of interpretation. By looking at some key developments in literary theory we will consider questions such as how does a text impart meaning to the reader? What is the role of the author, the reader, and/or the critic in creating the meaning of a text? What constitutes a 'text'? What tools do we need to begin to answer these questions? What are the uses and limits of those tools? We will explore such theoretical frameworks as Formalism, Structuralism/poststructuralism, Marxism, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, Cultural Theory, and Postcolonialism. We will be making use of textual, as well as visual, materials in order to explore how these theories function in the construction of meaning. At the beginning of the course students choose one of the literary texts from the list below as their object of study on which to focus throughout the course. Each class will pair a literary example with the theory under study, in order for students to practice applying theory to a particular object of study.

Course Objective:

By the time students have completed this course, they will have gained an understanding of what theory is, knowledge of particular theories that have been developed for the specific purpose of studying literature, and how to apply these theories with confidence. Through practical writing exercises, students will have the opportunity to apply the theories studied and improve their critical skills in reading, analysis, and writing. Ultimately, students will be able to produce their own academic, scholarly research paper that directly applies one theoretical framework to a literary object of study.

Literary texts from which to choose for the focus of your final paper:

The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock by TS Eliot (poem)

Recitatif by Toni Morrison (short story)

Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain (novel)

Hamlet by William Shakespeare (play)

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde (play)

Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti (poem)

Everyday Use by Alice Walker (short story)

Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut (novel)

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (novel)

Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett (play)

Young Goodman Brown by Nathaniel Hawthorne (short story)

Required Reading:

Course pack available at Haven Books (Seneca & Sunnyside)

Highly Recommended:

Composition handbook (e.g. *The Broadview Guide to Writing*)

M. H. Abrams' *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Harcourt Brace)

John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism

<http://litguide.press.jhu.edu.proxy.library.carleton.ca/index.html>

Course Evaluation:

Interpretive Analysis 20%

Due January 18th before class

3 – 5 pages, double-spaced, New Times Roman Font

Following the introductory class for the course, students will be provided with a visual object of study and asked to analyze and interpret the narrative embedded within the image. This

assignment will demonstrate to you that you have some rudimentary tools for analysis already (even if you're not initially aware of it), and give you the chance to work on the writing skills necessary to convey your ideas. In 3 – 5 pages, present your thoughts on a possible meaning of the image, supporting your observations in as much detail as possible, using both the content (what's contained in the image), and the context in which it appears. This will be due prior to the beginning of our second class on **January 18th**. The construction of a solid, coherent thesis, followed by supporting evidence from your observations, a conclusion that resolves the argument you set up at the start, and your command of adequate prose (including grammar, punctuation, syntax – sentence structure – and vocabulary) will form the basis of assessment.

A good way to start is by making notes of everything you observe in the image. You should consider the following questions as you work towards interpreting the image:

- Is the lighting bright or in shadow, or using some combination? Can the source of the light be determined?
- How are any figures in the image staged? Do they appear to be formal or informal? Who are the people portrayed (are they royal, common, male or female)? What facial expressions do they wear? Are they looking at the spectator (you) or somewhere else?
- When was the image created? What do you know about this time period?
- What atmosphere does the image create? How does it make the spectator (you) feel? Why?

Reading responses (30%)

Students will choose one reading per class assigned between January 18 and February 8 upon which to write a **2-page** response for each reading, for a total of **four** responses. The best 3 of 4 responses will be counted in your grade. This assignment is not simply summarizing the reading. For full marks you will need to **briefly** summarize the key points, and then critically engage with the material by noting the importance/significance of the theory under discussion in the article by considering and commenting on both the benefits and limits you observe in the author's position in these articles. These reading responses **must** be submitted online prior to class. Responses submitted after the class in which the materials have been discussed will **not** be accepted.

This is a formal writing assignment, and must be presented in proper MLA format, double-spaced, with your ID clearly visible. Please submit your assignment in doc or docx format, with your name in the subject (i.e., Janne, reading response 1).

Annotated Bibliography/Thesis Assignment 20%

6 – 8 pages, double-spaced, 12pt New Times Roman Font, MLA format
Due March 14 prior to class

This assignment builds the research paper. You will be expected to present a thoughtful, coherent thesis (argument) that will be defended in your paper, followed by a properly annotated bibliography (in MLA format) that briefly describes your sources, and **fully assesses** their

relevance to your argument. The following cites provide information on how to create an annotated bibliography. Pay particular attention to the formulation of critical assessment:

http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/annotated_bibl.php

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/1/>

Research Essay 30%

10 - 12 pages (excluding Works Cited page), double-spaced, 12pt New Times Roman Font, MLA format

Due midnight April 4

This is a formal research and writing assignment, the primary focus of which is to present a complex **critical analysis** of one of the texts listed on the syllabus, using a theoretical interpretive strategy studied in the course. This is an exercise in applying theory to your object of study. You will need to state clearly the theoretical framework you are using to build your argument in your introduction, and then demonstrate throughout your paper an understanding of the theory you are deploying. Your paper should include a complex thesis/argument, along with **8-10** scholarly secondary sources as evidence to support your position. Scholarly sources include journal articles found in the library database published by University journal presses, chapters from books on your topic, chapters from anthologies on your subject. Websites of lecture notes from other professors are **not** considered published material (that is they are not vetted by an editorial board of peers), and **will not be accepted** as scholarly sources. You must correctly use MLA format for in-text citations as well as your Works Cited page. Information on MLA formatting can be found in the MLA Handbook (7th edition) in the reference section of the library, or on this website:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will result in an automatic failure of your paper. There will be no extensions of the deadline, except in extreme cases with accompanying documentation to support your request. Late papers will be penalized 1 mark per day (not one letter grade) up to 7 days. Any papers submitted after 7 days following the deadline will not be accepted. **Failure to submit a paper will result in a failure of the course.**

Attendance

It is important to attend all classes, and come prepared to discuss the readings assigned. Non-attendance will result in failure of the course. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from another student in the class, as I do not give lectures twice.

Late Policy

Assignments must be submitted online through cuLearn on the due date by the beginning of class to receive full marks. There will be **no extensions** granted unless discussed prior to the due date with the instructor. In the case where illness prevents a student from submitting an assignment on

time, a doctor's note will be accepted. All other late assignments will be penalized **1 mark** per day up to seven days, including weekends. No assignments will be accepted if they are more than 7 days late, with the exception of those stated above. **NOTE: It is your responsibility to insure that all assignments are submitted on time. Keep a backup copy that can be submitted upon request in the event of a lost or misplaced assignment.**

All assignments will be submitted electronically on cuLearn

NOTE: All assignments must be completed in order to be eligible to pass the course. Failure to hand in all assignments may result in a grade of "F".

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation.

If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable).

After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own*". This can include:

- Reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source

- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement in any academic assignment
- Failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks

Plagiarism is a serious offence. When an instructor suspects plagiarism the Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties can include a final grade of "F", which will appear on the student's transcript.

The Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed at <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>.

Reading Schedule*

January 11

Introduction:

What is Literary Theory? Moving from image to text to understand the possibilities of narrative.

January 18

Formalism ++ Interpretive Analysis Assignment due

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” T.S. Eliot; “The Heresy of the Paraphrase” Cleanth Brooks

January 25

Historicisms (Old & New)

“The Structure of Historical Narrative” Hayden White; “What is an Author?” Michel Foucault

February 1

Linguistics/Structuralism

“Course in General Linguistics” Ferdinand de Saussure;
<http://www.buzzfeed.com/chrisr414d8a71a/post-structuralism-explained-with-hipster-beards-xwfbz#.cioaJR46>

February 8

Poststructuralism/Deconstruction

“Death of the Author” Roland Barthes; “What is Postmodernism?” Jean Francois Lyotard; “Las Meninas” Michel Foucault

February 15

Reading Week – no class

February 22

Materialism/Marxism

From “Wage Labor and Capital”, Karl Marx; from “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” Louis Althusser, “Hegemony” Raymond Williams

February 29

Psychoanalysis

“The Unconscious” Sigmund Freud; “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” Sigmund Freud; “The Mirror Stage” Jacques Lacan

March 7

Feminisms/Gender

“Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” Judith Butler; “Negotiating Postmodernism and Feminism” Linda Hutcheon; “Introduction to Female Masculinity” Judith Halberstam

March 14

Queer Theory **Thesis/Annotated Bib due

“Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” Adrienne Rich; “The History of Sexuality” (Chpt 1) Michel Foucault

March 21

Postcolonialism/Critical Race Theory

“Situating Colonialism and Postcolonial Studies” Anita Loomba; “The Signifying Monkey” Henry Louis Gates; “The Language of African Literature” Ngugi wa Thiong’o; “Signs Taken for Wonders” Homi K. Bhabha

March 28

Cultural Theory

“The Function of Subculture” Dick Hebdige; “The Practice of Everyday Life” Michel de Certeau

April 4

Wrap up ** Research paper due prior to class

* Readings will be available in the course pack from Haven Books.

NB: Schedule or readings may be subject to change. **All assignments must be submitted electronically in .doc or .docx format on cuLearn.**