

Carleton University
Winter 2024 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English

ENGL 2005A: Theory and Criticism
Theorizing Literary Authorship

No Preclusions
Prerequisite(s): second-year standing or permission of the Department
Lecture 3 hours / week

Tuesdays; 11:35 am-2:30 pm
Location: check Carleton Central

Instructor: Professor Jody Mason
Email: jody.mason@carleton.ca

*****This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change. A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term.*****

I. Course Description

An introduction to theories and methods of literary analysis. Through the study of literature, theory, and criticism, students will explore disciplinary history, critical terms, textual analysis, and research methods.

In this section of Theory and Criticism, we'll be considering theories of literary authorship and methods for studying authorship. The literary author is both omnipresent and invisible in literary studies: adored as a celebrity, celebrated as a semi-spiritual figure of genius, and isolated from the material conditions that make literature happen, the literary author is at once hypervisible and not really seen. Beginning with Romantic ideas of authorship and their influence on literary studies as a field, we will then explore the difference between the author as "creator"—a concept associated with the Romantics—and the author as "producer"—a concept that has been taken up (in very different ways!) in Marxist literary theory and in poststructuralist theory. We'll think about how these theories of authorship might be applied to cultural texts, and we'll examine literary history and criticism as a means of considering methods for studying authorship.

II. Learning Outcomes

Students in this course will learn to interpret and evaluate theories of literary authorship that have been dominant in the western world since the end of the eighteenth century. They will learn to construct arguments about cultural texts using these theories.

III. Texts

Additional course readings will be available through Ares.

Brecht, Bertolt. *Mother Courage and Her Children* (Methuen Drama, 2009, trans. John Willett, ISBN: 9780413412904); MacOdrum Library also has this title as an [ebook](#).
Coetzee, J.M. *Foe* (1986) (Penguin, 2010, ISBN: 978-0241950111)

IV. Evaluation

Note that all term work must be completed to pass the course. Those who have more than three undocumented absences will not pass the course.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Discussion Posts=20%
Module Reflection=20%
Applying Theory=20%
Research Essay=35%
Participation=5%

Discussion Posts (5% x 4)=20% (late policy doesn't apply)

We will complement our discussions of course readings using Discussion Forums in Brightspace. Your four posts must discuss texts that you *have not chosen for your Module Reflection* (see below). You will find fuller instructions in Brightspace. Posts are due at the beginning of classes (on or before 11:30 am) indicated in the syllabus. I will mark these posts continuously through the course to ensure regular feedback. You will be asked to reflect on your post in class—be prepared!

Module Reflection (20%) (late policy applies) (sign-up in week one—must choose different weeks for this assignment and Applying Theory)

For one of the three course modules, you are required to submit a 500-word reflection that summarizes in plain language the basic precepts of your chosen theory of literary authorship. Fuller instructions are available on Brightspace.

Applying Theory (15% + 5% for in-class presentation)=20% (late policy applies) (sign-up in week one—must choose different weeks for this assignment and Module Reflection)

For one of the three course modules, you are required to submit a 500-word discussion that attempts to apply your chosen theory of literary authorship to an example (this could be a cultural text, like a film, a television show, a novel, a poem, a work of fanfiction, but it could also be an author's self-presentation, such as a Twitter or other social media account, a website, an interview). How does your chosen example imagine authorship? What evidence can you gather from your example of its theory of authorship? Why is your example's theory of authorship significant to its meanings? In class on the day your assignment is due, you will have 5 minutes in class to share your example and its

relevance to your chosen theory of literary authorship. I will encourage you to work in pairs on this assignment. Fuller instructions are available on Brightspace.

Research Essay=35% (late policy applies)

This essay should be 1,500 words in MLA style (approximately 6 pages). It will develop an analysis of J.M. Coetzee's novel *Foe*; you will choose any theory readings from the course and develop an argument about what the text is saying about authorship. There is also a secondary research component. Fuller instructions are available on Brightspace.

Participation=5%

As noted above, your regular presence in class is expected (more than three undocumented absences will result in a failing grade). In assessing your participation grade, I will be asking: do you come to class with the assigned reading completed? Do you come to class with the assigned texts? Do you participate in lecture/discussion? Do you listen actively and attentively?