

**Carleton University  
Summer 2017  
Department of English**

**ENGL 2005A: Theory and Criticism**

***Prerequisites: 1.0 credit in English at the 1000 level***

***Preclusions: None***

**Tuesdays and Thursdays / 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

**Location: 2104 CB**

**Instructor: John Coleman**

**Email: *john.coleman3@carleton.ca***

**Office: 1801 DT**

**Phone: \*Instructor may be reached by email\***

**Office Hours: Thursdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m.**

**I. Course description:**

This class will introduce students to an eclectic variety of prominent approaches to literary and cultural theory which have developed since the early twentieth century. Highly recommended for English majors, this class intends for students to catalogue and gain familiarity with core tenets of these approaches. The lectures are designed to break down and explore the theories; implement means for students to execute confidence and ability in producing theoretically guided readings of literature and culture; and discuss the history and nature of philosophical, ethical and political assumptions underlying different theoretical camps. Throughout the course, we will consider how these assumptions inform notions of subjectivity and agency in capitalist societies, with emphasis on how such notions help to determine various contexts of literary and cultural production and mediation. Students are intended to engage with and build critical understanding of the readings and lecture material through formal and informal written and oral assignments, and a summative final exam. These activities will allow students to compose and share different forms of critically engaged expressions about course material, and to practice and develop critical reading, writing and presentation skills that are essential in undergraduate English studies.

**II. Preclusions:**

Credit for no other course is precluded for students who take this course.

**III. Texts:**

**Required texts to purchase (available in the Carleton Bookstore):**

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, Faber and Faber, 2010

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Manchester University Press, 2009

**\*\* All other readings are available online through ARES, except for Medbh McGuckian's *The Flower Master* (which will be on 2-hour reserve in the library), and Edgar Allan Poe's *The Oval Portrait* (which is printed as an appendix to Barry's *Beginning Theory*)\*\***

#### **IV. Course calendar:**

**\*\*Note:\*\* Some readings are noted to have "focus pages," which students are only expected to read. Students are free to read the entirety of these readings, but will not be expected to have done so.**

#### **Class 1 (May 2): Introduction: Historicizing the Literary**

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, "Theory before 'theory' – liberal humanism" (Chapter 1); Appendix 1 (Edgar Allen Poe, "The Oval Portrait")  
Raymond Williams, "Literature"

**\*\*Sign-up for discussion workshops; explanation of course outline, assignments, readings, and expectations\*\***

#### **Class 2 (May 4): The Turn to Critique: Formalism and Structuralism**

*Beginning Theory*, "Structuralism" (Chapter 2)  
Boris Eichenbaum, "The Formal Method"  
Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel"

#### **Class 3 (May 9): Society and Literature I: Marxism and Modernity**

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, "Marxist Criticism" (Chapter 8) **\*\*focus pages: 150-156\*\***  
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, selections  
Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"  
Bertolt Brecht, "A Short Organum for the Theatre" **\*\*focus pages: 511-521 (#33-62)\*\***

**\*\* Critical Response due at beginning of class\*\***

#### **Class 4 (May 11): Psychoanalysis: Linguistics and Subject Formation**

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, "Psychoanalytic criticism" (Chapter 5); pp. 156-165 (the section from chapter 8 entitled "The Present – the influence of Althusser")  
Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as formative of the I function as revealed in psychoanalytic experience"  
Louis Althusser, "Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects"

*\*In-Class Discussion Workshop\*: Making connections, marking distinctions, between different theoretical camps*

**Class 5 (May 16): Post-Structuralism: Erasing the Subject of Language**

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, “Post-structuralism and deconstruction” (Chapter 3)  
Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author”  
Seán Burke, “The Ethics of Signature”

*\*\*In-Class Discussion Workshop Reflection due at beginning of class\*\**

**Class 6 (May 18): Feminisms I: Écriture Feminine**

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, “Feminist criticism” (Chapter 6)  
Medbh McGuckian, selected poems from *The Flower Master* (on reserve in library, titles of selected poems will be posted on CULearn before Class 2)  
Patricia Boyle Haberstroh, “Medbh McGuckian” *\*\*focus pages: 123-134\*\**

*\*In-Class Discussion Workshop\*: Écriture Feminine and Medbh McGuckian’s The Flower Master*

**Class 7 (May 23): Postmodernism: The “End of History”?**

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, “Postmodernism” (Chapter 4)  
Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*

*\*\*In-Class Discussion Workshop Reflection due at beginning of class\*\**

*\*In-Class Discussion Workshop\*: Never Let Me Go*

**Class 8 (May 25): Feminisms II: Queer and Global Intersections**

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, “Lesbian/Gay Criticism” (Chapter 7)  
Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution”  
Silvia Federici, “Women, Globalization, and the International Women’s Movement”

*\*\*In-Class Discussion Workshop Reflection due at beginning of class\*\**

**Class 9 (May 30): New Historicism and Cultural Materialism**

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, “New Historicism and Cultural Materialism” (Chapter 9)  
Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?”  
Alan Sinfield, “Literature and Cultural Production”

**Class 10 (June 1): Society and Literature II: Collective Practices**

Wendy Griswold, Terry McDonnell, and Nathan Wright, “Reading and the Reading Class in the Twenty-First Century”

Jack Stillinger, “Implications for Theory” **\*\*Focus pages: 182-88, 194-202 (to the end of section 2, and all of section 4)\*\***

### **Class 11 (June 6): Post-Colonial Literary Theory: Debates in the Field**

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, “Postcolonial criticism” (Chapter 10)

Homi K. Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man”

Neil Lazarus, “Introduction: The political unconscious of postcolonial studies”

NoViolet Bulawayo, “Hitting Budapest”

**\*\*“Working With Theory” Essay due at beginning of class\*\***

### **Class 12 (June 8): Cultural Studies Today**

Claire Squires, “Publishing Contexts and Market Conditions” **\*\*focus pages: 19-26, 35-39\*\***

Dobrota Pucherová, ““A Continent Learns to Tell its Story at Last”: Notes on the Caine Prize”

Stuart Hall, “The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media”

*\*In-Class Discussion Workshop\*: Making connections, marking distinctions, between different types of literary analysis*

**Class 13 (June 13): Review class**, in which we will review all of the main concepts we have covered, and draw out overarching aspects, in preparation for the final exam

**\*\*In-Class Discussion Workshop Reflection due at beginning of class\*\***

## **V. Evaluation:**

### **General criteria that influence grading:**

*All work completed for this course, including informal and formal written and oral assignments as well as the final exam, will receive a numerical grade that corresponds to the guidelines set out by the Faculty of Arts:*

90-100 – A+

85-89 – A

80-84 – A-

77-79 – B+

73-76 – B

70-72 – B-

67-69 – C+

63-66 – C

60-62 – C-

57-59 – D+

53-56 – D

50-52 – D-  
Below 50 – F

*All work completed for this course, including informal and formal written and oral assignments as well as the final exam, will be subject to the following general evaluation criteria, as well as any particular criteria stated in each assignment outline:*

The strength of students' engagement with course material will be assessed based on their ability to express, in clear and effective written prose and/or oral communication, nuanced engagement with the significance and relevance of various particular textual details. Students are expected to produce novel, critically informed argumentative positions of how patterned interactions and functions of these details create meaning, and to genuinely support these positions by demonstrating thorough textual engagement and providing ample concrete textual references. Any broadly articulated, generalized, obvious, or superficial claims will be seriously penalized for lack of critical engagement.

*All written assignments designated under "Term Work" will be subject to the following evaluative criteria, in addition to what is outlined in the above paragraph, as well as any particular criteria stated in each assignment outline:*

- 1) Written term work must be guided by a thesis statement. This will be located at the beginning of the assignment, either in the introductory paragraph of the essay, or as the first sentence of the critical response and in-class discussion workshop reflections. Each thesis statement will effectively convey a non-obvious, non-general, nuanced argumentative position on the significance of the particular textual details analyzed throughout the assignment. Each thesis' scope must also reflect an accurate reading of the assignment question and be appropriate for the length of the assignment.
- 2) All written term work is to be based solely on texts listed on this syllabus. Students are neither encouraged nor expected to perform any secondary research for this course.
- 3) Written term work is to be presented in MLA citation style and format. This means that all references to texts must be cited parenthetically in your prose, and that your documents are to be formatted following MLA style (double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman Font, numbered pages, identification info at top left-hand corner of page one.

*\*\*However, you are not required to include lists of Works Cited for any written work for this class\*\**

The Purdue Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource for MLA style:  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

You may also consult the Eighth Edition of the *MLA Handbook*, which is on reserve in the library.

- 4) Significant consideration will be paid to accuracy (correct identification of texts, authors, and historical context; logical, well-supported readings of texts); and the effective expression and communication of ideas through proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence and paragraph structure.
- 5) What is paramount is for students to also effectively display and express in all of their work – written, oral, and on the final exam – a genuine attempt at (a) developing critical reading, writing, and communication throughout the course, and (b) formulating nuanced, complex, less than obvious arguments based on deep critical engagement with material studied.

"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."

### **Examinations:**

**Final Examination, 30% of total grade (Summative):** The final exam will be held during the formal examination schedule for the Early Summer 2017 term, which is June 19-25 (note that exams are usually held on all seven days of the week). The final exam will include one or more essay responses, as well as either one, or both, of the following sections: multiple-choice questions; short-answer responses comprising definitions and examples of several key terms. It is worth 30% of the final grade. Anything discussed during class can be drawn upon. The graded final exam will not be returned to students and will not include comments. If students wish to review their final exam after it has been graded, they can schedule a meeting with the instructor to do so.

**Deferred Examinations: N.B. Deferred finals, which must be applied for at the RO, are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.** The minimum standard for any student to be in good standing in this course, and entitled to write a deferred final exam, is to have completed all term work within the allowable parameters designated in this outline, and to have a 50% average in the course.

### **Term work:**

**Critical Response, due at the beginning of Class 3, 250-400 words, 5% of final grade:** The purpose of this assignment is twofold. Firstly, it will allow students to get useful early feedback on how their writing meets the standards of evaluation for formal written assignments for this course, addressing areas for improvement when writing future assignments. Secondly, this assignment will give students opportunities to engage with foundational theoretical concepts covered in the first three classes, which should build knowledge that is essential for moving forward. Questions will be provided in the first week of class, prompting modes of inquiry for students to critically engage with specific readings. This is a formal writing assignment, expected to be guided by a thesis statement, and to be academic in tone. Further explanation will be provided in the first week of classes.

**In-Class Discussion Workshops, total of four at 10% each, 40% of final grade:** In the first week of class, students will be placed in groups which will stay in-tact throughout the course. In following weeks (noted on the schedule), four in-class discussion workshops will comprise the second half of class; these will be devoted to discussing the assigned readings and lecture material for that class. Questions will be provided one week in advance of each discussion workshop, prompting modes of inquiry for students to critically engage with specific readings, and compare and contrast their tenets to those of different theoretical camps that we have already studied. Each discussion period will include time for each group to discuss the questions amongst themselves, and for the groups to reconvene and discuss their findings as a whole class.

Each student will receive an individual grade out of 10 for each in-class discussion workshop; 5 points of this grade will be based on the student's participation during the discussion period; 5 points will be based on an informal one- to two-page written reflection on the ideas raised, to be written at home and handed in at the beginning of the following class. For each of these components of each workshop's total grade of 10, quality of engagement will be assessed in terms of expressing non-obvious, nuanced critique, which identifies and explores specific details of the texts in question, following the general criteria regarding assessment of critical engagement outlined above.

**“Working With Theory” Essay, 25%, 1000-1250 words in length, Due at the beginning of Class 11:** In this assignment, students will write a formal academic essay in response to one of a few writing prompts which the instructor will provide. Students will choose one of the theoretical camps on our syllabus as the basis for inquiry, and choose from one of two options for going about doing this. Firstly, students may choose to “apply” theory to the one of the literary texts on our syllabus – that is, to use it as a “lens” through which to critically read and arrive at a novel understanding of the literary text. Secondly, students may use this essay as an opportunity to reflect on the limits of a theoretical camp – that is, to show how a major theoretical disposition needs expanding, is inadequate, has problematic underlying political, ethical and cultural assumptions, etc. Further explanation will be provided in the third or fourth week of classes.

**Policy on handing in assignments:** All term work assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of the class on the date which they are due. No other form of submission, electronic or otherwise, will be accepted (aside from submissions which conform to the policies on later papers and extensions outlined below).

**Late Paper Policy:** Term work assignments submitted after the beginning of the class on the date which they are due must be submitted to the English Department Essay Dropbox (18<sup>th</sup> floor Dunton Tower), and will be docked 2% per day up until one week after the due date, after which they will receive a grade of zero.

**Policy on Extensions and Absences:** Extensions for written term work assignments will be considered on a case by case basis; if you know in advance that an extension will be needed, you must provide the instructor with a valid reason at least one week in advance of the due date, and a new due date may be negotiated; in emergency circumstances within one week of the due date,

the instructor must be made aware of the situation and valid reasons necessitating an extension immediately, and a new due date may be negotiated.

For absences from in-class discussion workshops to be excused without losing participation marks, official medical documentation noting the student's inability to attend class, such as a doctor's note, must be provided at the next class, and the student must complete an additional written assignment to make up for the lost participation marks. In addition to completing this makeup assignment, students absent from in-class discussion workshops will still be expected to hand in at the beginning of the class following the missed workshop an informal written reflection on the ideas raised in the assigned readings.

**Policy on lost assignments:** If a student claims to have handed in an assignment either at the beginning of class on the date which it is due, or to the English Department Essay Dropbox (18<sup>th</sup> floor Dunton Tower) within one week of the due date, and the instructor has not received the assignment, the student must email the instructor an electronic version of the assignment within two hours of email request by the instructor.

**Policy on Attendance:** You are expected to reflect thorough knowledge of all course material, including all readings, lecture material, and class discussions, in your term work and on the final exam. Therefore, students are expected to attend each class, and come extremely prepared by having read all assigned material and being ready to discuss it.

## **VI. Statement on Plagiarism:**

### **PLAGIARISM**

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentional 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;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence, which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

## **VII. Requests for Academic Accommodations:**



## **REQUEST FOR 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](mailto: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*). **Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.** After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website ([www.carleton.ca/pmc](http://www.carleton.ca/pmc)) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).