



**Philadelphia University
College of Arts
Department of English
Professor Dr. Marwan M. Obeidat
The Literary Theory: 120780
Fall Semester: 2018/2019**

Course Description

As the title promises, this course will focus on key critics, ideas, and schools of criticism. We will read and discuss historical and contemporary criticism and theories, considering a range of literary (critical) viewpoints, voices, and canonical works of the critical and literary theory. For this purpose, the course will offer a comprehensive and thorough survey of the major trends of the literary (critical) theory as well as the technical literary terminology from Plato down to modern times, including such movements and concepts as structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstructionism, psychoanalysis, and cultural criticism.

Aims (Purposes/Objectives)

- 1 Rigorous reading of all assigned works
- 2 Selected readings of recommended sources
- 3 Participation in class discussion of main ideas
- 4 Regular attendance. If you are not in class, you are ABSENT!

Learning Outcomes

This course is intended to:

- 1 Familiarize students with the literary premises and intellectual background pertinent to important eras of the literary and critical theory.
- 2 Encourage students to discover their own literary and critical "theories" as they read.
- 3 Introduce and examine practical critical concepts that are influential and important at the present time.
- 4 Help students know how to read, comprehend, discuss, analyze, and interpret critical texts of all types. Special emphasis will be placed on the cultivation of critical thinking, writing, and conversational skills.
- 5 Help update their knowledge of current literary issues and critical theories.
- 6 Explore possible applications of critical theory to various literary texts.
- 7 Develop students' knowledge of the terms used in the criticism of literature.
- 8 Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of foundational critical texts.
- 9 Historicize and contextualize foundational theoretical and critical texts.
- 10 Employ critical methodologies appropriate to the practice of critical disciplines.

Course Requirements

- 1 Weekly two-page summaries/analyses. These analyses should be made available in each class meeting.
- 2 Weekly reviews of your class peers' position papers.
- 3 Students will lead weekly discussions on assigned readings, and they are expected to participate actively in class discussions. Failure to do so will have a detrimental effect on your grade!
- 4 One short memo-proposal including a working bibliography identifying both primary and secondary sources. Reliance on electronic materials is strongly discouraged.
- 5 A research paper directed towards a professional audience other than the course instructor and students.
- 6 Students are also encouraged to participate in sessions of University-wide seminars and/or public lectures related to the subject. A short report of these sessions should be made available in class.
- 7 A portfolio consisting of your weekly written summaries, critiques, proposals, bibliography, and the final research paper.
- 8 Soundness of communication skills and well orderedness.

Grading

Students will be evaluated by exams, attendance, participation in the course, and by the quality of their written works. Percentages will be assigned on the following basis:

- 1 Weekly summaries/analyses, critiques, research papers, presentations, and participation in seminars: 30%
- 2 Mid-term exam: 30%
- 3 Final examination: 40%

Assessment

The strength and intensity of this course greatly depend on active participation and contribution to the class dialogue. It is each participant's responsibility to remain current in all readings and assignments. Everyone is expected to prepare all oral and written assignments in time for class discussion and by specified due dates. Each student will be evaluated primarily on how clearly she or he can express their ideas, encourage others to express their ideas, and how fully and rigorously they can evaluate the topics and ideas being spoken of or written about in class discussions, research papers, and presentations.

Attendance

All students are expected to attend every session of this course. You are also encouraged to make use of my office hours by appearing in my office in person.

Absences and Lateness

You are required to attend all class meetings and to notify the Professor in advance if you anticipate a problem with your attendance, as an unexcused absence. Any student may miss up to THREE classes for any reason. If more than three classes are missed for any reason, you may fail. If papers and assignments are not turned in when due, the grade for the assignment may be lowered. If a student misses more than a total of three classes for any reason, she or he will not be eligible to receive any credit for the course unless extraordinary circumstances exist that the Professor and the Dean deem worthy of exception.

Documentation and Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty may lead to your failure, suspension, or exclusion from this course. Therefore, you are supposed to work on your assignments, homework, papers, and projects individually (unless otherwise required). Any submitted work must be genuine and yours alone. Working with other students for anything other than research data collection, relying on other students' work from former semesters, and/or plagiarizing published research shall be deemed a corrupt act of cheating. Plagiarism is a profound academic offense that will result in failing the course. Learning notes by heart and repeating information word by word in exams can also be a type of plagiarism.

Academic Integrity

Students will be expected to uphold their work to the highest degree of academic integrity, including crediting and citing all bibliographical sources appropriately per the MLA guidelines.

Course Protocol (Code of Behavior)

- 1 You are allowed to miss up to (3) classes. If you surpass this limit, you may fail the course.
- 2 Lateness will not be accepted. If you come to class after attendance is taken, you will be welcome to attend, but I will consider you absent.
- 3 Plagiarism is a staid academic wrongdoing that will result in failing the course.
- 4 Participation is an indispensable part of the course requirements that includes preparing beforehand and actively partaking in class discussions.
- 5 Make-up exams will be offered for acceptable reasons only with the approval of the Professor and the Dean.

Teaching Methods: (Lectures, Tutorials, Debates, and Discussion)

In addition to formal lectures, there would be in-depth class discussions of the critical theories and movements to be studied as well as question-and-answer sessions, and students have to take the lead in these discussions/sessions. Students are also encouraged to develop their own thoughts and then express these thoughts into short critical essays. To help them do so, students will often be given a list of questions about particular issues of the premises of the critical practice and models to train them in the process of reading and writing about literature.

Readings

In addition to the readings handed out in class, the primary texts for the course include, but by no means are limited to, the following:

- Aristotle, *Poetics*. Trans. and ed. by Anthony Kenny. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Barthes, Roland. 'The Death of the Author', in *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Noonday Press, 1977.
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002.
- Bennett, Andrew, and Nicholas Royle. *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2009.
- Bertens, Hans. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. London & New York, Routledge, 2001.
- Cuddon, J. A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. Fourth ed. London: Penguin, 2000.
- Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: OUP, 2011.
- Davis, Robert Con, & Ronald Schleifer, eds. *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary Cultural Studies*. New York & London: Longman, 1989.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.
- Hawthorn, Jeremy. *A Concise Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*. Second ed. London: Arnold, 1994.
- Hopkins, Chris. *Thinking about Texts: An Introduction to English Studies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.
- Leitch, Vincent B., ed. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York: Norton, 2001.
- Preminger, Alex, Leon Golden et al, eds. *Classical Literary Criticism: Translations and Interpretations*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1974.
- Rivkin, Julie, & Michael Ryan, eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.
- Royle, Nicholas, & Andrew Bennett. *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. London: Longman, 2004.
- Rylance, Rick. *Debating Texts: A Reader in Twentieth-Century Literary Theory and Method*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*. Oxford: OUP, 2006
- Zima, Peter V. *The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory*. London: Continuum Collection, 2005.

Latest Selected Sources

- A New Handbook of Literary Terms* by David Mikics
- Literary Theory: A Guide for the Perplexed* by Mary Klages
- The Blackwell Guide to Literary Theory* by Gregory Castle
- Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* by Lois Tyson
- A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present* by Rafey Habib
- How Literature Works* by John Sutherland
- The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*
- Literary Movements for Students: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Literary Movements* by Gale Research Staff
- The Case for Literature* by Xingjian Gao; Mabel Lee (Translator)
- The Event of Literature* by Terry Eagleton
- The Use and Abuse of Literature* by Marjorie Garber

Contact Information

You may reach me for questions about the course, or schedule office meetings at:
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