

Introduction to Literary Criticism and Theory

English 527 | SDSU | Fall 2016
Professor Jessica Pressman

This class reads seminal works of twentieth-century literary criticism and theory from different movements, including the New Criticism, structuralism, and poststructuralism as well as psychoanalytic, Marxist, feminist, multicultural, and queer theory. The goal is to provide students with a foundation for understanding how literature is discussed in scholarly and critical discourse.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) You will be able to understand that literary criticism has a history
- 2) You will be able to recognize and explain seminal movements in the history of 20th-century literary criticism
- 3) You will be able to trace the influences of seminal thinkers on current critical discourse about literature and culture
- 4) You will be able to apply diverse critical theories to the analysis of literature.

Email: jpressman@mail.sdsu.edu *Do not expect a response within 24 hours	Course Website: http://fall2016-eng527.jessicapressman.com
Office: AL 261 Office hours: 9:30-10:30 T/Th and by appointment	T/Th 12:30-1:45 Room: SH 113
English Subject Librarian: Markel Tumlin	< mtumlin@rohan.sdsu.edu >

REQUIRED READING: Available in the SDSU Bookstore

Leitch, Cain, Finke, Johnson, McGowan, and Williams, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010. ISBN 978-0-393-93292-8

ASSIGNMENTS

PARTICIPATION (total=35%)

In-class Participation 15%

This is *your* class, and your attendance and participation is vital to its success.

Attendance matters and counts towards your grade. Come to class prepared to discuss the

novels in depth; this means having read the *entire* text assigned *before* the first class meeting dedicated to that text.

-Your participation grade includes speaking in class. If you have trouble speaking in public, please come see me early in the semester.

-Your participation grade includes an in-person meeting with the professor.

-Your participation grade includes a 3-minute presentation on one of the texts. This presentation should serve to start the class's conversation for the day. You will point us to a question from the day's reading and to the specific passage in the text that sparked that inquiry for you. You will get the discussion rolling...

Online Participation: Short Weekly Blog Posts 20%

These informal blog posts are a place to post questions about the reading or specific passages to discuss. These posts need not contain fully fleshed and thesis-driven analysis but rather should serve as starting points for class conversation. You will receive a completion grade for the blog posts as follows:

A= 12-13 posts

B= 10-11 posts

C= 7-9 posts

D= 4-6 posts

F= 3 or less

Posts are due before the second class meeting of the week. Late posts do not receive credit.

Essays (midterm 30%, final 35%)=total 65%

You have 2 options for the essays and can choose which one to pursue for the midterm or the final:

Option 1: close reading

In this (5-7 page) essay, you will apply close reading, textual analysis of a single text from our syllabus. You will develop an argument about the text by focusing on a specific aspect of it and by explicating that text to support the claim you make about it.

Option 1: application

In this (5-7 page) essay, you will apply the theory presented in at least one theoretical text from our syllabus to a work of literature that you select.

READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

August 30: introduction to the class and our topic of study

September 1: Jonathan Culler, "What is Theory?" [PDF]

Week 2: Psychoanalytic Criticism

September 6: Sigmund Freud, from "Interpretation of Dreams" (814-824)

September 8: Harold Bloom, from *The Anxiety of Influence*, especially "Interchapter: A Manifesto for Antithetical Criticism" (1651-59)

Week 3: Marxism

September 13: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Selections (647-676)

September 15: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Selections (647-676)

Week 4: Marxism

September 20: Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, from *The Culture Industry* (1107-1127)

September 22: Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, from *The Culture Industry* (1107-1127)

Week 5: Structuralism

September 27: Ferdinand de Saussure, from *Course in General Linguistics* (850-866)

September 29: Ferdinand de Saussure, from *Course in General Linguistics* (850-866)

Week 6: Post Structuralism/Deconstruction

October 4: Jacques Derrida, from "Of Grammatology" and "Dissemination" (1680-1734)

October 6: Jacques Derrida, from "Of Grammatology" and "Dissemination" (1680-1734)

Week 7: Post Structuralism

October 11: Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" (1469-1489)

October 13: Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," and "From Work to Text" (1322-1331)

Week 8: Post Structuralism

October 18: Jean Baudrillard, from *The Precession of Simulacra* (1553-1565)

October 20: Jean Baudrillard, from *The Precession of Simulacra* (1553-1565)

*****Sunday, October 23 @ midnight: Midterm Essay Due*****

Week 9: Post-Colonialism

October 25: Edward Said, "Orientalism" (1861-1904)

October 27: Edward Said, "Orientalism" (1861-1904)

Week 10: Gender and Queer Studies

November 1: Michel Foucault, "The History of Sexuality" (1490-1521)

November 3: Michel Foucault, "The History of Sexuality" (1490-1521)

Week 11: Gender and Queer Studies

November 8: Virginia Woolf, "A Room of One's Own" (896-905)

November 10: Virginia Woolf, "A Room of One's Own" (896-905)

Week 12: Gender and Queer Studies

November 15: Judith Butler, from *Gender Trouble* (2536-2553)

November 17: Judith Butler, from *Gender Trouble* (2536-2553)

Week 13: Peer Review

November 22: Peer Review of Thesis for Final Essay

November 25: Thanksgiving, No class

Week 14: Race & Ethnicity Studies

November 29: Henry Louis Gates Jr., "Talking Black" (2427-2438)

December 1: Gloria Anzaldúa, "Borderlands" (2095-2109)

Week 15: Digital Humanities & Conclusion

December 6: Franco Moretti, "Graphs, Maps, and Trees" (2438-2464)

December 8: Concluding Conversation

******Sunday, December 15 @ midnight: Final Essays Due, posted to the blog******

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

I take teaching seriously, and I expect you to take seriously your work as a student. That means that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonest includes, but is not limited to: (a) using assignments that you wrote for another class, (b) representing work done by someone else as your own (i.e., plagiarism), and (c) copying someone else's work on an assignment, basic cheating. Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be referred to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities for further action. If you have questions at all, you should consult me immediately.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at [\(619\) 594-6473](tel:6195946473). To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.