

This syllabus has been provided as a reference tool for students considering this course. It has been modified to follow Senate regulations. Current students enrolled in any undergraduate course must obtain the most recent syllabus from their course instructor or from their course website. This is not the latest version.



Department of English & Writing Studies

Contemporary Theory and Criticism
English 2210G (001)
Winter 2014

Instructor: Dr. Jan Plug

Date/Time: Tuesday 7:00pm-10:00pm

Location: University College 289

Prerequisites

At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Antirequisite(s): English 2236F/G.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

This course is intended to introduce students to a number of schools of contemporary theory and criticism. In particular, we will discuss approaches that have been crucial to the definition and study of literature throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries, as well as the motivations and consequences of the rise of theory. Part of our concern will be to situate certain schools of theory (for example, structuralism, deconstruction, feminism, psychoanalysis, cultural studies) and also how they react, polemically or otherwise, to one another.

Objectives:

One of my favourite theorists has stated that reading means being open to the unpredictable. Teaching and learning-must also remain similarly open, which means that we cannot predict what the outcome of a course such as this might be (otherwise, there would be little point in taking it: you would already know now what you are going to know at the end). That said, a course on theory and criticism, while it draws on some of the reading skills you have developed in courses on literary works, where you read for character, theme, and style, will also entail analyzing critical and philosophical arguments. This will require breaking down and teasing out the authors' biases, presuppositions, and the implications of his or her arguments. In written work, you will be asked to look closely at how claims are made and what purchase they have

Course Materials

Required Texts:

The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism. 2nd ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al, eds. New York: Norton, 2010.

Resources

Undergraduate Introduction to Critical Theory (Dino F. Felluga, Purdue University)
<http://www.purdueedu/guidetotheory/>

The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism. Ed. Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth. <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/> search in Weldon Library catalogue for title and click connect to internet resource"

Literary Sources-Theory (Jack Lynch, Rutgers University)
<http://andromedarutgersedu/~jlynch/Lit/theory.htm>

Methods of Evaluation

Short Papers (2 x 15%)	30%
Final Paper	35%
Final Exam	35%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Timetable:

Unless otherwise noted, the readings are from the Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism. I encourage you also to read the introductions to the texts and authors in the anthology.

January 7: Introduction

Structuralism

January 14: de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*

January 21: Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, Barthes, *Mythologies*, "The Death of the Author"

Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction

January 28: Nietzsche, "Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense"; de Man, "Semiotics and Rhetoric"

February 4: Derrida, *Of Grammatology*

February 11: Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, cont'd, *Dessemination*

February 18: *Reading Week: No Class*

Marxism, Historicism, Ideology, Culture

February 25: Marx and Engels; Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

March 4: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, *The History of Sexuality*

March 11: Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility"; Horkheimer and Adorno, "The Culture Industry"

Psychoanalysis, Feminism, Gender

March 18: Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Uncanny*; Lacan, "The Mirror Stage"

March 25: Lacan, cont'd; Cixous, *Laugh of the Medusa*; Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman"

April 1: Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"; Sedgwick, *Between Men*,
Epistemology of the Closet

April 8: Conclusions, exam review

Assignments:

Late Assignments: Late essays will be penalized 2% per day late. I will not accept essays more than one week late without consultation. Please note that University Senate policy prohibits me from accepting any assignment after the last day of class.

Short Papers: These paper will give you the opportunity to engage critically with concepts on the course. You will be asked to consider a problem raised in the work of an author, how the author handles the idea, what his or her presuppositions are, how the argument develops (and perhaps falls apart).

Final Paper: In your research essay you will be asked to consider a significant issue in theory and criticism and to analyze how it is taken up by two or perhaps three thinkers on the course. The essay must be thoroughly researched and documented.

Attendance:

Excessive absenteeism is grounds for debaring a student from taking the final examination. The 2013 Academic Calendar states: "Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course" (p.35).

I will take attendance.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.