

**Department of English and Writing Studies
Western University**

**English 2210F
Fall 2014**

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and by appointment

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.

Course 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.

Required Text

Available at the Western Bookstore

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.purdue.edu/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://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Lit/theory.html>

Laptop/Tablet/Cellphone Use

During class, I would like all of our attention to be focused on the texts and on our discuss of them. Unless you have a compelling (and documented) need for one, **no laptop or tablet use** will be allowed during class. Please shut your cell phone **off** before entering class.

Academic Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 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 Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf>.

The full policy is set out in the handbook:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

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.

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.

Plagiarism (See 2013 U.W.O. Calendar, pp. 19-21.)

Plagiarism (the unacknowledged use of another person's work) is one of the most serious academic offences, since it involves fraud and misrepresentation. In plagiarizing, one is in effect claiming another person's words or ideas or data as one's own work, and thus misrepresenting material subject to academic evaluation. It is necessary, therefore, that plagiarism carry appropriate penalties. These are within the discretion of the Chair of Undergraduate Studies, but may include failure of a course or a grade of zero on an assignment, without the privilege of resubmitting it.

STUDENTS FOUND GUILTY OF A SECOND SERIOUS OFFENCE WILL BE EXPELLED FROM DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH COURSES. FURTHER ACTION MAY BE TAKEN BY THE DEAN'S OFFICE.

Students must acknowledge each printed or electronic source (**including study guides such as *Cole's Notes* and Internet materials**) by author, title, date and place of publication, and page number if: (a) they quote from it directly; (b) they paraphrase its ideas; (c) they are conscious of any influence its ideas may have had on their own work. **Every source (including websites) that students have consulted (whether they refer to it directly or not) must be included in a bibliography (Works Cited).** Some instructors may require that students provide copies of material downloaded from the Internet.

It is not always possible to identify the sources of inspiration of one's own ideas with total accuracy. A reasonable and conscientious effort is all that is required. **However, it is entirely the student's responsibility to be aware of the nature of plagiarism.** If students have any questions about plagiarism, they should ask their instructor. If students have any doubts about the documentation of their own essays, they should see the instructor before the essays are due. Information about correct forms of documentation may be found in the *MLA HANDBOOK For Writers of Research Papers* (New York: Modern Language Association, 2009), available in the Reference section at Weldon (LB 2369.M57).

Students found to have submitted the work of another person as their own work **will automatically fail the course.** Any students who know their own work has been used improperly have a responsibility to inform the Department of that fact; otherwise they will be considered collaborators.

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>).

Grade Distribution

Short Paper	15%
Quizzes	10%
Essay outline, bibliography	10%
Final Paper	30%
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. 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 does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the office of the registrar.

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 classes (December 3).**

Short Paper

This 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.

To help prepare for this essay, you will submit a draft of your introduction, an outline, and an annotated bibliography in advance. These will be returned, with comments that you can use in organizing your thoughts, preparing your argument, and working on your writing.

Quizzes

6 **unannounced** quizzes will be given throughout the semester. They will be based on the assigned reading for that class and will be largely factual, to ensure that you have completed and understood the reading, and might also include a question or two that requires more analysis or application of the concepts in the reading.

The quizzes represent a great opportunity for you to bolster your grade: if you come prepared to class, there is absolutely no reason why you should not do very, very well on them. Also,

of the 6 quizzes I will count your 5 best grades (each for 2% of the final grade for a total of 10%).

Schedule of Classes

All 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.

September 4: Introduction

Structuralism

September 9: de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (850-866); Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (1277-1286)

September 11: Barthes, *Mythologies* (1320-1322), "The Death of the Author" (1322-1326)

Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction

September 16: Nietzsche, "Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense" (764-774); Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (photocopy)

September 18: Derrida, cont'd

September 23: Derrida, from *Of Grammatology* (photocopy); de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality" (photocopy)

September 25: de Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric" (1365-1378)

Marxism, Historicism, Ideology, Culture

September 30: Marx and Engels (651-676)

October 1: **NO CLASS** (conference)

October 7: Marx and Engels, cont'd; Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1335-1361)

October 9: Althusser, cont'd

October 14: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (photocopy), *The History of Sexuality* (1502-1521)

October 16: Foucault, cont'd

SHORT ESSAY DUE

October 21: Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility" (1051-1071)

October 23: Benjamin, cont'd

October 28: Horkheimer and Adorno, "The Culture Industry" (1110-1127)

October 30: Fall Study Period—**NO CLASS**

Psychoanalysis, Feminism, Gender

November 4: Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams* (814-824), *The Uncanny* (824-841)

November 6: Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" (photocopy)

FINAL ESSAY OUTLINE AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

November 11: Lacan, "The Mirror Stage" (1163-1169), "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious" (1169)

November 13: Lacan, cont'd

November 18: Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (892-905); Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1926-1938)

November 20: Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (2084-2095)

November 25: Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman" (1906-1913); Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (photocopy)

FINAL ESSAY DUE

November 27: Sedgwick, *Between Men* (2466-2470)

December 2: Conclusions, Review
