

Department of English & Writing Studies

Contemporary Theory and Criticism
English 2210G (001)
Winter 2017

Instructor: Joshua Schuster
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Office hours: Tues 1:30-2:30; Wed 3:30-4:30, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Lyndsay Day
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Office hours: Tues 11:30-12:30; Thurs 10:30-11:30, or by appointment

Class location: Arts & Humanities 2R21

Class Date/Time: Tues 12:30-1:30; Thurs 11:30-1:30

Prerequisite(s): 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. 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 builds on the historical foundations of ENG 2200F/G to concentrate on important issues in contemporary literary theory and criticism. Students will be introduced to some of the major schools and movements of literary analysis in the twentieth century, including New Criticism, Russian formalism, structuralism, deconstruction, the Frankfurt School, psychoanalysis, critical race theory, postcolonialism, queer theory, and posthumanism. We will focus on defining key terms and developing critical thinking skills together as we explore some of the major theories of writing and reading that have marked the past century.

Objectives:

Successful students who complete the course will be able to:

- Understand the major intellectual movements and schools of literary theory of the twentieth century;
- Define key terms and concepts that are widely used in literary theoretical analysis;
- Gain an understanding of how to become self-reflexive with one's own use of theoretical concepts and questions as they apply to literary texts and to cultural issues more broadly in the humanities.

Course Materials**Texts:**

The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, ed. Vincent Leitch

Methods of Evaluation

Midterm	20%	
Final	40%	
Participation	15%	
Final Paper	25%	(4 pages)

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>.

Final Paper: Topics will be handed out in class. Late essays are not accepted. We will use OWL.

Midterm and Final Exams: The format will include quote identifications, a few short answer questions, and (on the final exam) some short essays that will require you to compare different theorists on a given topic.

Participation: Your participation is central to this class and is a key component of your growth as a student. Participation includes: being involved in class discussion, participating in group work, and putting real energy into all assignments and readings. **Read the texts before the day they are discussed.**

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and obviously counts for your grade in participation. It is imperative to arrive to each class on time. No unexcused absences are permitted (I am not crazy and I do know that problems arise during the semester – but please supply a legitimate written excuse – see Western policy on this). If you miss a certain number of courses, I will warn you, but already you risk getting a zero in participation and/or dropped from the course.

MLA Documentation: Undergraduate research papers written in Arts and Humanities follow the formatting procedures outlined by the Modern Language Association. The complete guide to this format can be found in the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009). This guide can be found On Reserve in the D. B. Weldon Library, call no: LB2369.M57 2009. The Department of English also offers an overview of MLA documentation, at: <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergrad/guidelines.html>

Timetable

Jan. 5 – Introduction; Cleanth Brooks “The Formalist Critics” (OWL)

Jan. 10 – T. S. Eliot “Tradition and the Individual Talent”

Jan. 12 – Ferdinand de Saussure “Course in General Linguistics”

Jan. 17 – Boris Eichenbaum “The Theory of the Formal Method”

Jan. 19 – Roman Jakobson “Linguistics and Poetics”

Jan. 24 – Paul de Man “Semiotics and Rhetoric”

Jan. 26 – J. L. Austin “Performative Utterances”

Jan. 31 – Jacques Derrida “Signature, Event, Context” (OWL)

Feb. 2 – Jacques Derrida “Différance” (OWL)

Feb. 7 – **midterm**

Feb. 9 – Sigmund Freud “The Uncanny”

Feb. 14 – Jacques Lacan “The Mirror Stage”

Feb. 16 – Roland Barthes “The Death of the Author”; Michel Foucault “What Is an Author?”

Feb. 28 – Walter Benjamin “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility”

Mar. 2 – Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno “Dialectic of Enlightenment”

Mar. 7 - Louis Althusser “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”

Mar. 9 – Julia Kristeva “Revolution in Poetic Language”

Mar. 14 – Langston Hughes “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”

Mar. 16 – Zora Neale Hurston “Characteristics of Negro Expression”; Audre Lorde “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action” (OWL)

Mar. 21 – Edward Said “Orientalism”

Mar. 23 – Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak “A Critique of Postcolonial Reason”

Mar. 28 – Judith Butler “Gender Trouble”

Mar. 30 – Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick “Epistemology of the Closet”

Apr. 4 – Donna Haraway “A Manifesto for Cyborgs”

Apr. 6 – review; **final paper due**

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:

Plagiarism constitutes an automatic failure of this course and goes on a student's permanent record of conduct. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me. 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>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

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.