

Department of English & Writing Studies

History of Theory and Criticism
English 2200F (001)
Fall 2017

Instructor: Professor Jan Plug
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Office hours: M 2:00-3:00 pm, W 2:00-4:00
pm and by appointment

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Office Hours: M, W: 1:30-2:30 pm

Course Date/Time: Monday 12:30-1:30 pm,
Wednesday 11:30-1:30 pm

Course Location: AHB 2R21

Antirequisite(s): English 2235A/B.

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 offers an introduction to some of the most influential ideas in and about the arts from Plato to the turn of the twentieth century. The course will consider, for example, debates around the definition and function of art; the charge that literature is a "lie"; the question of beauty; the role of the poet; the importance of literary "tradition" and more. The point, as will become clear from the readings, will be less to determine a "truth" of art that could then be applied to individual works than it is to *read* literary theory, analyzing the arguments of the texts, how they make their arguments, what their blind spots might be.

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 their arguments. In written work, you will be asked to look closely at how claims are made and what purchase they have.

Course Materials

Required Text:

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>

I will also provide handouts of poems and other shorts texts, sometimes images, that we will discuss in class.

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.

Attendance:

Excessive absenteeism is grounds for debarring a student from taking the final examination. The 2012 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).

ANY STUDENT WHO HAS MORE THAN 3 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES MAY BE DEBARRED FROM THE FINAL EXAM.

Methods of Evaluation

Grade Distribution

Quizzes	15%
Short Essays (3)	15%, 15%, 20% (50% total)
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 that are more than one week late.

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. They are intended 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 3% of the final grade for a total of 15%).

Short Papers:

This paper will give you the opportunity to engage with the texts and concepts taken up throughout the course. You will be asked to consider a problem raised in the work of an author or authors, how the author handles the idea, what the author's presuppositions are, how the argument develops (and perhaps falls apart), and perhaps to put two or more authors in dialogue.

The first two papers will be 750 words in length, and the last 1200 words.

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.

September	11:	Introduction
	13:	Plato, from the <i>Republic</i> , books III, VII (pp. 45-77)
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September	18:	NO CLASS
	20:	Plato, cont'd
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September	25:	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> (pp. 88-115)
	27:	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i>
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October	2:	Sidney, from <i>Defence of Poesy</i> (pp. 254-283)
	4:	Hume, <i>Of the Standard of Taste</i> (pp. 392-406)

October 9: **FALL READING WEEK: NO CLASS**

11: **FALL READING WEEK: NO CLASS**

October 16: Kant, from *Critique of Judgment* (pp. 411-450)

18: Kant, cont'd **PAPER # 1 DUE**

October 23: Hegel, from *Phenomenology of Spirit*, from *Lectures on Fine Art* (pp. 541-556)

25: Hegel, cont'd

October 30: Wordsworth, from *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (pp. 559-579)

November 1: Wordsworth, cont'd; Coleridge, from *Biographia Literaria* (pp. 584-591)

November 6: Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (pp. 695-714)

8: Arnold, "The Function of Criticism," cont'd; from *Culture and Anarchy* (pp. 714-721)
PAPER #2 DUE

November 13: Wilde, Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; from *The Decay of Lying*, from *The Artist as Critic* (pp. 790-807)

15: Wilde, cont'd

November 20: Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense*; from *The Birth of Tragedy* (pp.764-785)

22: Nietzsche, cont'd

November 27: Marx and Engels, all selections (pp. 651-676)

29: Marx and Engels, cont'd
PAPER #3 DUE

December 4: Wollstonecraft, from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (pp.496-504); Woolf, from *A Room of One's Own* (pp. 896-905)

6: Woolf, cont'd; **Review and Final Exam Preparation**

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>.

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.