

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND WRITING STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

English 2200F (001)
History of Theory and Criticism
Fall 2024

Professor Jan Plug
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Office hours by appointment
and Tuesdays 10:30-12:00, Thursdays 10:30-11:30

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Tuesday 2:30-4:30

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 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. *It is students' responsibility to ensure that they have the proper requisites.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an introduction to some of the most influential ideas in and about literature and the arts from Plato to the turn of the twentieth century.

Wait, let me interrupt that: this sounds dry. And the readings might seem that at times. The course won't be, however, and you'll find your way into the readings, too. What the course does is allow us to take a step back and ask fundamental questions about literature and the arts, as well as about what we are doing when we study them. To quote the German Romantic poet Friedrich Hölderlin, "Wozu Dichter in dürftiger Zeit?" ("What are poets for in wretched times"—a question for today!).

So, we'll ask what literature is for. Why does it matter? Why does studying it matter? What is the nature of truth in literature? What is beauty? How are such central concepts arrived at? What are their implications?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To learn to analyze arguments about literature and art.

- To develop the critical skills to unpack authors' biases, presuppositions, and the implications of their arguments, how claims are made, and what purchase they have.
- For you to discover something completely unexpected—for you and for me—about literature, how we approach it, what it means, how it means, etc. This is a lofty goal, but I think we should be open to it.

REQUIRED TEXT

The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism. 3rd ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al, eds. **Available at the bookstore.**

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Please leave your phones turned off and in put away. Also, I much prefer it when students take notes with pen and paper – all the studies show that doing so improves your learning and creates a better classroom atmosphere.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Quizzes:	15%	(best 4 of 6)
Short essay:	15%	(due October 22 at 11:55pm)
Final Essay:	30%	(due December 2 at 11:55pm)
Participation:	10%	
Final Exam:	30%	(Scheduled by the Registrar in December; in-person, closed book: no aids, other than your own thinking and preparation)

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar [here](#).

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the [Registrar's webpage](#). **All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.**

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make **one** Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

- **The Final Exam. (By policy, Examinations scheduled during official examination always require documentation.)**

Flexible Completion

Quizzes. This course has **6** quizzes of approximately 20-25 minutes. The **4** quizzes with the highest marks are counted towards your final grade. Should extenuating circumstances arise, students **do not** need to request Academic Consideration for the first two missed quizzes. Academic consideration requests will be denied for those first two missed quizzes. Academic Consideration requests may be granted when students miss more than two quizzes.

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, [here](#).

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

I'm interested in **your** thinking and writing, not that of a large language model. I therefore ask that you complete all your work without the use of AI. If I suspect you have used AI, the instructor might ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. You are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, you may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

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.

POLICY ON ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program” ([Academic Policies](#)). Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students” ([Accessible Education](#)).

GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Western University is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

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.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

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 5: Introduction

Week of September 9: Plato, selections from *The Republic*

Week of September 16: Aristotle, *Poetics*; Sidney, "The Defense of Poesy"

Week of September 23: Sydney, "Defense," cont'd; Hume, *Of the Standard of Taste*.

Week of September 30: Sydney, cont'd; Kant, from *Critique of Judgment*.

Week of October 7: Kant, cont'd; Wollstonecraft, from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (507-514).

Week of October 14: Fall Reading Week – No Class

Week of October 21: de Staël, "Essay on Fictions" (517-525), "On Literature Considered in Its Relationship to Social Institutions" (525-530); W.E.B. DuBois, from *The Souls of Black Folk*; "Criteria of Negro Art."

Week of September 28: Wordsworth, Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*; Coleridge, from *Biographia*

Week of November 4: Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time"; Wilde from *The Decay of Lying*, from *The Artist as Critic*.

Week of November 11: Wilde, cont'd; Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense*; from *The Birth of Tragedy*

Week of November 18: Marx and Engels, selections

Week of November 25: Virginia Woolf, from *A Room of One's Own*

Week of December 2: Odds and ends, exam review

December 6: Last Day of Classes
