



ENGL 2600 Introduction to Critical Literature & Theory Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Kurt Harris
E-mail: HarrisK@suu.edu
Phone: 865-8642

Web site: <http://www.suu.edu/faculty/harrisk>
Office: BC 300G
Office hours: MonTueWed 2:00-4:00 & by appt.

Description

This course is the reading and application of literary theory. (It is required for English Literature and English Teaching majors and minors as a prerequisite to 3000-level survey courses.) It is a writing intensive course and will require critical analysis of prose, poetry, and dramatic texts. Provides (1) a workshop in the techniques used by critics examining and writing about literary texts, (2) a brief historical survey of literary theory, and (3) an introduction to the basic terminology of literary study. (Fall, Spring)

Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following skills:

- Identify the major schools of Anglo-American critical theory
- Describe the key critical concepts utilized by literary scholars
- Critically evaluate ideas presented in fiction, poetry, and drama using literary terms
- Objectively and accurately summarize critical texts
- Apply the ideas of influential critical theorists to literary texts
- Write literary analyses incorporating works by several authors
- Participate actively in large and small group discussions about literary and critical texts

Course work

To achieve course objectives, students will complete the following assignments:

- A mid-term exam will require students to identify the major schools of Anglo-American critical theory and describe the key critical concepts utilized by literary scholars
- A final exam will require students to apply to a literary text the ideas presented in a critical text
- Informal writing will require students to evaluate critically the ideas presented in fiction, poetry, and drama using literary terms
- An essay will require students to apply the ideas of influential critical theorists to one or more literary texts
- In-class discussions will require students to participate actively in large and small group discussions about literary and critical texts

Integrity

I approach this class with respect for all students, and I operate under the assumption that they respect me, their classmates, and themselves. Those who use the words or ideas of someone else without giving proper credit are guilty of plagiarism, which is a serious offense. Those found guilty of such academic dishonesty will fail the class. The current issue of the *SUU Student Handbook* and the *SUU 2009-2011 Undergraduate Catalog* (p. 36) explain this matter in detail.

Grades

Below is a list of the weight each component carries in this course:

Assignment	Score	Percentage	Value
Mid-term exam (Oct. 2)		x 10%	
Final exam (Dec. 8)		x 15%	
Informal writing (Aug. 31-Nov. 23)		x 30%	
Essay (Dec. 4)		x 25%	
In-class participation		x 20%	
TOTAL		100%	

I will give points to all graded work and will use these points to calculate final course grades. Points translate into letter grades as follows:

A = 93-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-92	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 63-66
	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	D- = 60-62
			F = 0-59

Required texts

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 2nd ed. Manchester, UK: Manchester UP, 2002. Print.

Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times*. 1854. Ed. Kate Flint. New York: Penguin, 2003. Print.

Richter, David H., ed. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. Print.

Recommended texts

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009. Print.

A college-level dictionary.

Notes

Please take note of the following:

- Students with medical, psychological, learning, or other disabilities desiring academic adjustments, accommodations, or auxiliary aids will need to contact the Southern Utah University Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) located in Room 206F of the Sharwan Smith Center, or phone (435) 865-8022. The SSD determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of services.
- Information contained in this syllabus—other than the grading, late assignment, and attendance policies—is subject to change with advance notice.
- Literary analysis may conflict with your personal convictions and values; be prepared to have your assumptions challenged.

Date	Topic of the day	Assignment to be completed before class
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Week 1 (Aug. 24-28) – Introduction

1a	What are the purposes and goals of this course?	No assignment
1b	Why bother with critical theory?	Read the Introduction to <i>Beginning Theory</i> (Barry 1-10) and write a one-page response to the questions in “Stop and Think” (8-9)
1c	What am I supposed to do with something like the <i>Cyborg Manifesto</i> ?	Read at least five pages of Donna Haraway’s <i>A Cyborg Manifesto</i> (Richter 1966-70) and Ch. 1 “Theory before ‘theory’ – liberal humanism” (Barry 11-36)

Week 2 (Aug. 31-Sept. 4) – Schools of Theory I

2a	What is structuralism?	Read Ch. 2 “Structuralism” (Barry 39-60)
2b	What are post-structuralism and deconstruction?	Read Ch. 3 “Post-structuralism and deconstruction” (Barry 61-79)
2c	What is postmodernism?	Read Ch. 4 “Postmodernism” (Barry 81-94)

Week 3 (Sept. 7-11) – Schools of Theory II

3a	Labor Day	No classes
3b	What is stylistics?	Read Ch. 11 “Stylistics” (Barry 203-19)
3c	What is narratology?	Read Ch. 12 “Narratology” (Barry 222-46)

Week 4 (Sept. 14-18) – Schools of Theory III

4a	What is psychoanalytic criticism?	Read Ch. 5 “Psychoanalytic criticism” (Barry 96-118)
4b	What is feminist criticism?	Read Ch. 6 “Feminist criticism” (Barry 121-36)
4c	What is lesbian/gay criticism?	Read Ch. 7 “Lesbian/gay criticism” (Barry 139-53)

Week 5 (Sept. 21-25) – Schools of Theory IV

5a	What is Marxist criticism?	Read Ch. 8 “Marxist criticism” (Barry 156-70)
5b	What are new historicism and cultural materialism?	Read Ch. 9 “New historicism and cultural materialism” (Barry 172-89)
5c	What is postcolonial criticism?	Read Ch. 10 “Postcolonial criticism” (Barry 192-201)

Week 6 (Sept. 28-Oct. 2) – Schools of Theory V

6a	What is ecocriticism?	Read Ch. 13 “Ecocriticism” (Barry 248-69)
6b	Where are we now?	To be determined
6c	What do you know about critical theory?	Mid-term exam

Week 7 (Oct. 5-9) – Textual Analysis I

7a	Who is in control of the text?	Read Michel Foucault’s <i>What Is an Author?</i> (Richter 904-14) and Roland Barthes’ <i>The Death of the Author</i> (Richter 874-77)
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7b	How can we read this poem?	To be assigned
7c	How does Harris read this poem?	Read Kurt Harris's "Beyond the Scope of the 'I' in E. E. Cummings's Leaf Poem" (electronic text)

Week 8 (Oct. 12-16) – Textual analysis II

8a	What themes are emerging in the novel?	Read <i>Hard Times</i> Book I, Ch. 1-8 (9-58)
8b	What critical "lenses" might one use to analyze the novel?	Read <i>Hard Times</i> Book I, Ch. 9-16 (58-108)
8c	What critical lens would <i>you</i> choose to use to analyze the novel?	Read <i>Hard Times</i> Book II, Ch. 1-6 (111-62)

Week 9 (Oct. 19-23) – Textual analysis III

9a	Harvest Recess	No classes
9b	Critical discussions	Read <i>Hard Times</i> Book II, Ch. 7-12 (162-212)
9c	Critical discussions	Read <i>Hard Times</i> Book III, Ch. 1-5 (215-55)

Week 10 (Oct. 26-30) – Marxist criticism

10a	Critical discussions	Read <i>Hard Times</i> Book III, Ch. 6-9 (256-88)
10b	What does Marx mean?	Read the Intro to Karl Marx (Richter 397-400) and Marx's <i>The Alienation of Labor</i> (Richter 400-05)
10c	What does Althusser mean?	Read Louis Althusser's <i>Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses</i> (Richter 1263-72)

Week 11 (Nov. 2-6) – Psychoanalytic criticism

11a	What does Freud mean?	Read the Intro to Sigmund Freud (Richter 497-500) and Freud's <i>The Dream-Work</i> (500-09)
11b	What does Saussure mean?	Read Ferdinand de Saussure's <i>Nature of the Linguistic Sign</i> and <i>Binary Oppositions</i> (Richter 841-51)
11c	What does Lacan mean?	Read Jacques Lacan's <i>The Mirror Stage</i> (Richter 122-28) and <i>The Meaning of the Phallus</i> (Richter 1149-55)

Week 12 (Nov. 9-13) – Feminist criticism

12a	What does Kristeva mean?	Read Julia Kristeva's <i>Women's Time</i> (Richter 1563-78)
12b	What does Cixous mean?	Read Freud's <i>Medusa's Head</i> (Richter 533) and Hélène Cixous' <i>The Laugh of the Medusa</i> (Richter 1643-55)
12c	What does Rubin mean?	Read Gayle Rubin's <i>The Traffic in Women</i> (Richter 1663-83)

Week 13 (Nov. 16-20) – Postcolonial criticism

13a	What does Said mean?	Read Edward W. Said's Introduction to <i>Orientalism</i> (Richter 1801-14)
13b	What does Bhabha mean?	Read Homi K. Bhabha's <i>Signs Taken for Wonders</i> (Richter 1875-90)

13c	How and why do we watch movies?	Read Michel Foucault's <i>Las Meninas</i> (Richter 1357-66) and Laura Mulvey's <i>Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema</i> (Richter 1172-80)
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Week 14 (Nov. 23-27) – TBA

14a	What does this film mean?	To be determined
14b	Thanksgiving Recess	No classes
14c	Thanksgiving Recess	No classes

Week 15 (Nov. 30-Dec. 4) – Textual Analysis IV

15a	Peer workshops	Essay draft A
15b	Peer workshops	Essay draft B
15c	Review	Final Essay

Final Exam

Tues., Dec. 8 at 11:00	What did you learn?	Final Exam
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