

English 434W: Literary Theory

Duquesne University

Fall 2015, CRN: 13732, Section # 1, 3:05-4:20pm, TTh, Location: 222 College Hall

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Office Hours: T/Th 10:40am-12:10pm

The Postmodern Condition: Literary Theory for the Modern Subject

While literary criticism has largely been concerned with the analysis of literature and specific authors, literary theory combines the analysis of literature with philosophical thinking. From the eighteenth century forward, especially with the rise of the Cartesian subject, the contemporary dominant ideology systems began to emerge in the form that we currently know them. More specifically, those ideologies begin to be inscribed in the written word as literature, which led to their more contemporary forms in everyday media like television and movies. This course will trace the major theoretical movements from the nineteenth century forward while also occasionally looking back to earlier, foundational philosophical and literary texts. Throughout the semester, we will discuss pivotal philosophical and theoretical texts, including aesthetic theory, psychoanalysis, Marxist/political theory, feminist theory, gender studies, Queer theory, race theory, and postcolonial theory. Ultimately, this course will examine the ways that dominant ideologies that reflect the condition of the postmodern subject are embedded in language, and the ways those ideologies help keep “good” subjects inline.

Learning Objectives

- ✓ To understand the major theoretical movements from the nineteenth and twentieth century
- ✓ To show a proficiency in reading and discussing highly abstract and dense texts
- ✓ To deconstruct the ideologies these texts critique
- ✓ To use theory as a tool to understand the way both texts and social ideologies function
- ✓ To use theory as a tool to help you write about texts, both literary and visual

Required Texts

Murray, Penelope. *Classical Literary Criticism*. 2000. New York: Penguin, 2004. (ISBN: 9780140446517)

Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. 2nd Edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. (ISBN: 978-1405106962)

Course Policies

Attendance:

Attendance is expected in my class; however, I do understand that certain life events might make missing class necessary, including illness, personal emergency, or active military duty. To that end, a student may miss up to **4** classes without affecting the attendance policy. For each absence after **6**, the student's final grade will be dropped by **ONE grade level**. At **6** absences, the student **automatically fails the course**. In addition, excessive tardiness will result in an “F” in your in-class participation grade, which is 10% of your overall grade for the course.

PLEASE NOTE: You are expected to be in class every single day. The attendance policy is meant to accommodate emergencies and illnesses. These are NOT skip days. Let me repeat. These are only to be used for emergencies.

Late Work:

As a rule, I do not accept late work except under extreme emergency situations. Work is due at the beginning of class on the listed due date. **If you come to class late and the assignment has already been collected, I WILL NOT accept it.** Your work should be collected, stapled/paper clipped, and ready to turn in at the start of class. Also, if you miss class, you are still responsible for any work due at the next class that you attend. Assignments, due dates, and a course schedule are all included in this syllabus, so missing class is not an excuse for missing work due at the next class that you attend.

I also **do not** accept e-mailed work for missed classes unless arrangements have been made with me in advance. **DO NOT** e-mail me the work if you are not coming to class. **I would strongly encourage you to befriend a peer in your class who you might call upon and make arrangements to turn in your work for you if you would need to miss a class.**

PLEASE NOTE: The failure of a printer to work or a computer crash does not constitute an emergency. Be sure to save your work often and in multiple locations. Dropbox.com is a great online resource where you can save your work and avoid missing work due to a computer crash.

Office Hours and E-Mail:

Office hours (listed above) provide a great chance to talk one-on-one. Please stop by to ask questions—or to just say hello. You may drop in during these times or make an appointment with me to talk about any questions or comments you have about your progress in the course. I'd be happy to talk with you via e-mail as well, and you can expect that I will respond to you (in email or in class) within 48 hours Monday through Friday.

In addition, this is a writing class. Improperly formatted e-mails are not acceptable. In every e-mail, you must have an opening remark (Dear so and so), the body of the e-mail, a closing remark (Sincerely, etc...), and your full name (first and last) written at the bottom. In addition, e-mails should be properly formatted—meaning using proper sentence structure, capitalization, and the absence of text/IM language (like **u** for **you**). **THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IF YOU E-MAIL FROM A CELL PHONE.** If you do not follow proper e-mail format, then you forfeit the opportunity of receiving a response from me.

Also, the syllabus contains the majority of the information that you need for this course. **Please, review the syllabus before e-mailing me a question**—especially about length requirements. If the answer to your question can be found on the syllabus, I will simply refer you to the syllabus for the first e-mail, and thereafter, I maintain the right to not e-mail you back if the information can be found in the syllabus.

Cancellations:

In the event that I would need to unexpectedly cancel class, I will contact the class via e-mail. I do commute to campus, so on days of inclement weather, especially heavy snow, be sure to check your e-mail before coming to class. If class is cancelled, I may request that you e-mail work or give information about changes in the course schedule, so if class is cancelled, you are responsible for checking your e-mail and following any included instructions before the next class.

Electronic Devices:

I embrace technology. I know that many of you will bring your syllabus to class on cell phones, laptops, or tablets. As long as they are used for course related materials (i.e., taking notes, viewing reading assignments, consulting the syllabus), these devices are free for you to use during class. **However, cell phone ringers should be turned to silent, and if any device is used for anything other than class related work, I have a one strike policy. You will immediately lose your class privileges for electronic devices, and you will receive a “0” for class participation that day. If you repeatedly violate this policy, I reserve the right to collect the device from you at the beginning of every class AND/OR to give you a “F” in participation for the term.**

PLEASE NOTE: This applies especially to texting or answering phone calls in class. You will also receive a “0” in participation for the day for misuse. I will not notify you of the “0” for participation. You will simply receive it if your cell phone is being used during my class. Continual misuse will result in a failing grade in participation for the course. If the disruption is extensive enough for me to ask you to leave, you will also receive an absence for the day. EVEN IF WE HAVE DOWN TIME IN CLASS OR YOU FINISH A TASK BEFORE THE REST OF THE CLASS, THE CELL PHONE SHOULD ONLY BE USED FOR CLASS-RELATED MATERIAL. KEEP IT PUT AWAY.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is the inclusion of another’s words or ideas as your own in a paper you submit for this class. This includes having another person write a paper for you, turning in another student’s work who has previously had this class, taking any or all information, writing, or ideas from the internet without proper in-text citations and works cited entries, and pulling any information, writing, or ideas from any other type of source that is not your own work. To avoid plagiarism, you should always use proper in-text citations for all quotations (which are direct word for word quotations in quotation marks) and for all paraphrased information (which is the use of others’ ideas and information, which has been converted into your own language). For specific in-text guidelines, see the documentation and citation section in your grammar handbook or visit the Perdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) on the internet.

If you do plagiarize, there are consequences for your actions. The university penalties include a “0” on an essay/portion of your grade, a failing grade for the course, suspension, and expulsion from the university. In order to avoid this, be sure to document and cite your sources clearly. If you are having particular trouble with documentation, writing, or even finding an idea for a paper, please, come and see me so that we can discuss your issue. It is far better to take a late penalty or even a “0” on an assignment than have to face sanctions from the university. I am more than happy to help you with your writing/citing in any way that I can.

For complete information on the university plagiarism policy, see the “Academic Integrity” section of the undergraduate catalog located at: <http://www.duq.edu/about/administration/academic-affairs/policies-and-procedures>.

Standards for Written Work

Format:

1” Margins on Top, Bottom, and Sides, 12 Point Times New Roman Font (including titles), Single Spaced Header (No Longer than 2 Lines), Double Spaced Text, Pages with last name in upper right corner, Endnotes, and MLA Bibliography Style

Technology

All assignments should be typed and when assignments are turned in electronically, you should use Microsoft Word (".doc" or ".docx" files). **Failure to post or e-mail your work as a Word Document could result in a "0" or F on that assignment.**

Athletics

If you are involved in a university athletic program and will miss class because of it, you must bring an official list of the classes you will be missing from the athletic department in the first week of class. Moreover, ALL work is to be submitted prior to the excused absence. You are responsible for any announcements and/or class notes that you miss.

Learning Differences Support and Reasonable Accommodations

If you have any disabilities that may impact your performance in this class, please speak to me within the first week of classes. Disabilities that require accommodation must be documented by the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services (x6657).

Writing Center

This is a writing-intensive course. In order to assist you in the revision process of your writing, the Writing Center on campus is available and is staffed by graduate and undergraduate tutors who offer help with writing assignments in all disciplines. Before meeting with a tutor, prepare specific questions about your work so that your time is well spent. The Writing Center is located in 216 College Hall. Appointments must be made online at www.sites.duq.edu/writing-center/

Project Descriptions and Grade Distribution

Written work is the primary focus for this class; writing assignments will be many and varied. Please feel free to ask questions if you do not understand a particular writing assignment. **For your own protection, you must keep all work that you produce for this class—including drafts and in-class notes—until the end of the term.**

Course Elements

- ✓ Theoretical Application Essay 1 (15%)
- ✓ Theoretical Application Essay 2 (15%)
- ✓ Final Paper Abstract (5%)
- ✓ Annotated Bibliography (10%)
- ✓ Final Researched Theory Argument Paper (20%)
- ✓ Quizzes and Free Writes (10%)
- ✓ Theory Argument Paragraphs (15%)
- ✓ In-Class Participation/Professional Etiquette (10%)

In-Class Participation-10% of Overall Grade

Grading for In-Class Participation

- A: Comes to class on time with clear evidence of having read the material. Contributes significantly to discussion (makes at least 3 substantive comments) in most classes.
- B: Comes to class on time with clear evidence of having read the material. Contributes some to class discussion (makes at least 2 substantive comments) in most classes.
- C: Comes to class on time with clear evidence of having read the material. Contributes to class discussion occasionally (makes at least 1 substantive comment) in most classes.
- D: Comes to class with clear engagement with the class and the reading material but refrains from making any comments. Or, tardy for class.

- F: Comes to class but does not show evidence of engaging with the material or participate in class discussion.
- O/F: Does not attend class, sleeps during class, uses electronic device during class (i.e. cell phone, laptop) outside of approved methods, or causes substantial disruption to class.

Written Assignments (Generally, specific details in assignment sheets)

Grading for Written Assignments

- A: Ideas are well-developed, original, and succeeds in mastering the technical goals for the assignment. There is a clear argument supported with examples, analysis, and research. Paper follows proper citation format, includes a Works Cited page, and has few grammatical errors.
- B: Ideas are written with considerable care and attention. They are developed and detailed. There is some argument format, but ultimately, needs clearer structure. Ideas, grammar, and syntax need more clarity and development. The paper includes correct format, citations, and a Works Cited page.
- C: Ideas and structure are acceptable. The student needs to make more effort to master syntax, grammar, and argument structure and/or develop a thoughtful and focused argument and/or analysis.
- D: Student has made some effort to achieve the assignment goals, but basic fundamentals of writing and analysis need improvement. Also, citations need improvement and argument structure needs more clarity and development. The paper proposes an opinion rather than an argument supported with evidence, especially close reading of the text.
- F: Does not achieve the assignment's technical goals and/or it does not present a focused or thoughtful analysis of the text. There is no clear argument supported with close reading or research. There are no clear citations, and/or the reader summarizes others' ideas rather than constructing his/her own argument. DID NOT MEET THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF THE ASSIGNMENT.

Quizzes & Free Writes

At the beginning of each class, you may be asked to either respond to a prompt about the text assigned for that day or you may be given a quiz. These free write and quiz assignments will not be announced, but they will occur in the first ten minutes of class. If you miss class or if you are late for class, you will not be allowed to make up the quiz or free write, and you will receive a "0." The free writes and quizzes will ask you to not only identify events in a text but engage with the text. You will be asked to engage in critical thinking. I would prefer to not give quizzes or free writes every day; however, if it is clear that a significant amount of the class is not doing the reading, I will begin to give a quiz OR free write daily. **These Quizzes and Free Writes are worth 10% of your overall grade for the course.**

Schedule of Activities and Assignments

Note: Please bring your syllabus with you to class every day.

Course Schedule Subject To Change at Instructor's Discretion

Week	Day	Date	Homework (Due on Date Listed)
1	T	8.25	Introduction; Discuss policies and procedures; Review syllabus
	Th	8.27	Plato- <i>Republic</i> , Book 10 (<i>Classical Literary Criticism</i> 40-56) Longinus- <i>On the Sublime</i> (<i>CLC</i> 113-139, 147-153, 158-166)
2	T	9.1	Formalism and Structuralism Intros (3-6, 53-55) Brooks-Language of Paradox (28-39) Eichenbaum-Formal Method (7-14)
	Th	9.3	De Saussure-Course on General Linguistics (59-71) Propp-Morphology of the Folk-tale (72-75)
3	T	9.8	Barthes-Mythologies (81-89) Foucault-Archeology of Knowledge (90-96)
	Th	9.10	Phenomenology Intro (127-130) Kant-Transcendental Aesthetic (131-136) Bourdieu-Distinction (237-256)
4	T	9.15	Post Structuralism Intro (257-261) Nietzsche-Truth & Lying (262-265), Will to Power (266-270) Heidigger-Identity and Difference (271-272)
	Th	9.17	Bataille-Heterology (273-277) Derrida-Difference (278-299) Theory Application Essay 1 Draft Due
5	T	9.22	Cixous-Newly Born Woman (348-354) Lyotard-The Postmodern Condition (355-364)
	Th	9.24	Baudrillard-Simulacra and Simulations (365-377) Deleuze and Guattari-A Thousand Plateaus (378-388) Theory Application Essay 1 Final Paper Due
6	T	9.29	Psychoanalysis Intro (389-396) Freud-Interpretation of Dreams (397-414), Beyond the Pleasure Principle (431-437)
	Th	10.1	Lacan-Mirror Stage (441-446), Instance of the Letter (447-461)
7	T	10.6	Fanon-Negro Psychopathology (462-469) Chodorow-Preoedipal Gender Configurations (470-486) Midterm TAP Deadline
	Th	10.8	Historicism Intro (505-507) Foucault-Discipline and Punish (549-566) Armstrong-Some Call It Fiction (567-583)
8	T	10.13	Political Criticism Intro (643-646) Hegel-Dialectics (647-649) Bhaktin-Discourse in the Novel (674-685)
	Th	10.15	Marx-Wage Labor and Capital (659-664), Capital (665-672)

9	T	10.20	Althusser-Ideology and State Apparatuses (693-702) Žižek-The Sublime Object of Ideology (712-724)
	Th	10.22	Feminism Intro (765-769) Irigaray-Power of Discourse (795-798) Gilbert and Gubar-Madwoman in the Attic (812-825)
10	T	10.27	Spivak-Three Women's Texts and Critique of Imperialism (838-853) Lorde-Age, Race, Class, and Sex (854-860) Theory Application Essay 2 Draft Due
	Th	10.29	Gender and Queer Studies Intro (885-888) Foucault-History of Sexuality (892-899) Butler-Performative Acts & Gender Constitution (900-911)
11	T	11.3	Sedgwick-Epistemology of the Closet (912-921) Halberstam-Female Masculinity (935-958) Theory Application Essay 2 Final Paper Due
	Th	11.5	Critical Race Theory Intro (959-963) Gates-Blackness of Blackness (987-1004) Morrison-Playing in the Dark (1005-1016)
12	T	11.10	Postcolonial and Transnational Theory Intro (1071-1074) Anzaldua-Borderlands/La Frontería (1017-1030) Loomba-Situating Colonial & Postcolonial Studies (1100-1111)
	Th	11.12	Said-Austen and Empire (1112-1125) Bhaba-Sins Taken for Wonders (1167-1184)
13	T	11.17	Kincaid-A Small Place (1224-1232) Thiong'o-Decolonising the Mind (1126-1150) Final Paper Abstract Due
	Th	11.19	Cultural Studies Intro (1233-1234) Benjamin-Work of Art in Age of Mechanical Reproduction (1235-1241) Horkheimer and Adorno-Culture Industry as Mass Deception (1242-1246)
	M-F	11.24-11.29	Thanksgiving Break
14	T	12.1	De Certeau-Practice of Everyday Life (1247-1257) Hebdige-Subculture: The Meaning of Style (1258-1267)
	Th	12.3	Fiske-Television Culture (1274-1284) Krimms-Rap Music and Poetics of Identity (1285-1310) Annotated Bibliography Due Final TAP Deadline
15	M	12.9-12.15	Final Paper Due during Final Exam Time Slot