

ENG 3020: INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY AND CRITICAL THEORY
Spring 2013

Professor Sheffer
414 East Hall
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Office hours: W and F 2-4 pm

Required Texts:

Vincent B. Leitch, et al. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 2nd edition (W. Norton, 2010)

Ann B. Dobie, *Theory into Practice*, 3rd edition (Wadsworth, 2012)

Additional readings available on Canvas. (These are marked with an asterisk; further readings may be added at the discretion of the professor.)

Recommended but Not Required:

Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, 7th edition (Bedford/St. Martin's)

This course is designed to provide an introduction to major schools of thought and key figures of contemporary critical theory. We will discuss formalism, Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, gender and queer theory, critical race and postcolonial theories, poststructuralism, cultural studies, and more. Do not be intimidated by theory! This is an introduction to theory. I do not expect you to understand these concepts already. I DO expect you to gain a critical and theoretical vocabulary that will be applicable to a range of subjects and texts. I am always available during office hours and by appointment to discuss any questions or problems you may have with the material.

Since this is a seminar, I will not primarily be lecturing. I will provide context and explanation as necessary, but the burden lies on you to keep up with the reading, ask questions, make connections, and generally develop your critical and theoretical vocabulary. You are responsible for all assigned material, including **author headnotes**, **explanatory essays**, and outside **primary texts** such as films, short stories, and television shows. All readings are from the *Norton* unless otherwise indicated; items with an * are available on Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS

15% **A Critical theory reading notebook**, in which you analyze a passage from the assigned essay and then pose one question about the text. These responses are due in class on the day we discuss the assigned reading. The question must be substantial (about a paragraph) and analytical (discussing the meaning and implications of the reading). Your question should engage with a main idea within the reading, and/or explore applications and/or relationships to other texts. I will often provide specific prompts; be sure to listen in class and to check your email for these suggestions. Your questions must be typed (**Times, 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins**) and submitted in HARD COPY by the end of the class period. I will ask students to

share their questions every class period. Please see the instructions and sample response on Canvas.

These questions are due twice per week on the following schedule (except on MLK Day and exam days; then all students will submit on Wednesday and Friday of those weeks):

Students with last names beginning with A-K:	Mondays and Fridays
Students with last names beginning with L-Z:	Wednesdays and Fridays

In addition, you should create an ongoing list of **key vocabulary and definitions** that you will use to study for the exams. I will also call on students each period to contribute new terms and offer definitions (see class participation).

10% Presentations. Each class period two people will be assigned to give a presentation. Presenters must work together to plan the presentation, leading the class through key terms, explaining the central concepts in the assigned readings, as well as providing a game, creative application, or primary text to which the reading will be applied. The presenters will not submit questions (i.e., the reading notebook) on the day of their presentation, but they will post their key terms and definitions to **Discussion Board** within 24 hours of their presentation. If you need suggestions for the activity, see me in advance of your presentation date.

10% Class participation. Since this a seminar, regular, active participation is crucial. Participation includes: asking questions; offering to read passages at my request; volunteering key terms, definitions, and responses to the readings; and otherwise displaying consistent engagement with the course.

20% One 5-7-page paper. You will apply one of the readings or schools of theory to a primary text of your choosing (such as a novel, poem, or film). The essay should have all of the features of good writing: clear argumentation, proper MLA citation, and error-free prose. I encourage you to meet with me early to discuss topics and review drafts. Please also make use of the writing center to improve your writing skills.

15% Mid-term exam 1 (in-class), covering terms, definitions, theoretical concepts, authors.

15% Mid-term exam 2 (in-class), covering terms, definitions, theoretical concepts, authors.

15% Final Exam covering terms, definitions, theoretical schools, and essay questions from the entire semester.

All requirements need to be completed in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to complete ANY of the major assignments (exams, essay) will result in a failing grade for the course.

Absences: Since this course has requires participation and discussion, you are only allowed three absences without penalty. Each additional absence will result in a one-third-grade deduction, and six or more absences will result in failure of the course. Three tardies = one absence. Please reserve your absences for illness, family emergencies, and other unavoidable events. Any student who comes to class without books or without having done the reading will be asked to leave; these absences will affect your final grade like all other absences.

According to university guidelines, “excused absences” are limited to “verified illness, participation in athletic events or other group activities sponsored by the university, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, and religious observances.” If you have unavoidable obligations or commitments outside of class (such as the above), you must make prior arrangements with me regarding work that is due for that day.

NOTE ABOUT DISABILITY SERVICES

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact Disability Services at 419 372-8495 in room 413 South Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

COMPLETE SCHEDULE

All readings are from the *Norton* unless otherwise indicated; items with an * are available on Canvas as a .pdf file. Always read the entire essay, plus author headnotes. Be sure to bring the essays to class in hard copy.

AESTHETICS, FORMALISM, AND NEW CRITICISM

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| January 7 | Introduction |
| January 9 | Dobie, Intro and chapters 1-2
Norton anthology, “Introduction to Theory and Criticism” (1-13)
Kant, from <i>Critique of the Power of Judgment</i> |
| January 11 | Dobie, Chapter 3, “Formalism”
Norton anthology, “Introduction: FORMALISM” (17-18)
Brooks, from <i>The Well Wrought Urn</i>
Brooks, “The Formalist Critics”* |

MARXISM

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| January 14 | Dobie, Chapter 5, “Marxist Criticism”
Norton anthology, “Introduction: MARXISM” (13-15)
Hegel, from <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> [The Master/Slave Dialectic] |
| January 16 | Marx and Engels, from <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>
Marx and Engels, from <i>Capital</i> (all selections in <i>Norton</i>) |
| January 18 | Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological
Reproducibility” |
| January 21 | MLK Day |
| January 23 | Althusser, from <i>Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses</i> |

January 25 Review readings
Homework: application of reading to text

PSYCHOANALYSIS

January 28 Dobie, Chapter 4, “Psychological Criticism”
Norton anthology, “Introduction: PSYCHOANALYSIS” (15-17)
Freud, headnotes and selections from “The Interpretation of Dreams”;
“The Uncanny”

January 30 Lacan, “The Mirror Stage”

February 1 Lacan, “The Signification of the Phallus”

FEMINISM

February 4 Dobie, Chapter 6, “Feminist Criticism”
Norton anthology, “Introduction: FEMINISM” (24-26)
de Beauvoir, from “The Second Sex”
Kolodny, “Dancing through the Minefield”

February 6 B. Smith, “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism”

February 8 Gilbert and Gubar, from *The Madwoman in the Attic*

February 11 Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa”

February 13 Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”

February 15 **Mid-term Exam**

February 18 Film: *THE PERVERT’S GUIDE TO CINEMA*

February 20 Film: *THE PERVERT’S GUIDE TO CINEMA*

February 22 Film: *THE PERVERT’S GUIDE TO CINEMA*

QUEER THEORY

February 25 Norton anthology, “Introduction: QUEER THEORY” (26-27)
Butler, all selections from *Gender Trouble*

February 27 Discussion and Review of film and readings

March 1 Sedgwick, all selections from *Between Men and Epistemology of the Closet*

March 4	Spring Break
March 6	Spring Break
March 8	Spring Break
March 11	Foucault, all selections from <i>The History of Sexuality, Volume 1</i>

READER RESPONSE

March 13	Dobie, Chapter 7, “Reader-Response Criticism” Norton anthology, “Introduction: READER-RESPONSE” (18-21) Iser, “Interaction Between Text and Reader”
March 15	Review readings Homework: application of reading to text

STRUCTURALISM & SEMIOTICS

March 18	Dobie, Chapter 8, “Deconstructive Criticism” Norton anthology, “Introduction: STRUCTURALISM & SEMIOTICS” (21-22) Saussure, from <i>Course in General Linguistics</i>
March 20	Todorov, from <i>Structural Analysis of Narrative</i>
March 22	Review readings Homework: application of reading to text

POSTSTRUCTURALISM & DECONSTRUCTION

March 25	Norton anthology, “Introduction: POSTSTRUCTURALISM & DECONSTRUCTION” (22-24) Barthes, “The Death of the Author”
March 27	Derrida, from <i>Of Grammatology</i>
March 29	Baudrillard, from <i>The Precession of the Simulacrum</i>

CULTURAL STUDIES: NEW HISTORICISM

April 1	Dobie, Chapter 9, “Cultural Studies: New Historicism” Norton anthology, “Introduction: NEW HISTORICISMS and CULTURAL STUDIES” (29-33) Greenblatt, “Resonance and Wonder”
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- April 3 Hall, “Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies”
- April 5 Hebdige, from *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*
Hebdige, additional excerpt from “Subculture and Style”*

CULTURAL STUDIES: RACE & ETHNICITY

- April 8 **Mid-Term Exam 2**
- April 10 Dobie, Chapter 10, “More Cultural Studies: Postcolonialism and Multiculturalism”
Norton anthology, “Introduction: POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES AND RACE & ETHNICITY STUDIES” (27-29)
Gates, Jr., “Talking Black: Critical Signs of the Times”
- April 12 McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege” *

Essay Draft due via Canvas by SUNDAY, APRIL 14TH at MIDNIGHT.

CULTURAL STUDIES: POSTCOLONIALISM

- April 15 Vizenor, from *Manifest Manners**
- April 17 Fanon, from *The Wretched of the Earth*
- April 19 Said, from *Orientalism*
- April 22 Spivak, from *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*
- April 24 McClintock, “Postcolonialism and the Angel of Progress”*
- April 26 Wrap Up

FINAL ESSAY DUE Sunday, April 28th by 11:59 pm via Canvas

FINAL EXAM will follow the posted schedule set by the University