

ENG 210 Introduction to Literary Study

Fall, 2003

Call #: 8527
MW 2:30-3:50, Humanities 132

Instructor: Bret Benjamin (bret@albany.edu)
Office: Humanities 340 (442-4054)
Office Hours: Monday 12:15-1:15,
Wednesday 4:00-5:00, and by appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce the English major to a range of critical approaches to the study of literature and culture. The course has several primary objectives: 1) to provide a historical survey of important essays, authors, and “schools” of thought within literary theory (e.g. Formalism, Semiotics, Marxism, Feminism, etc.); 2) to explore complex questions about the state of English Studies in the contemporary historical moment; 3) to prepare English majors for upper-division courses where they may be expected to have a basic knowledge of theoretical approaches to literary and cultural study. As with any introductory survey, the selections we will read are necessarily limited—they offer brief glimpses at a number of broader movements and approaches rather than exhaustively exploring specific questions or authors in detail. Most notably, the course will explore a range of key theoretical concepts—meaning-making, representation, subjectivity, the relation between culture and society, etc.—examining the ways in which these issues are re-interpreted and re-imagined by various theorists. Over the course of the term students will learn to differentiate among modes of reading and by working with them begin to assess their uses and limits.

Prerequisite(s): completion of, or current enrollment in, a 100-level English literature course.

Required Texts

(All texts can be purchased at Mary Jane’s Bookstore, 215 Western Ave)

Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan, eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Revised Edition. Blackwell, 1998.

Stuart Hall, ed. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Sage Press, 1997.

Course Requirements

- 2 critical/theoretical papers based on in-class readings
- Theory Group Response Papers
- Daily Quizzes

Breakdown of Grades

Paper 1	25%
Paper 2	40%
Response Papers	15%
Quizzes/Assignments	10%
Participation	10%

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required. After three absences, I will lower your final class grade by one third of a letter for each additional class that you miss. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. You can miss three classes, and three classes only, before your grade begins to drop. If an extenuating situation arises such as a prolonged illness or a death in the family, you should contact me immediately and your absences may be excused as long as documentation from the Undergraduate Dean's office is obtained. It is your responsibility to keep track of your own absences.

Lateness Policy

You are late to class if you arrive after I have finished calling roll. Two late arrivals will be the equivalent of one absence. If you do arrive late, see me after class to make sure I have marked you present for the class.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a very serious academic offense and, as such, instances of plagiarized materials will be dealt with harshly. Depending on the severity and the details of the case, I reserve the right to file formal disciplinary action with the University (a process that often results in suspension or expulsion) and the right to impose a grading penalty that may go so far as to issue a failing grade for the entire course. DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.

From the University Guidelines on Scholastic Integrity:

Presenting as one's own work the work of another person (for example, the words, ideas, information, data, evidence, organizing principles, or style of presentation of someone else). Plagiarism includes paraphrasing or summarizing without acknowledgment, submission of another student's work as one's own, the purchase of prepared research or completed papers or projects, and the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else. Failure to indicate accurately the extent and precise nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly, or creative indebtedness, and the consequences for violating University regulations.

Examples of plagiarism include: failure to acknowledge the source(s) of even a few phrases, sentences, or paragraphs; failure to acknowledge a quotation or paraphrase of paragraph-length sections of a paper; failure to acknowledge the source(s) of a major idea or the source(s) for an ordering principle central to the paper's or project's structure; failure to acknowledge the source (quoted, paraphrased, or summarized) of major sections or passages in the paper or project; the unacknowledged use of several major ideas or extensive reliance on another person's data, evidence, or critical method; submitting as one's own work, work borrowed, stolen, or purchased from someone else.

Schedule of Readings

Week One

9/3 Introductions

Week Two

9/8 Eagleton, "What is Literature?"
Bohannon, "Shakespeare in the Bush"
9/10 Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" (LT 17-23),
Maria-Britton, "The Wreck of the Enid Rose"
Argueta, "Microbus to San Salvador"

Week Three

9/15 Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" (LT 32-44)
9/17 Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (LT 76-90)

Week Four

9/22 Barthes, "Myth Today" (LT 1119-1134)
9/24 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (LT 464-487)

Week Five

9/29 Hall, "The Work of Representation" (R 15-41)
10/1 Hall, "The Work of Representation" (R 41-63)

Week Six

10/6 **No Class**
10/8 workshop paper drafts

Week Seven

10/13 **Paper 1 Due** Marx, *The German Ideology* (LT 250-255)
10/15 Marx, *Capital* (LT 268-276), Gramsci, "Hegemony" (LT 277)
London, "The Apostate"

Week Eight

10/20 Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (LT 294-304)
10/22 Stuart Hall, "The Rediscovery of Ideology" (LT 1050-1064)
Melville, "Bartelby the Scrivener"
Wayman, "The Country of Everyday: Literary Criticism"

Week Nine

10/27 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
10/29 Max Horkheimer Theodor Adorno "The Culture Industry" (LT 1037-1041)
Janice Radway *Reading the Romance* (LT 1042-1049)

Week Ten

11/3 Hall, "Genre and Gender" (R 339-364)
11/5 Hall, "Genre and Gender" (R 365-384)

Week Eleven

11/10 Judith Fetterly, "On the Politics of Literature" (LT 561-569)
Helene Cixous "Sorties" (LT578-584)
11/12 Audre Lorde "Age, Race, Class, and Sex" (LT 630-636)
Teresa de Lauretis "The Technology of Gender" (713-721)
Mahasweta Devi, "Draupadi"

Week Twelve

11/17 Deleuze and Guattari, from *A Thousand Plateaus* (LT 514-523)

11/19 Lyotard, from *The Postmodern Condition* (LT 509-513)

Week Thirteen

11/24 Edward Said *Orientalism* (LT 873-886)

11/26 **Thanksgiving—No Class**

Week Fourteen

12/1 Hall, "The Poetics and Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures" (R 153-184)

12/3 Hall, "The Poetics and Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures" (R 153-184)
Gordimer, "The Train from Rhodesia"

Week Fifteen

12/8 Theory Groups—workshop Paper 2

12/10 **Paper 2 Due**