

ENG 710 Textual Studies I: Survey

Fall, 2006

Call #: 15212

Mon 4:15-7:05, ED 022

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<http://www.albany.edu/faculty/bret/710/>

Course Description

This course offers an introductory exposure to critical terms and problems involved in advanced work in textual, critical, literary, and cultural studies. We will examine the historical emergence and evolution of “English” as a discipline, surveying a range of movements and methodologies that have been influential in shaping the current modes of critical discourse and interpretation being pursued within the field today. Our mapping of the field will pay close attention to the interventions and contestations posed by recent work in, among other areas of scholarship, cultural studies, post-colonial/globalization, gender. The aim of this survey will be to provide members of the class with the analytic tools by which to articulate a composite framework for pursuing English studies in intellectual, critical, and professional terms

Required Texts

Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature*

Terry Eagleton: *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Second Edition)

Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Second Edition)

All books available at Mary Jane's Books, 215 Western Ave.

Additional Readings, dictated by the directions that our discussions take, will be added periodically to the course E-Reserves page.

Course Requirements:

Response Papers

For each week's readings, you will be responsible for posting a short (500-750 word) response to the course website.

Class Presentation

Once during the semester, each of you will be responsible to introduce one of the theoretical readings for that class session. You will present a short (15 minute max) overview of the material, framing the relevant questions and issues that arise from the readings, and initiating class discussion. On the week that you present, rather than posting a response paper, I will ask that you post a set of discussion questions/issues to the class website.

Critical Conversations

Theory surveys can sometimes make it seem like a new canon of classics has emerged to replace an older one. At its least interesting, theory functions like a toolbox of terms and approaches to be “applied” to any textual object. To counter this tendency, and to insist that you begin engaging with contemporary scholarship in the field, I will ask you to follow the recent debates of one major journal within your area of specialization. You will read through two years of back issues (6-8 total issues) from the journal of your choice,

keeping a log of your investigation. This log will be turned in along with a short essay (8-10 pages) identifying and addressing gaps within a specific scholarly debate. A more detailed paper description will be distributed.

Individual Research Project

You will also write a short research project (10-12 pages) that engages in a more extended investigation of one of the theorists we read in class (possibly the one on which you present). For this project, you will need to read and study a more substantial selection of your chosen theorist's writings, as well as survey scholarship about the theorist. Your essay will not simply be an overview, but rather will develop an argument that addresses the critical stakes and value of this theorist's work. A more detailed paper description will be distributed.

Schedule of Readings

9/11 **Introductions**

9/18 **Marx**

Selections of Hegel and Marx (RR 643-673)
"A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (E-Res)
"Manifesto to the Communist Party" (E-Res)
Williams "Base Superstructure" (E-Res)

9/25 **Formalisms**

Eagleton Introduction and Ch.1
Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (E-Res)
Leavis, from *Revaluation*, "Introduction," and "Keats"(E-Res)
Richards, from *Practical Criticism* (E-Res)
Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" (RR, 15-21)
Brooks, "The Language of Paradox" (RR 28-39)

10/2 **No Class**

10/9 **Disciplinary History**

Graff, *Professing Literature*

10/16 **Structuralism**

Eagleton, Ch.3
Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics" (RR 59-72)
Barthes, "Mythologies" (81-90)
Bakhtin, "Discourse and the Novel" (674-686)

10/23 **Deconstruction**

Eagleton, Ch. 4
Derrida, "Difference," "Of Grammatology," "Semiology and Grammatology" (RR, 278-339)
Johnson, "Writing" (340-347)

- 10/30 **Critical Conversations**
Critical Conversations Paper Draft Due
- 11/6 **Psychoanalytic Foundations**
Eagleton, Ch. 5
Selections of Freud (RR 397-440)
Lacan, "The Mirror Stage" (RR 441-446)
- 11/13 **The Ideological Subject**
Foucault, "Discipline and Punish" (RR 549-566)
Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (E-Res)
Hall, "The Problem of Ideology" (E-Res)
- 11/20 **Mass Culture**
Benjamin, "Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (E-Res)
Horkheimer and Adorno, "The Culture Industry as Mass Deception" (E-Res)
Jameson, "Reification and Utopia" (E-Res)
- 11/27 **Reading Gender**
Rubin, "Traffic in Women" (RR 770-794)
Foucault, "The History of Sexuality" (RR 892-899)
Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" (RR 900-911)
Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Epistemologies of the Closet" (RR 912-921)
- 12/4 **Reading Empire**
Said, "Jane Austen and Empire" (RR 1112-11125)
Spivak, from *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, revisions of "Can the Subaltern Speak" (E-Res)
Hardt and Negri from *Empire* (E-Res)
- 12/11 **Present and Future Formations?**
Critical Conversations Paper Due
Critical Enquiry Vol. 30 n.2. (on-line)
- 12/18 Research Projects Due