**Literary Theory (ENGL 4/5366)**

**The (mad!) science of reading!!**



**Instructor**: Dr. Glenn Jellenik **E-mail**:gjellenik@uca.edu **Office**: 430 Irby **Time:** T 6-9 (CRN 23468/9) **Office Hours**: TR 9:30-10:30, or by appointment **Place:** Irby 313

Course Description: Simply put, this course will work through a selection of major literary and cultural theory in order to identify and explore some of the problems, issues, and questions that animate theoretical discussion among literary scholars today. In essence, we will engage with a series of philosophical reading strategies designed to systematically process the ways we make meaning when we produce and consume texts.

**Learning Outcome:** Make no mistake, you will sprain your brain. Several times, at least. You will regularly practice pushing back on texts that push you. The primary outcome of this course will be a greatly enhanced ability to read, confront, and process extremely challenging texts. Specifically, you will develop a practical and working knowledge of some of the major literary theories that drive contemporary literary discourse. In keeping with Cicero’s dictum that he had never adequately thought about a subject until he wrote on it, you also will organize that mental processing into two extended essays, as well as weekly 1 page responses to the readings.

**My Policies.**

**Participation**: It comprises 15% of your final grade. That means that I expect everybody to participate in our discussions. Seriously, you do *not* want to listen to 150 straight minutes of my talking head every Tuesday night. That said, we will explore a wide range of texts and topics in class; not only would it be impossible for all of you to agree on everything, it would be boring. I highly encourage you to disagree with one another, and I highly encourage you to disagree with me. All I ask (actually, I don’t ask, I demand) is that you disagree with one another (and me) in a **constructive** manner that fosters conversation rather than shuts it down. Show respect for one another’s views, opinions and ideas.

In keeping with the idea that this is a safe space to share and test out ideas, I encourage you all to speak to one another in our discussions. That is, not all comments have to go through me at the front of the room. Let ideas bounce around the room—address one another directly. This will be best accomplished if you learn each other’s names. If done properly, we can all join together in a lit-theory brother and sisterhood. We will now join hands and sing Kumbaya.

Small but not insignificant point: In order to truly participate productively in class, you need to have done the assigned readings. If it becomes obvious that you haven’t been doing the readings—and it’s not difficult to tell—I’ll be forced to administer annoying quizzes at the beginning of each class. Don’t make me administer annoying quizzes. Do the readings.

**Attendance:** If you intend to make a premium grade (A or B), you should attend class as frequently as possible, preferably every class day. Your final grade for this course will drop two points for every absence after two, except in rare situations. Infrequent absences caused by illness or accident, family death, official university functions, or inclement weather are acceptable, but you need to bring documentation of the reason to receive this consideration. If you should miss 4 or more classes, I will strongly recommend that you drop the class.

**Late arrivals/Early departures:** Avoid these at all costs; if it’s unavoidable, be as considerate as possible to your classmates.

**Cell Phones:** Call it a pet peeve, but cell phone interruptions drive me *crazy*—seriously, they give me facial tics. Please preserve the illusion of my sanity; turn all cell phones off before class.

**Late Work:** I do not accept late work. All assignments are due on the day indicated on the syllabus, at the start of class. Period.

**Assignments and Grade value:**

\*Essay 1 (3/11) 20% \*Essay 2 (4/29) 40% SWAs (short writing assignments) 15% Presentation 10% Participation 15%

\*You cannot pass the class without completing **both** essays.

# Grades: Ahh, grading! Here’s the rub. One of the major sticking points between teacher and student comes down to a potential disparity in goals. My goal is that you develop as a thinker, reader and writer. Often (I didn’t say always, so don’t be offended!), your goal is to obtain a grade that will make you happy. See the potential conflict? Honestly, if I thought that handing out A’s were the best way to improve your thinking/reading/writing, I’d do it. Unfortunately, everything about your academic training to this point has worked in an opposite direction. In our system, I tie a carrot (grade) to a stick and dangle it in front of you as you pull the millstone. Sorry. I didn’t invent the system, but it’s where we work. On the bright side, in my experience, it’s relatively rare for the grade not to reflect the effort of the student.

Extra credit opportunities **may** be offered throughout the semester, but they exist in order to enhance your engagement with the college and our material, not to explicitly improve a student’s grade (though, of course, they will improve your grade). What I’m saying here is, don’t ask me to devise extra extra credit opportunities to make up for missed or poor work.

**University Policies.**

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act:**The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans withDisabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

Students should familiarize themselves with all policies included in the Student Handbook, particularly the **Sexual Harassment Policy** and **Academic Policies**. You are responsible for acting in accordance with these university policies. If you have any questions about these policies and how they pertain to you, do not hesitate to ask me for clarification.

**Emergency Procedures:** Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Course Texts:** *Literary Theory: an Anthology* (Rivkin & Ryan, 2nd Edition) *Frankenstein*  *The Bluest Eye*  Supplemental handouts

**Course Schedule**

Week 1: Welcome!

T 1/14

Week 2: **Structuralism**

 T 1/21. **Read:** Ferdinand de Saussure, “Course in General Linguistics”

 Roland Barthes, “Mythologies”

Week 3: **Post-stucturalism/Deconstruction**

 T 1/28. **Read:** Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Will to Power”

 Martin Heidegger, “Identity and Difference”

 Jacques Derrida, “Differance” & “Of Grammatology”

Week 4: **Post-modernism**

 M 2/3 **Screening:** *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*

T 2/4. **Read:** Jean-Francois Lyotard, “The Postmodern Condition”

 Jean Baudrillard, “Simulacra and Simulations”

 **Recommended Screening:** *The Matrix*

Week 5: **Psychoanalysis**

 T 2/11. **Read:** Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” & “Beyond the Pleasure Principal”

 Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I”

 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Week 6: **Historicisms**

 T 2/18. **Read.** Michel Foucault, “Discipline and Punish”

 Nancy Armstrong: “Some Call it Fiction: On the Politics of Domesticity”

Week 7: **Marxism**

 T 2/25: **Read:** Karl Marx, “Grundrisse,” “The German Ideology,” “Wage Labor and Capital,” & “Capital”

 Antonio Gramsci, “Hegemony”

Week 8: **Bakhtin!**

 T 3/4. **Read:** Mikhail Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel” & “Rabelais and his World”

Week 9: **Feminism/Gender Studies**

 \*T 3/11. **Read:**Helene Cixous, “The Newly Born Woman”

 Luce Irigaray, “The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine” & “Women on the Market”

 Gilbert & Gubar, “The Madwoman in the Attic”

 \*Due: Essay 1

Week 10: **Feminism/Gender Studies**

 T 3/18: **Read:** Michel Foucault, “The History of Sexuality”

 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Epistemology of the Closet”

 Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

Week 11: **Spring Break**

 T 3/25

Week 12: **Race/Ethinc Theory**

 T 4/1. **Read:** Shelley Fisher Fishkin, “Interrogating ‘Whiteness’”

 Toni Morrison, “Playing in the Dark”

 Gloria Anzaldua, “Borderlands/La Frontera”

Week 13: **Post-colonial Studies**

 T 4/8. **Read:** Edward Said, “Jane Austen and Empire”

 Jamaica Kincaid, “A Small Place”

 **Recommended Screening:** *Avatar* and/or *Burn*

Week 14: **Cultural Studies**

 T 4/15: **Read:** Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

 Horkheimer & Adorno, “The Culture Industry as Mass Deception”

**Recommended Screenings**: *Being John Malkovich* & *Adaptation.*

Week 15: **Cultural Studies**

 T 4/22. **Read:** John Fiske, “Culture, Ideology, Interpellation” & “Television Culture”

 Adam Krims, “Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity”

\*Final Essay **Due:** T 4/29.