**ENGL 4345: Topics in Critical Theory: The Myth of Community**

**Spring 2014**

**Instructor:** Professor Kevin Porter

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**Office Hours:** TR 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m., and by appointment

**Section Information:** ENGL 4345-001

**Place and Time of Class Meetings:** PH 300, TR 12:30 p.m.-1:50 p.m.

**Course Description**

This reading-intensive course has three major goals: (1) to examine how the notions of “community” and “society” have been theorized and applied; (2) to draw into the conversation some innovative and provocative work from historians, philosophers, sociologists about the role of discourse (and perhaps its diminishing efficacy) in imagining, and strengthening, and preserving the sense of the “communal”; and (3) to promote reflection on our own beliefs about, participation in, and complicity with “community” and “society.” The major texts for the course are Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, Pierre Bourdieu’s *Language and Symbolic Power*, and Jean-Luc Nancy’s *The Inoperative Community*.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Students should be able to:

* employ proper grammar, punctuation, spelling in writing
* employ standard MLA or APA guidelines for formatting assignments and citation
* write and speak with clarity to communicate effectively
* respond critically to course material, using synthesis and analysis
* assimilate existing information to formulate new ideas
* develop active listening skills including paraphrasing and synthesizing ideas expressed in class
* develop methods and strategies for analyzing and interpreting texts
* evaluate an oral, visual, or written argument for sound or faulty (fallacious) reasoning
* compare and contrast major themes, issues, or topics in more than one text
* respond critically to the writing of others in primary and secondary sources
* provide a general overview of various attempts to define “community”

**Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials**

* Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 2006. Print. [ISBN: 978-1844670864]
* Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001. Print. [ISBN: 978-0674510418]
* Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Inoperative Community*. Ed. Peter Connor. Trans. Peter Connor et al. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1991. Print. [ISBN: 978-0816619245]

**Major Assignments**

All students must submit 25 reading cards (described below). In addition, students have a choice between completing (1) two essays (6-8 pages each) and a cumulative take-home final exam or (2) one essay (6-8 pages) and a course project (described in a separate handout). *Unless other arrangements are made, the essays, final exams, and course projects are to be submitted to me via email attachment (preferably in MS Word). Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of -10% per half hour.*

**Grading Policy**

Your course grade will be calculated as follows, depending on the option you choose:

Reading Cards 20% Reading Cards 20%

Essay #1 30% Essay #1 or #2 30%

Essay #2 30% Course Project 50%

Final Exam 20%

*A grade of “Incomplete” will be assigned only under documented cases of extreme medical, family, or personal emergency; in all cases, the incomplete must be resolved by the start of the next 15-week semester or else the grade will be changed automatically to an “F.”*

**Attendance Policy**

This is a senior-level course; consequently, attendance is mandatory, and active participation is expected. Attendance will be taken through the use of reading cards. At the start of each class, you must submit an index card that contains the following: your name, the date, a 1-2 sentence summary of the scheduled reading, and a thoughtfully constructed question (e.g., no true/false or yes/no or quiz-like questions) about the day’s assigned reading.

Excluding the first day of class, we have 29 scheduled meetings that may involve newly assigned readings;however, since it is not always possible to attend class, I will expect from you a maximum of 25 cards, which means that you are allowed four absences without penalty.Additional cards will count as .5% extra credit; so, if you have perfect attendance and turn in the required cards, you will raise your final grade by 2%.

Please note:

* You must be present in class in order to submit reading card; I will not accept cards that are submitted via email, put in my mailbox, shoved under my office door, etc., even if are turned in early.
* If you are late for class by no more than 20 minutes, please hand your card to me as soon as you enter the classroom. If I have not yet collected the reading cards, you will receive full credit; if I have already collected them, you will receive half-credit.
* Cards submitted later than 20 minutes after class has started will not receive credit; if you are uncertain about how late you are, please ask me after class.
* Cards that explain why you have not written a summary and question will not receive credit!
* If no new reading is required for class, a sign-in sheet, distributed at the beginning of class, will be used in lieu of a reading card.
* If two or more readings are required for class, you should only summarize one of them for your reading card.

**Schedule of Assignments**

Note: I reserve the right to modify, as necessary, the readings and other assignments listed on this syllabus. All readings marked \*\*\* will be made available for download from one of my MavSpace folders. A “ticket” to access the folder will be sent to you via email. You should download all of the files to your computer and then print them as soon as possible.

**Introduction to the Course**

1/14 Introduction: What Is Critical Theory?

**“Counterfeit” and “Genuine” Communities**

1/16 \*\*\* Freie, *Counterfeit Community*, Chapter 1 (“Identifying the Counterfeit”)

1/21 \*\*\* Freie, *Counterfeit Community*, Chapter 2 (“Genuine Community”)

**Imagined Communities**

1/23 Anderson, Chapter 1

1/28 Anderson, Chapter 2

1/30 Anderson, Chapter 3

2/4 Anderson, Chapter 4

**Short Essay #1 assigned**

2/6 Anderson, Chapter 5

2/11 Anderson, Chapter 6

2/13 Anderson, Chapter 7

2/18 Anderson, Chapter 8

2/20 Anderson, Chapter 9

2/25 Anderson, Chapter 10

2/27 Anderson, Chapter 11

3/4 Bourdieu, Chapter 1

3/6 Bourdieu, Chapter 2

3/11 Spring break

3/13 Spring break

**Language and Community**

3/18 Bourdieu, Chapter 3

**Short Essay #1 due by the start of class**

**Short Essay #2 assigned**

3/20 Bourdieu, Chapter 4

3/25 Bourdieu, Chapter 5

3/27 Bourdieu, Chapter 6

4/1 Bourdieu, Chapter 7

4/3 Bourdieu, Chapter 8

4/8 Bourdieu, Chapter 9

**Inoperative Communities**

4/10 Nancy, “The Inoperative Community”

4/15 Continued discussion of Nancy, “The Inoperative Community”

4/17 Nancy, “Myth Interrupted”

4/22 Nancy, “‘Literary Communism’”

4/24 Nancy, “Shattered Love”

4/29 Nancy, “Of Divine Places”

5/1 Continued discussion of Nancy, “Of Divine Places”

**Paper 2 due by the start of class**

**Final exam assigned**

**Note: Final examinations and course projects are due by 1:00 p.m. on Monday, May 5th.**

**Miscellaneous Policies**

**Classroom Decorum:** I treat students with utmost respect and courtesy; when teaching, conferencing, and grading, you and your work will have my full attention. In return, I ask the same from all of you: Please turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, books from other classes, etc. You may use a laptop to take notes during class, so long as you are mindful enough not to disturb the students around you.

**Subject Librarian:** Rafia Mirza is the Reference and Instruction Librarian for English, History, and Communication. She is available to answer questions about how to access and use the resources provided by the library; and she is also happy to meet with students for a one-on-one research consultations. She may be contacted at rafia@uta.edu or 817-272-7428.

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center, Room 411 in the Central Library, will assist you with any writing assignment while you are a student at UT-Arlington. You may schedule appointments by calling 817-272-2601, by following directions listed at www.uta.edu/owl/appointments, or by visiting the Writing Center. If you come to the Writing Center without an appointment, you will be helped on a first-come, first-served basis as tutors become available. Writing Center tutors are carefully chosen and trained, and they can assist you with any aspect of your writing, from understanding an assignment to revising an early draft to polishing a final draft. However, the Writing Center is not an editing service; tutors will not correct your grammar or rewrite your assignment for you, but they will help you learn to solve your grammatical and organizational problems.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student’s responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at 817-272-3364.

**Academic Integrity:** It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. According to the UT System Regents’ Rule 50101, §2.2, “Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.”

**Student Support Services Available**: The University of Texas at Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. These resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals to resources for any reason, students may contact the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107 or visit www.uta.edu/resources for more information.

**Electronic Communication Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University “MavMail” address as the sole official means of communication with students. MavMail is used to remind students of important deadlines, advertise events and activities, and permit the University to conduct official transactions exclusively by electronic means. For example, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation are now sent to students through the MavMail system. All students are assigned a MavMail account. ***Students are responsible for checking their MavMail regularly.*** Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/email/. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active even after they graduate from UT Arlington. To obtain your NetID or for logon assistance, visit https://webapps.uta.edu/oit/selfservice/. If you are unable to resolve your issue from the Self-Service website, contact the Helpdesk at helpdesk@uta.edu.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory will be asked to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS) about the course and how it was taught. Instructions on how to access the SFS system will be sent directly to students through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback data is required by state law; student participation in the SFS program is voluntary.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.