

# **MODL 5310-001: Theories of Literature and Culture**

**Fall 2015**

**Department of Modern Languages  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
Christopher Conway, Ph.D.**

This class is about methodology. It's about thinking about texts in a variety of different ways. It's about looking at something from one direction, then, to use a spatial and material metaphor, turning it upside down to look at it from a different direction.

The message of this class is that there is not one way to define the meaning of the text. Rather, our interpretation of a text is defined by the method or set of concepts we choose to use to analyze it.

Our class is about changing gears, about shifting from one theory to the next, and about going from summaries of ideas (synthesis) to putting ideas into concrete action and producing new, creative interpretations.

The best thing you can do to succeed in this class is understand that what this is ultimately all about is *critical thinking*. Critical thinking is “the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking...” A critical thinker “raises vital questions and problems,” and “gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret...” And most importantly: “thinks openmindedly within alternative systems of thought.”<sup>1</sup>

This is our job and responsibility in this class. Let's get to work.

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<sup>1</sup> These quotes are from page 3 of Richard Paul and Linda Elder's *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools*, published by The Foundation for Critical Thinking. I recommend this mini book to each one of my students.

## **MODL 5310: Theories of Literature and Culture**

**Instructor(s):** Christopher Conway

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**Faculty Profile:** <https://www.uta.edu/profiles/christopher-conway>

**Office Hours:** Thursday 1:30-2:30 and by Appointment.

**Section Information:** MODL 5310-001

**Time and Place of Class Meetings:** Mondays, 5-7:50, TH 01

**Description of Course Content:** Readings, analyses, and applications of recent literary and cultural theories. Particular attention to how such theories may serve to focus or refocus literature as cultural production. Required for the M.A. in French, German, and Spanish.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students demonstrate an ability to clearly define major literary and cultural theories and methodologies. Method of assessment: in-class examinations, writing exercises, and group presentations.
2. Students successfully apply said theories and methodologies to literature and films through classroom exercises, written assignments, and exams. Method of assessment: in-class examinations, writing exercises, and group presentations.
3. Students acquire an understanding of how to successfully approach studying for the literary and cultural portions of the M.A. Exam in Modern Languages. Method of assessment: in-class examinations modeled on M.A. Exam in Modern Languages.

### **Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials (available at UTA bookstore):**

- *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) by Robert Dale Parker.

- *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez.
- *The Sentimental Education* by Gustave Flaubert.

### **Descriptions of major assignments and examinations:**

**Midterm Examination (1 assignment):** Consists of two sets of two questions; each student picks one question from each set to answer in essay form. Each of the two answers will be composed of a definition of a theory and its application to a short story made available one week prior to the exam. The exam is modeled on the format of the M.A. examination in the Department of Modern Languages. Each exam will be assessed for two elements: the ability to synthesize and clearly explain/define a theoretical methodology, and the successful/convincing application of said theory to an assigned story. The stories assigned for the exam will not have been covered in class.

**Final Examination (1 assignment).** Same format as Midterm Examination. New stories will be provided one week in advance of the examination. As above, none of the stories will have been covered in class.

**Response Papers (6 assignments).** A response paper is a short, single spaced critical response to the reading that ranges from 400 (hard minimum) and 600 words. Response papers are an opportunity to think through a conceptual problem –in this case the application of a new theory to an assigned short story. Our response papers will not carry a lot of weight: they are designed as a tool to help you think critically. There will be six response papers before the midterm, but I will drop the lowest scored one.

**Team Exercises (2 assignments).** For this assignment, a group of students applies a given theory to the analysis of one of the classic novels assigned in the class. Each group will have up to 15 minutes to do a PowerPoint presentation on their theory.

**Attendance:** At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I have established the following attendance policy: students are permitted two absences without penalty or need for explanation. Upon the third absence, the student will have six points deducted from their final grade. Students should use their "penalty free" two absences for emergencies only.

### **Grading:**

- Written homework needs to be carefully prepared and presented (quality spelling, grammar, attention to formatting instructions.) Work that does not meet these guidelines will be penalized. I encourage students with less practice in English to partner with a classmate or classmates to revise homework for grammar and spelling. Writing with more than 3 spelling mistakes will lose 10 points. Writing that is hard to understand or with poor syntax (more than two sentences) will be penalized 10 points.
- Exams will be a little more lenient with regards to spelling but it is imperative that your responses be well organized and understandable.

- Team Exercises will be scored based on accuracy of content and clarity/organization of delivery. Grade will be calculated based on a combination of professor's score and scores anonymous collected from other students in the class, who will also judge each presentation (except theirs.)

Each Exam is 25%= 50% of the final grade or 50 points of the final grade.

Each Response Paper is 5%=25% of the final grade or 25 points of final grade. \*There are six response papers but I will drop the lowest scored one.

Team Exercise 1: 10%. or 10 points of the Final Grade.

Team Exercise 2: 15%. or 15 points of the Final Grade.

Total Maximum of the above: 100% or 100 points.

Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor) if their performance drops below satisfactory levels; see "Student Support Services," below.

**Make-up Exams, Exceptions, Extensions, Tardy Work:** If I excuse a student from taking the midterm exam with his or her classmates, or if I agree to a make up exam for a student who has missed an exam, I reserve the right to schedule the exam at my convenience, and to change the subject matter (stories) covered in the exam. Students should not miss the original midterm. For the final exam, the same principles apply, but I also reserve the right to give an incomplete if I cannot accommodate a student's exam before final grades are due. In such a case, a student would have to take the final exam in January, under conditions that parallel the experience of his or her classmates for the original exam (for example, only having 1 week to assess and review assigned stories for the exam.) Assignments that are turned in late (response papers) will be graded down (10 point deduction.) I reserve the right to change the assignment prompt if necessary. For the team exercises, successful collaboration is imperative. If there are interpersonal problems, I expect each team to solve them democratically and via consensus. I should not have to hear about any problem between you. I am waiting for a final product; you have a responsibility to make your team work.

**Expectations for Out-of-Class Study:** A general rule of thumb is this: for every credit hour earned, a student should spend 3 hours per week working outside of class. Hence, a 3-credit course might have a minimum expectation of 9 hours of reading, study, etc.

**Grade Grievances:** Any appeal of a grade in this course must follow the procedures and deadlines for grade-related grievances as published in the current University Catalog. Please see: <http://catalog.uta.edu/academicregulations/grades/#graduatetext>.

**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. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Disability Accommodations:** UT 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)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. 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 disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the **Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)**. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

**The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364.  
**Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS)** [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671.

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](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit [uta.edu/eos](http://uta.edu/eos). For information regarding Title IX, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).*

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey

(SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**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, which is located to the right and up the stairs. After ascending the stairs in a calm and orderly fashion, turn right again to clear the building. Do not use the elevator in the case of an emergency. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Student Support Services:** UT 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. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>

**The English Writing Center (411LIBR):** Hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mondays-Thursdays, 9 am to 3 pm Fridays and Noon to 5 pm Saturdays and Sundays. Walk In **Quick Hits** sessions during all open hours Mon-Thurs. Register and make appointments online at <http://uta.mywconline.com>. Classroom Visits, Workshops, and advanced services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for detailed information.

#### **Library Resources Available to Students to Assist Them with Coursework:**

Library Home Page.....	<a href="http://www.uta.edu/library">http://www.uta.edu/library</a>
Subject Guides .....	<a href="http://libguides.uta.edu">http://libguides.uta.edu</a>
Subject Librarians .....	<a href="http://www.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php">http://www.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php</a>
Course Reserves.....	<a href="http://pulse.uta.edu/vwebv/enterCourseReserve.do">http://pulse.uta.edu/vwebv/enterCourseReserve.do</a>
Library Tutorials .....	<a href="http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php">http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php</a>
Connecting from Off- Campus .....	<a href="http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus">http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus</a>

Ask A Librarian ..... <http://ask.uta.edu>

**Librarian to Contact for Assistance:** Diane Shepelwhich ([dianec@uta.edu](mailto:dianec@uta.edu))

### Course Schedule

*“As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. – Christopher Conway*

1. Week 1: August 31: Introduction to the Course. Overview of New Criticism. Robert Dale Parker, 1-42.
2. Week 2: September 7: Structuralism and Deconstruction. Dale Parker, 43-83; Alice Munro, “Miles City, Montana” 374-394 (Available on Reserve.) Response Paper 1: New Criticism Reading of “Miles City, Montana.”
3. Week 3: September 14: Psychoanalysis. Dale Parker, 111-146; Alice Munro, “Miles City, Montana” 374-394 (Available on Reserve.) Response Paper 2: Structuralist Reading of “Miles City, Montana.”
4. Week 4: September 21: Feminism. Dale Parker, 148-183; Alice Munro, “Miles City, Montana” 374-394 (Available on Reserve.) Response Paper 3: Psychoanalytic Reading of “Miles City, Montana.”
5. Week 5: September 28: Marxism. Dale Parker, 220-257; Alice Munro, “Miles City, Montana” 374-394 (Available on Reserve.) Response Paper 4: Feminist Reading of “Miles City, Montana.”
6. Week 6: October 5: Historicism and Cultural Studies. Dale Parker, 259-283; Ursula K. LeGuin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (Available on Reserve.) Response Paper 5: Marxist Reading of “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” by Ursula K. LeGuin.
7. Week 7: October 12: Queer Studies. Dale Parker, 185-219. Ursula K. LeGuin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (Available on Reserve.) Response Paper 6: Queer Studies Reading of “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” by Ursula K. LeGuin.
8. Week 8: October 19: **Midterm Examination.**
9. Week 9: October 26: Postcolonialism and Race Studies. Dale Parker, 285-327. García Márquez, Chapter 1.
10. Week 10: November 2: One Hundred Years of Solitude. García Márquez, Chapters 2-12.
11. Week 11: November 9: One Hundred Years of Solitude. García Márquez, Chapters 13-20.

12. Week 12: November 16: One Hundred Years of Solitude. **Team Exercises on García Márquez: Marxism, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, Postcolonialism.** The Sentimental Education. Flaubert, Chapter 1-2.
13. Week 13: November 23: The Sentimental Education. Flaubert, pages TBA.
14. Week 14: November 30: The Sentimental Education. Flaubert, pages TBA.
15. Week 15: December 7: **Team Exercises on Flaubert: Marxism, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, Postcolonialism.**

**Final Examination: December 14: 8:15 PM-10:45.**

**Emergency Phone Numbers:** [Optional but strongly recommended] In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381