

ENGL 5300: Theory and Practice in English Studies

Instructor: Cedrick May

Office 605 Carlisle Hall

Office Hours: Tu/Th: 11:00-12:00

Office Phone: 272-2692

Email: cedrick.may@uta.edu

Semester: Fall 2016

Class Time: Tuesdays 6:00-8:50pm

Classroom: Carlisle 212

[My Faculty Profile](#)

Course Description

This course will explore the various theoretical movements that emerged during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. We will examine some of the works of the main theorists of the various movements. Beginning with Friedrich Nietzsche, we will examine the emergence of a modern set of critical theories that are interdisciplinary and reveal reality to be much more rich and complex than the “common sense” perception. Through this interrogation of common sense notions of reality, we will see how structuralists and later poststructuralist and deconstructionist theorists refute the classical understanding of literature as mimetic—mirroring life—and instead focus attention on language and the politics of representation. We will also examine the intersections between poststructuralist thought and other areas of literary study, including psychoanalysis, feminism, post-colonial, and post-humanist studies.

Texts:

The three required books for this class are:

- [The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism](#) (ed. Vincent B. Leitch.)
- [The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music](#) (Nietzsche)
- [The Poetics of Space](#) (Gaston Bachelard)

Course Objectives

- To develop a knowledge of some of the key concepts in critical and literary theory.
- To understand the historical and philosophical tradition from which these theories developed.
- To hone analytical and critical thinking skills.
- To improve analytical and critical writing skills.

Course Requirements:

14 four-page Analytical Papers (70%)

1 Class Presentation (30%)

Choosing a Text

Early in the first week of classes, each student will choose a text that they will do critical readings of using the theoretical models read in this course. Please choose a text that you

are already very familiar with. You will need to email me and clear your choice prior to writing your first analysis. You will be analyzing this text for the entire semester, so make sure it is something you can live with for fifteen weeks!

Weekly Analysis Paper

Each Tuesday you will turn in **a four-page (~1500-1550 words)** analytical paper that will be a reading of a text of your choosing through the theorist/critical theory for that week. For instance, if you choose *Moby Dick* as your text for the semester, then your analytical paper for week 8 will be a psychoanalytic reading of the book using Freud's "Interpretation of Dreams" or "The 'Uncanny'" as the basis for your analytical interpretation of the novel or parts of the novel. In week 9, the theoretical model you will use for interpreting the novel would be Lacan's "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious," and for week 10, Fanon's "The Negro and Language," and so forth. The first paragraph of each paper should contain a thesis statement and briefly explain the theoretical method being employed to make the analysis. The purpose of the analytical paper is to give you practice **using** critical theory as a means to uncover the variety of ways a text may be read or interpreted. It is an intellectual exercise in thinking and understanding the multiplicity of ways that a text may operate or **do work**, as a cultural artifact.

If you do your analytical papers well, you will have learned a strategic way to read theoretical texts and apply them to the reading of a variety of cultural productions, from poetry, short fiction, and novels, to film and art. You will have amassed a certain number of very useful drafts for essays, presentations, and your comps, not to mention a very deep knowledge of the particular text you choose to use during the semester. You will turn in a total of fourteen (14) four-page essays by the end of the semester.

****Every analytical paper must be turned in for you to get full credit for the course.** Failing to turn in one or more analytical papers will result in a "C" being the highest possible grade for the course. ***I will not accept late papers, so get them in on time!***

Presentation

The presentations for this class are aimed at helping you develop the skill of interpreting literary texts using literary theory. You will present a literary text to the class using a specific theoretical lens. You should choose either a short story or a poem (other than the one each of you have chosen for your four-page papers) and perform a "reading" of the text using the method of the theoretical camp you have signed up for. You will distribute your literary text to the class the week before, so that we have a chance to read it before your presentation. *****You must be present and on time to class the day of your presentation. If you fail to give a presentation on the day you have signed up for one, the highest grade you can get for the class is a "C".***

What to do

- You should begin with an overview of your theoretical movement, emphasizing the main points and the key concerns and influences, etc.
- In performing the reading of your literary text, you should not read an already prepared paper. Rather, you should prepare an *oral* presentation of your analysis. You might choose to “teach” us the text, with guiding questions that will help us to arrive at your meaning. Or, you might like to create another pedagogic exercise by which to present your reading and analysis to us.
- After you have presented your reading of the text, you should be prepared to answer questions from me and the other members of the class pertaining to your text and theoretical movement.

You will be evaluated on:

- The accuracy and clarity of your summary of the theoretical school you are assigned.
- The quality of your analysis of the literary text using the theoretical lens. This will depend upon the kind of evidence you are able to produce within your literary text to support your reading.
- The coherence and organization of your presentation

Tips:

You may need to do some research to find an appropriate literary text. Have a look at the literary criticism/theory section of the library. Some books give sample readings etc. The internet is also a useful tool. I am not necessarily looking for an original interpretation, but I do expect you to cite your sources. You should not present another critic’s reading of a text as your own. I would recommend reading essays by critics who are undertaking Marxist, Psychoanalytic, Poststructuralist, or Feminist readings of *other* texts and model the reading of your text after those readings. What elements of their texts do these other critics emphasize? What kinds of arguments do they use the theory to make? What role does language play in their texts? Etc.

Plagiarism: In both oral and written communication, the following guidelines for avoiding plagiarism must be followed:

1. Any words quoted directly from a source must be in quotation marks (for a written assignment) and cited.
2. Any paraphrasing or rephrasing of the words and/or ideas of a source must be cited.
3. Any ideas or examples derived from a source that are not in the public domain or of a general knowledge must be cited.
4. **All papers and presentations must be the student’s own work.**
- 5.

Students who are confused about what constitutes plagiarism should meet with me, the instructor.

Academic Honesty is expected of all students. Cheating and plagiarism are violations of academic honesty. Any student caught violating the academic honesty code will be failed for the entire semester and the matter will be reported, with documentation, to the Office of Student Conduct for further disciplinary action.

Grading Scale:

A= 90-100 D= 60-69

B= 80-89 F= 59 and below

C= 70-79

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or earlier if accommodations are needed immediately. Bring a copy of all relevant paperwork to the meeting. If you do not have a notification for accommodations but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office for Students with Disabilities, 102 University Hall, 2-3364.

Attendance: Attendance in my course is mandatory and important. I expect everyone to arrive in class on time having read the reading assignments for the day, and prepared to engage in detailed discussion about the texts at hand. I take attendance every class period. **Everyone has one free absence, but after that I drop your final grade 3 points for every absence after the first.** Also, three tardies equal one absence.

Assignment Schedule (subject to change)

Readings are due on the date recorded and should therefore be completed BEFORE the corresponding class day.

DATE	CLASS ACTIVITIES/ READINGS DUE
Week 1 T (Aug 30)	Introduction to the Course
Week 2 T (Sept 6)	The Beginnings of Modern Critical Theory <i>Nietzsche—The Birth of Tragedy</i>
Week 3 T (Sept 13)	Structuralism Ferdinand De Saussure—“The Course in General Linguistics”
Week 4 T (Sept 20)	Northrop Frye—“Archetypes of Literature”
Week 5 T (Sept 27)	New Criticism Wimsatt and Beardsley—“The Intentional Fallacy” and “The Affective Fallacy” Cleanth Brooks—“The Well Wrought Urn”
Week 6 T (Oct 4)	Poststructuralism Michel Foucault—“What Is an Author?” Roland Barthes—“The Death of the Author”
Week 7 T (Oct 11)	Henry Louis Gates—from “Signifying Monkey” (PDF)

Week 8 T (Oct 18)	Psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud—"Interpretation of Dreams" and "The 'Uncanny'"
Week 9 T (Oct 25)	<i>Gaston Bachelard —The Poetics of Space</i>
Week 10 T (Nov 1)	Frantz Fanon—"The Negro and Language" (PDF)
Week 11 T (Nov 8)	Deleuze & Guattari—"A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia"
Week 12 T (Nov 15)	Deconstruction/Poststructuralism Jacques Derrida—"Dissemination"
Week 13 T (Nov 22)	Walter Benjamin—"The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
Week 14 T (Nov 29)	Donna Haraway—"A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science Technology and Social Feminism in the 1980s"
Week 15 T (Dec 6)	Judith Butler—"Gender Trouble" Vivian M. May—"What is Intersectionality?" (PDF)

Survival Tips for Theory Courses

1. There are no stupid questions! **Do** ask when you don't understand something in an essay or in class discussion. Everyone else will be grateful you took the plunge, and I will be too because I can teach better when I know what you understand and what you don't.
2. Expect to work hard, but be patient with yourself. Don't give up after the first page (paragraph, sentence). Some of these essays will seem like ancient Greek (or Klingon) at first, but if you give yourself extra time, you'll find you can get through them. You will probably need to read some of these essays/chapters more than once.
3. Take notes as you read: What are the most important ideas in the essay? Key concepts? What did you not understand? Vocabulary? What did you like about the essay? What bothered you about it? Use these notes to formulate questions and comments for class discussion as well as a tool for structuring your reading.
4. You may find some of the ideas we are exploring somewhat unsettling. If so, try to figure out what it is that bothers you about an essay and write it down. If you can analyze the source of your discomfort with a particular idea, you might be better able to come to terms with the material. Feel free to raise these concerns in class discussion.
5. Come talk to me about any difficulties you are having—or any ideas, questions, suggestions, etc.
6. Have fun with the ideas! Try to apply the concepts to the cultural “texts” you encounter every day.

The Other Important Stuff:

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). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. 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 or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy: *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.*

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.*

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 in their courses by 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. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

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>.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" are 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 via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students' anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses, 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 \[insert a description of the nearest exit/emergency exit\]](#). 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 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, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

<p>Emergency Phone Numbers: 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</p>
