

**ENGL 4345: Topics in Critical Theory: Roland Barthes
Fall 2017**

Instructor: Professor Kevin Porter

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Office Hours: TR 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., and by appointment

Section Information: ENGL 4345-001

Place and Time of Class Meetings: 216 Trimble Hall / TR 12:00 p.m.-1:50 p.m.

Description of Course Content

A question: What do the Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, the German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and the Marquis de Sade have in common with James Bond, the Tour de France, and an advertisement for Panzani pasta? Answer: All of them have been analyzed with insight, erudition, and wit by Roland Barthes (1915-1980), a French literary theorist and cultural critic. As capacious as these categories are, they do no more than suggest the prolific nature of his scholarly and creative work and the prominence of his public career; and they leave untouched the turmoil of his private life. This course is necessarily limited in its objective: It can, somewhat paradoxically, do no more than provide a few lines for the sketch of the life and work of the writer who (in)famously announced “the death of the Author.” We will devote most of our time to close readings of four quite different and succinct books that span Barthes’s career: *Elements of Semiology* (1964), which provides a clear and concise introduction to the structuralist approach to language and, more generally, to any system of signs; *Mythologies* (1957), which identifies why and how “myth” continues to operate in contemporary culture; *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973), which problematizes notions of authorship and readership; and *Camera Lucida* (1980), which examines photographic images in terms of their structure, function, and effects on viewers.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students should be able to respond critically to course material, using synthesis and analysis.
- Students should be able to assimilate existing information to formulate new ideas.
- Students should be able to express, clearly and succinctly, ideas or arguments in oral and written form.
- Students should be able to develop active listening skills, including paraphrasing and synthesizing ideas discussed in class.
- Students should be able to develop methods and strategies for analyzing and interpreting texts.
- Students should be able to apply key concepts from Barthes’s work to contemporary contexts.

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials

- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. 1980. Translated by Richard Howard, Hill and Wang, 2010.
- ---. *Elements of Semiology*. 1964. Translated by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, Hill and Wang, 1977.
- ---. *Mythologies*. 1957. Translated by Richard Howard and Annette Lavers, Hill and Wang, 2013.
- ---. *The Pleasure of the Text*. 1973. Translated by Richard Miller, Hill and Wang, 1975.

Major Assignments

The major assignments for the course are as follows: twenty reading cards, two group work projects, and a course project.

Grading Policy

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Reading Cards	20%
Group Work Project #1	15%
Group Work Project #2	15%
Course Project	50%

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

At UT Arlington, taking attendance is not required, but attendance is a critical indicator of student success. 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 require attendance and active participation. Excluding the first day of class, we have twenty-seven scheduled meetings; however, because attending class is not always possible, you will have two (and only two) absences automatically excused. **In other words, you are expected to attend at least twenty-five classes; for each subsequent absence, 1% will be deducted from your final grade for the course.**

For the twenty-two class periods that involve newly assigned readings, attendance will be tracked through the use of reading cards. A reading card is a 4x6 index card that contains (1) your name, (2) the date, (3) a 2-3 sentence summary of a single chapter, essay, or section from the day's assigned readings (with three exceptions listed on the schedule of assignments), and (4) a comment or open-ended question that could be used to facilitate class discussion. Please keep the following in mind:

- Incomplete reading cards will receive at most half-credit.
- You must be present in class in order to submit a reading card; I will not accept cards that are submitted via email, put in my mailbox, shoved under my office door, etc., even if they are turned in early.
- If you are late for class by no more than 20 minutes, please hand your reading card to me as soon as you enter the classroom. If I have not yet collected the cards, you will receive full credit; if I have already collected them, you will receive half-credit.
- Reading 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.
- Reading cards that explain why you have not written a summary and question will not receive credit!
- Reading cards are used to track attendance, but they are also graded assignments (see "Grading Policy") for which you will simply receive full, half, or no credit. The cards will not be returned to you. A running tally of your reading cards will be kept on Blackboard.
- I expect you to complete 20 of 22 reading cards. If you complete 21 cards, you will receive 1% extra-credit toward your final course grade; if you complete 22 cards, you will receive 2% extra-credit.

For the five class periods that do not involve newly assigned readings, attendance will be tracked through the use of a sign-in sheet passed around at the start of class. If you arrive before the sign-in sheet makes its way around the room, you will be considered "present"; if you arrive after the sign-in sheet has been collected but no later than 20 minutes after the start of the class, you will be considered "late," which counts as a half-absence; and if you arrive later than 20 minutes, you are welcome to join the class for the remainder of the period, but you will be considered "absent."

Note: While UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Schedule of Assignments

8/24	Introduction to the Course: Who Was Roland Barthes?
8/29	<i>Elements of Semiology</i> : Introduction and Chapter 1
8/31	<i>Elements of Semiology</i> : Chapter 2
9/5	<i>Elements of Semiology</i> : Chapter 3
9/7	<i>Elements of Semiology</i> : Chapter 4 and Conclusion
9/12	Group Work Project #1: bring <i>Elements of Semiology</i> to class [no reading card due]

- 9/14 Group work project #1 continued: bring *Elements of Semiology* to class [no reading card due]
- 9/19 *Mythologies*: "Myth Today," pp. 215-249
Course Project Assigned
- 9/21 *Mythologies*: "Myth Today," pp. 249-274
- 9/26 *Mythologies*: "In the Ring"
- 9/28 *Mythologies*: "The Tour de France as Epic"
- 10/3 *Mythologies*: "Saponids and Detergents"
Mythologies: "Depth Advertising"
- 10/5 *Mythologies*: "Wine and Milk"
Mythologies: "Steak-Frites"
Mythologies: "Ornamental Cuisine"
- 10/10 *Mythologies*: "Toys"
Mythologies: "Plastic"
- 10/12 *Mythologies*: "Einstein's Brain"
Mythologies: "The Jet-Man"
- 10/17 *Mythologies*: "Lost Continent"
Mythologies: "The Great Family of Man"
- 10/19 "The Death of the Author" [available on Blackboard]
- 10/24 *The Pleasure of the Text*: pp. 3-23 [note: reading card does not require a summary]
- 10/26 *The Pleasure of the Text*: pp. 23-46 [note: reading card does not require a summary]
- 10/31 *The Pleasure of the Text*: pp. 46-67 [note: reading card does not require a summary]
- 11/2 "The Photographic Message" [available on Blackboard]
- 11/7 Continued discussion of "The Photographic Message" [no reading card due]
- 11/9 Group Work Project #2: bring "The Photographic Message" to class [no reading card due]
- 11/14 Group Work Project #2: bring "The Photographic Message" to class [no reading card due]
- 11/16 *Camera Lucida*: Part One, Sections 1-12
- 11/21 *Camera Lucida*: Part One, Sections 13-24
- 11/23 Thanksgiving holiday [no class]
- 11/28 *Camera Lucida*: Part Two, Sections 25-36
- 11/30 *Camera Lucida*: Part Two, Chapters 37-48
- 12/5 Work period for final project [no class]

The final project must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 8th. Late work will be penalized at a rate of -10% per half hour.

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 smartphones, books from other classes, etc. You may use a laptop or tablet **for the purposes of our course only** so long as you are mindful enough not to disturb the students around you.

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/>.

Library & Research Assistance: University-level research requires university-level sources. Contact the Library for personalized help in navigating research resources and locating the sources you need.

- **Librarian:** Your subject librarian is **Diane Shepelwich**, dianec@uta.edu. If you need help getting started with your research or have questions along the way, contact Diane for personalized assistance.
- **Research Coach:** Research Coaches are UT Arlington students trained to help you frame your research questions, develop search strategies, understand citation styles, and select and evaluate relevant resources, <http://libguides.uta.edu/researchcoach>.
- **Library Staff:** Find library staff at the Service Zone, Central Library first floor, or at the branch libraries, by phone at 817-272-3395, by text at 817-727-8395, email at AskUs@uta.edu, or chat on the library's homepage, <http://library.uta.edu/>.
- **Research Consultation:** To set an appointment with your librarian or research coach, visit <http://library.uta.edu/form/appointment-request-form>.
- **Research Guides:** For a list of useful guides to help you start your research, visit: <http://libguides.uta.edu/>.

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.

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>.

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) online (www.uta.edu/disability) or via phone 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 / 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: UT 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 www.uta.edu/eos.

Title IX Policy: UT Arlington 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.

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/>).

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 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. 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.

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. The non-emergency number is 817-272-3381.