

**ENG 703:
Survey of Literary Criticism & Theory**

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to some of the major texts within the long and complex tradition of literary theory and criticism. In a semester, and especially a semester where we lose two weeks of classes to Monday holidays, the task is nearly impossible. The best I can hope to do is to introduce you to a wide range of approaches so that you can explore further on your own. The course is divided into four units of unequal length: 1) Foundations 2) Formalism, structuralism, poststructuralism 3) Race, class, gender, sexuality, and 4) Books, readers, history. Within these units we will be reading a mixture of entire books, journal articles, and extracts from books. Some of these readings you have almost certainly encountered before while others will likely be new to you. I have also ordered from the bookstore but am not requiring my companion book, for students who want a broad historical overview (from antiquity to the present). We will cover some historical context in class but our main focus will be on reading and understanding the primary texts.

Learning objectives: Students in this course will be able to describe the salient characteristics of different kinds of literary criticism and literary theory from the nineteenth century to the present. They will learn how to analyze, evaluate, and employ different interpretative approaches and will develop a professional competency in critical thinking and writing about literature.

Required Texts: (available at the bookstore or elsewhere)

G. W. F. Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*

Karl Marx, *The Portable Karl Marx*

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Roland Barthes, *S/Z*

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Part 1*

Other readings available through Web Campus or via email for auditors.

Optional Text: Anne H. Stevens, *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Introduction*

Course requirements for enrolled students: At least three 100-200 word blog posts, three initial responses to another student's post, and a 2000-4000 word final reflection paper. Active participation in class discussion both in class and online.

Course requirements for auditors and passers-by: All are welcome to sit in on the class; you can choose your own level of engagement. Any auditors or others who wish to are encouraged to post and comment on the course blog and to participate in class discussion. I will make the Web Campus readings available via email for those who are interested.

The course blog: I have set up a WordPress blog for this course at eng703.wordpress.com. I will enable all registered students and auditors access as blog "authors." This means you will be able to create posts, upload files, and moderate comments on your own posts. You will not be able to

delete other people's posts or the site itself. Each registered student must commit to writing three 100-200 word posts over the course of the semester and three initial responses to someone else's post (I will pass around a sign-up sheet on the first day). Auditors are encouraged but not required to post and to respond to others' posts.

Your posts should relate to the week's reading and should be posted by 5:00pm on the Sunday before class, thus allowing enough time for the respondent to post and for others to comment prior to class. These posts will serve to begin our course discussion each week, and the discussion can continue online after class is over. Your posts can take a range of forms but should not be mere summary of the reading. Instead, they should focus on a particular passage, term, or question; connect the reading to something else either within or outside the class; use examples to clarify a theoretical point; etc. The designated first respondent should engage with the post and continue the conversation while remaining civil. Keep the genre of the blog post in mind as you write: images and links are encouraged, as are pithy provocations; detailed textual analysis is better reserved for classroom discussion.

Reflection paper: At the end of the semester, all registered students must write a 2000-4000 word essay that reflects upon the readings for the course and your own identity as a literary theorist. We'll talk more as the semester goes on about the kinds of things you should and shouldn't include in this paper. Your first task is to try to understand the sometimes quite difficult texts we'll be reading. Your next task is to synthesize the readings, to find points of agreement and disagreement, to understand the range of approaches to a single topic. The first two tasks will constitute our main focus in the class discussion and course blog. Your third task, and the one that will form the substance of this final piece of writing, is to begin to internalize the theoretical approaches you have read, adopting and transforming concepts and methodologies that best suit your identity as a critic.

Schedule:

January 25: first day of class. Introduction, sign up for blog postings.

1 Foundations

February 1: G. W. F. Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*

February 8: Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, from A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, and from *The German Ideology*, pp. 155-83; from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* pp. 287-323; from *Capital* pp. 432-503.

February 15: Presidents' Day, no class

February 22: Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

2 Formalism, structuralism, poststructuralism

February 29: Ferdinand de Saussure, from *Course in General Linguistics*; Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense"; Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth"; Tzvetan Todorov, "Some Approaches to Russian Formalism"

March 7: W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy"; W. K. Wimsatt, "The Chicago Critics," R. S. Crane, introduction to *Critics and Criticism*; Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences"

March 14: Roland Barthes, *S/Z*

March 21: Spring Break

3 Race, class, gender, sexuality

March 28: Simone de Beauvoir, from *The Second Sex*; Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History"; Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"; Raymond Williams, "Dominant, Emergent, and Residual"

April 4: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

April 11: Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*

April 18: Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence"; Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa"; Julia Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection"

April 25: Gloria Anzaldúa, from *Borderlands/La Frontera*; Judith Butler, from *Gender Trouble*; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, from *Epistemology of the Closet*; bell hooks, from *Ain't I a Woman*

4 Books, readers, history

May 2: Stanley Fish, “Interpreting the Variorum”; Hans Robert Jauss, “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory”; Pierre Bourdieu, from *Rules of Art*; Bruno Latour, “Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?”

May 9, 6:00-8:00 pm Final class session. Make-up day if needed; otherwise wrap-up and celebration.

May 13: Final reflection due

Academic Misconduct – Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <http://studentconduct.unlv.edu/misconduct/policy.html>.

Copyright – The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves **with** and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC) – The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you.

If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor **in** front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy – Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the end of the first instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Incomplete Grades - The grade of I – Incomplete – can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring and Coaching –The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895- 3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

UNLV Writing Center – One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student’s Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>

Rebelmail – By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students’ Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV’s official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students’ e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

Final Examinations – The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course

occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at:
<http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.