

Professor Jennifer Yusin
 Office: MacAlister 5013
 Email: jyusin@drexel.edu
 Phone: (215) 895-6778
 Office Hours: Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 11:00am – 12:00pm, and by appointment

Literary Theory
English 380
Winter 2014
Tues/Thurs 9:30am – 10:50am
Peck PS & R Center 202

Course Description

This course is an introduction to literary theoretical thinking, focusing on twentieth century structuralism, poststructuralism, and contemporary theory. We will examine the ways in which language is conceived and reconceived by major theoretical writers and the implications of this rethinking for notions of history, politics, ideology, sexuality, trauma, among others. In addition to introducing students to major issues in modern literary theory, this course will also emphasize interactions among language, literature, and culture, as well as upon cross-fertilizations of theory and fiction.

Prerequisites

English 101 and 102, grade C or higher, and English 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 211, 212, or 214, grade C or higher. This course is for English majors only. Students who are not English majors may seek written permission from the instructor.

Course Readings

All readings will be made available as PDF's on the course Blackboard Learn site. There are no texts required for purchase.

Course Requirements

1. Completion of all readings according to the course schedule
2. Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions
3. Two, 1000 word critical summary/reviews of the readings of your choice.
4. One, 1000 word analytic, reflective essay that synthesizes the readings of your choice.
5. One, ten-page (minimum) final critical essay that engages a literary text of your choice and one of the theoretical frameworks we learned in class.

Academic Integrity

All students must abide by Drexel University's academic integrity policy. If an act of academic dishonesty is determined to have occurred, for a first offense, one of the following sanctions will be imposed, depending on the severity of the offense: 1) 0% for the assignment; 2) Failure for entire course without the possibility to withdraw; this information, based on the decision of the faculty member and the department head shall be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. The incident will result in an official disciplinary record for the student(s). Note that plagiarism is not limited to copying a passage from a source word

for word. If you acquire specific information from a source, you must acknowledge that source, even if you have used your own words and paraphrased that information. Review *The Brief Wadsworth Handbook* Parts 3 and 4 for acceptable ways of acknowledging the work of other writers. Any academic integrity infraction beyond a first offense is subject to the sanctions described above, as well as to disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed through the University conduct process, administered through the Division for Student Life and Administrative Services/Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. These sanctions may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

(Drexel University Student Handbook,

<http://drexel.edu/~media/Files/studentaffairs/scs/Student%20Handbook%202013-2014.ashx>)

Disability Statement

Student with disabilities requesting accommodations and services at Drexel University need to present a current accommodation verification letter (AVL) to faculty before accommodations can be made. AVL's are issued by the Office of Disability Services (ODS). For additional information, contact ODS at www.drexel.edu/ods, or at 3201 Arch St., Street, Suite 210, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 215.895.1401 (V), or 215.895.2299 (TTY).

Religious Observances

Drexel University supports an environment that respects the religious observances of others and is committed to make every reasonable effort to accommodate the religious observances of instructors, students, and staff. Instructors are asked to reasonably accommodate students' religious observances in course scheduling. Instructors should provide a syllabus at the beginning of the term that specifies the examination schedule for their course and due dates for any written or oral assignments. With that information, students can then inform their instructors of any absences or conflicts with the examination/assignment schedule due to religious observances at the beginning of the quarter and well in advance of the anticipated absence. Students may be asked to provide information about their religious obligations and our hope is that they comply. Please visit the Provost's website to access the religious calendars. www.drexel.edu/provost/calendars

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required. You are permitted TWO unexcused absences, free from penalty. You will be considered absent if you are more than twenty (20) minutes late. Any absence beyond your three free absences will result in the lowering of one letter grade from your final grade. For example, a total of four absences (two free and two penalized) will make a final grade of B+ into a B-. I will keep track of your absences and you are welcome to check your records with me at any time. Participation is among the most important elements in this class and is worth a total of 20% of your grade. Regular, active, and engaged participation will easily earn you a high grade for this particular component. Disengaged, apathetic silence will, in contrast, earn you a 0 for this grade component.

Tardiness

You will be considered late to class if you enter twenty (20) minutes after the beginning of class. If you are late to class, kindly enter the classroom quietly and do not walk directly in front of the speaker. Excessive tardiness will be noted and individually addressed. If tardiness is

a problem, you will receive one verbal warning. After the verbal warning, every two late entrances into class will equal one penalized absence.

Assignment Punctuality

All assignments are due on the dates and at the times as stated in the syllabus and in the course schedule. Papers submitted after the due date will be penalized one letter grade for each day it is late (10 points per day). Journal entries will be equally penalized, with 1 point deducted for each day the entry is late. No make-up work will be assigned. If you find yourself beginning to fall behind in class work, let me know and I will help you get back on track.

Classroom Etiquette

All cell phones, pagers, and MP3 players, must be off or in the silent position. Do not interrupt the speaker and be courteous towards each other. Be respectful of each other and always listen to differing opinions and ideas with an open mind. Do not sleep in class. Do not text message in class. If you need to eat or drink, do so quietly and be sure to throw away your trash. You are all adults and I expect that you approach our classroom environment with a mature and respectful manner.

Paper Requirements

The papers must be submitted to me by email and as a Word document attachment on the stated due dates and at the stated times. If you need to arrange an alternate time and date, you must discuss it with me at least three days prior to the due date. All papers must meet the following requirements in order to be graded:

1. Pages must be numbered
2. Do not exceed a 12 point font size
3. Double-spaced
4. Your name and class title in the upper left corner of the paper, single-spaced
5. A title
6. There should only be one double space separating the beginning of your paper and title
7. If the final page is the page number of the minimum requirement, one half of the page must be text filled in order for it to be counted.
8. The paper must follow MLA citation guidelines.

Critical Summaries

The due dates are listed in the course schedule section

Your task is to write three, one thousand word critical summary/reviews of three works of your choice. In your essays, your primary task is to articulate the major tenets of a particular work in your own words, avoiding a dependence upon jargon and the heavy use of direct quotations. Aim to articulate what you understand to be the primary stakes of the reading in your own words and voice. This task is especially useful in demonstrating your ability to comprehend and synthesize the material in an effective manner that communicates to a varied audience.

Reflective Essay

The due date is listed in the course schedule section

Your task is to write one, one thousand word analytic, reflective essay that synthesizes the works and theoretical ideas of your choice. In this essay, your primary task is to consider how

particular readings and concepts have changed, in any way (and if at all), your thinking about any topic or category of understanding. If one reading, for example, has inspired you to approach questions of gender in a new way, then write about that shift. The topic is limited only by your own curiosity and horizons of thought—so remember that it is unlimited.

Final Critical Essay

The final critical essay is due by 8pm March 20th.

The final critical essay is aimed at exploring your specific literary interests as well as employing the tools of literary analysis developed throughout this course. The task for the final essay is to provide a critical reading of any text (visual or written) through the lens of one of the theoretical frameworks we learned about in class. You will be graded on criteria such as argument, structure, mechanics, etc., as well as on your synthesis of the theory and the text.

Grade Distribution

I will use the following percentage breakdown to determine your final grade. Remember that there are overarching criteria, such as attendance, that also affect your final grade.

| | | |
|----------------------|-------|-----------|
| Critical Summary #1 | | 10% |
| Critical Summary #2 | | 15% |
| Reflection Essay | | 20% |
| Class Participation | | 25% |
| Final Critical Essay | | 30% |

Each component of this course will be graded with a letter grade according to the following grade distribution, which is in accordance with Drexel's grade policy:

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| A+.....97-100 | C.....77-79 |
| A.....93-96 | C.....73-76 |
| A-.....90-92 | C-.....70-72 |
| B+.....87-89 | D+.....67-69 |
| B.....83-86 | D.....60-66 |
| B-.....80-82 | F.....below 60 |

Course Schedule (schedule may change)

A brief note about the schedule of readings: All readings listed for the week are to be read in their entirety by the beginning of class on Tuesday so that we may discuss each week's readings on both Tuesday and Thursday.

Week 1 (January 7th and 9th)

Signs, Signification, and the Linguistic Object

Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (selections)
Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics"

Week 2 (January 14th and 16th)

Structuralism and Semiotics

Roland Barthes, "Myth Today"
Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth"

Week 3 (January 21st and 23rd)

Deconstruction in Context

Jacques Derrida, "Différance"

Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences"

Week 4 (January 28rd and 30th)

Formalism and Its Discontents

Mikhail Bakhtin "Heteroglossia in the Novel"

Boris Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'"

Critical Summary #1 due by 6pm on Friday, January 31st

Week 5 (February 4th and 6th)

Referential Ruptures

Paul de Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric" from *Allegories of Reading*

Paul de Man, "The Resistance to Theory" from *The Resistance to Theory*

Week 6 (February 11th and 13th)

Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Text

Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id* (selections)

Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage"

Jacques Lacan, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud"

Week 7 (February 18th and 20th)

Subjectivity and Gender Performativity

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (selections)

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (selections)

Critical Summary #2 due by 6pm on Friday, February 21st

Week 8 (February 25th and 27th)

The Frankfurt School of Critical Theory

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, "The Culture Industry"

Week 9 (March 4th and 6th)

The Subaltern and the Postcolonial Subject

Gayatri Spivak, "Can The Subaltern Speak"

Homi Bhabha, "Signs taken for wonders: Questions of ambivalence and authority under a tree a outside Delhi, May 1817"

Reflection Essay due by 6pm on Friday, March 7th

Week 10 (March 11th and 13th)

Trauma, Literature, and History's Witness

Cathy Caruth, "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History"

Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss"

Final Critical Essays due by 8pm on Thursday, March 20th