

# Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

NELC/CS 7301

# Theorizing Literature

Wednesdays 2:15-5:00pm

Instructor:

Office Hours:

Office: 315 Hagerty Hall

Email:

Mailbox:

This course will provide an accelerated introduction to literary theory and criticism, surveying significant developments in modern and contemporary literary and cultural studies. Our readings will combine a wide range of critical and theoretical texts with poetry and prose from a variety of languages and time periods, many from the languages and literatures of the Middle East. We will be guided by the following questions:

- ❖ How do critical and theoretical texts affect how we read literary texts?
- ❖ How do literary texts affect how we read critical and theoretical texts?

## GOALS

- ❖ To master major trends in modern literary criticism and theory.
- ❖ To analyze both literary and theoretical texts.
- ❖ To enable students to pursue their own interests related to literary theory and criticism.

## TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS:

The following book will be used in this course, and can be found at local bookstores or online:

1. Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*

Other books you may find helpful, primarily for recommended readings, include:

1. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory, An Introduction* (2008)
2. Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*  
<http://faculty.utpa.edu/jmmartinez/Graduate/GradSeldenContemporaryLiteraryTheory.pdf>

All other readings will be made available on Carmen. Please make sure that you have access to this class on Carmen and let me know *immediately* if you have trouble accessing the course website. Readings must be completed by the day that they are assigned. Please be sure to bring copies of assigned readings to class, because we will be referring to and quoting from the text.

## REQUIREMENTS

Participation & Preparation

- Complete the assigned reading *before* class. Make sure to pace yourself – don't leave everything to the night before or the day of class because you'll have too much to process effectively.
- Participate in class discussions and in-class groups. This course revolves around class lectures and discussions, including significant material not necessarily included in the readings. Come to class prepared to be an active participant: ready to talk about the readings, to consider different viewpoints and to ask questions. You will be graded on how you engage the material and other students, not how much you know about the subject. Not everyone feels comfortable participating in class, but if it's difficult for you to speak up in discussions, try to show your interest and preparation by asking questions, taking an active role in group work, and speaking to me outside of class.

#### Weekly Responses

- Each week, students will write a short critical piece on the week's readings. The goal of these readings is to jump start discussion: to question or critique aspects of the reading, to wrestle with difficult or significant passages, to relate issues to other texts that we have read.
- Please do not summarize the readings. Instead, I would recommend that you start with either a question or argumentative statement, in which you focus on either a given issue in a critical or theoretical text, or on specific elements or passages of a text or text.
- Responses should be 300-500 words.
- Please submit your responses to the Carmen dropbox before class each week, and bring a copy (electronic or printed) to class with you each week.
- Your response grade will be based on the number of responses that you submit on time, provided that they are solid responses and not summaries of the readings.

#### Class presentation

- Each student will provide one academic article on a topic of their choosing that engages with some theoretical or critical topic, ideally in references to a specific literary text or linguistic/cultural tradition.
- I will integrate those articles into the syllabus, and ask you to facilitate a discussion about your article on the day it is assigned.
- How you present your article is entirely up to you. It may be helpful for you to explain why you chose this piece, to provide any background information about the texts, language(s) or tradition from which it's coming or to which it is related, and to consider what you think are its strengths and weaknesses.

#### Paper

- Each student will write a final paper (~15 pages) on a topic of their own choosing.
- Papers should engage with at least two of the thinkers/theorists discussed in class as well as texts of the student's choosing.
- Short proposal due (~200 words): March 11

- Work-in-Progress presentation (5 minute presentation): April 8-22
- Paper due: Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup> 2015, 12pm

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Attendance, Participation, Preparation	15%
Response Papers	20%
Class Presentation	15%
Final Paper	50%

Grading scale: A (93-100) A- (90-92) B+ (87-89) B (83-86) B- (80-82) C+ (77-79) C (73-76) C- (70-72) D+ (67-69) D (60-66) E (below 60)

### CLASS POLICIES

In Class: Please do not read newspapers, email, websites, text messages, etc. during class. If I believe that you are using a computer for reasons other than taking notes or referring to course information, I will restrict your use of computers in class.

Class Cancellations: If an emergency arises and I need to cancel class, I will send an email to the class, and ask that a sign be posted on the door. Please try to check your email before class in case anything comes up.

Fairness and Honesty: I expect students to complete all assignments with fairness and honesty. Plagiarism – the representation of someone else’s words or ideas as one’s own – is a very serious offense, and will be result in serious consequences. By plagiarism, I mean failing to acknowledge someone else’s work or ideas (word for word or paraphrasing), as well as cheating on quizzes and tests. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For addition information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/pdfs/csc\\_12-31-07.pdf](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf))

This is not to say that you cannot use other people’s ideas, just that you must **acknowledge** your sources (orally or with footnotes) and try to **build** on those ideas (agree, disagree, modify, give your own examples). One good reference is OSU’s “Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity” (<http://oaa.osu.edu/coamtensuggestions.html>). Please come and talk to me if you have any questions about this.

Contact Me: Please come talk to me over the course of the quarter if you have any problems or concerns, but also if you have questions or anything else that you'd like to talk about. It's great to have the opportunity to get to know you outside of class. Office hours are a good time to catch me, but you can also email me to set up an appointment to talk.

For quick questions or concerns, email ([brenner.108@osu.edu](mailto:brenner.108@osu.edu)) is the best way to reach me. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours.

### **DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://ods.osu.edu/>

### **SCHEDULE**

Reading assignments are subject to modification, but any changes will be announced at least a week in advance. Remember, all readings are to be completed before the date indicated and brought to class for discussion

- January 15     Introduction**  
Matthew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time"
- January 21     Anglo-American Perspectives: New Criticism     \*\* Bring/Email Article**  
Start reading *Season of Migration to the North*  
T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent"  
John Crowe Ransom, "Criticism, Inc"  
Recommended: Selden 15-26
- January 28     Russian Perspectives: Formalism**  
Finish reading *Season of Migration to the North*  
Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique"  
Mikhail Bakhtin, from "Discourse in the Novel"  
Recommended: Selden 29-42
- February 4     Structuralism and Its Roots**  
Ferdinand de Saussure, from *Course in General Linguistics*  
Tzvetan Todorov, "Structural Analysis of Narrative"  
Recommended: Selden 62-79 or Eagleton, 79-109
- February 11     Psychoanalysis**  
Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming"  
Jacques Lacan, from *Ecrits*

Recommended: Eagleton, 131-168

**February 18 Beyond Structure**

Roland Barthes, "Death of the Author"

Roland Barthes, from *S/Z*

Recommended: Eagleton, 110-130

**February 25 Differance**

Jacques Derrida, "Différance"

Recommended: Selden 164-178

**March 4 Marxism**

**\*\* Paper proposal due**

Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

Frederic Jameson, from *The Political Unconscious*

Recommended: Selden, 82-109

**March 11 Discourse**

Michel Foucault, "Orders of Discourse "; "What Is an Author?"; from *History of Sexuality*

Recommended: Selden, 178-180

**March 18 Spring Break**

**March 25 Feminisms**

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, from *Madwoman in the Attic*

Helene Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa"

Recommended: Selden, 115-137

**April 1 Postcolonialism**

Edward Said, from *Orientalism*

Homi Bhabha, from *Locations of Culture*

Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

Recommended: Selden, 218-235

**April 8 Literatures and Histories**

Stephen Greenblatt, TBA

**April 15 Bodies and Gender**

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl"

Judith Butler, from *Gender Trouble*

**April 22 TBA**