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Fall 9-1-2021

### LIT 300.01: Literary Criticism

Kathleen M. Kane

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## LIT 300 02 Literary Criticism Fall 2021

*"You are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts."  
—Daniel Patrick Moynihan*

*"You have to do the research. If you don't know something,  
then you ask the right people who do." —Spike Lee*

*"It is the mark of an engaged mind to be  
able to entertain a thought without accepting it."—Aristotle*

*"Research is formalized curiosity.  
It is poking and prying with a purpose."—Zora Neale Hurston*

LIT #300: 01 /CRN 72164

T/R: 11:00-12:20 LA 202

Instructor: Katie Kane (she/they)

Co-Instructor: Maura Ganz (she/her/hers)

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Fall Semester 2021

Office: LA 111

Text #: 406-880-5856

O. Hours: T 12:30-1:30

R 12:30-2:00

& By appointment

### Course Description

In this introductory course in literary and cultural theory, we will attempt to explore representative schools of and issues in contemporary criticism (formalism, postmodernism, eco-criticism, postcolonial/colonial criticism, critical race theory, trans-studies, psychoanalytic criticism and others). We will be working, therefore, to build an analytic and critical vocabulary for the activity of reading select number of texts from the canons of literary criticism and from the canons of Anglophone culture. Prior to engaging with the core of the class, we will consider the multiple ways in which both the truth and research methodology are in flux in our era: we will consider what it means to read a theoretical text, what it means to create an argument or assertion, and what it means to do research in Literary and Cultural Studies.

In addition to these "first-principles" objectives, however, we will also attempt to engage with such complexities of the current theoretical debate as "the question of the author," the reconciliation of form and content, the agon of canon formation and canon busting, and, finally, with the crucial issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Throughout the course we will be moving toward our current early twenty-first century moment in which the range and scope of the labor of the literary critic seems—in light of the rise of a host of non-traditional

representational and narrative forms—to be both expanding and contracting. Film, video games, the world of the digital, social media, all require the decoding and demystifying work of the engaged critic. A specific focus on Critical Race Theory will involve reading Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me*, and Beyoncé's *Lemonade*.

**REFER TO YOUR SYLLABUS OFTEN**  
**AND IN THE CASE OF ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS**

**Policy Statement**

Required Texts:

N.B. Your texts are available in the Bookstore. You **MUST** bring the requisite text with you to class. The responsibility for seeing the films rests with you. Also, a number of articles will be available to you on UM Box.

**★★★NOTA BENE★★★:**

This is a rigorous course; much will be expected of you in the way of reading, preparation, writing, and participation. Do not take this course if you are unprepared for a good deal of reading, underlining, writing and vigorous questioning. If you are not enthusiastic about doing this kind work, this is not the course for you. "I'm sorry, but I did not finish my reading for today," and/or "there is too much reading to do," are two expressions that do not, despite my generally congenial attitude, make me happy. The class is, after years of experience, carefully and with thought balanced in terms of workload. Look at the whole syllabus and its various components before making a final commitment to enrollment. If you think that there is too much reading or too much work, please feel free to drop.

**Coursework:** Final grades will be determined by your performance in three separate categories of coursework:

1. Participation/Quizzes	10%
2. Daily Writing	50%
3. Final Essay	<u>40%</u>
	100%

I will be happy to discuss grades with you during my office hours. However, please give yourself twenty-four hours after receiving your grade before coming to see me.

**Participation:** The success of the course will depend largely on the participation of all of the members of the class in dialogue over issues and texts. To facilitate and ensure the passionate and engaged participation of all the members of our course community, each individual will be asked to participate in the discussion of daily readings. Participation means that you must come to class with a reading of the texts/films assigned for that day. These readings can take many forms—assertions of interpretation or taste, close readings of specific passages, contextual explication, even questions and confusions, etc.

**Quizzes:** In the midst of the hurricane that is modern American student life, it can be hard to find time to read and thoughtfully engage with all of the materials scheduled class. Nevertheless, it is important that each and every student come to class having fully read all of the material (understanding it fully is another thing). I will administer these short quizzes at the beginning of the class, if necessary. There will be no chance for make-up quizzes.

**Written Responses:** Students will respond in writing to the course readings on both Tuesday and Thursday each week.

**A. Summary Essays:** Students will turn in a two-page response to the reading/s on Tuesday of every week until the writing of the final essay begins.

The two page essays will involve engaging thoughtfully with the assigned text: this semester the essays will do the work of **summary** rather than argument or critique. The last paragraph may be refutational, creative, extending, or challenging, but the first 2/3 of the essay will summarize in thoughtful and substantiated ways the primary argument(s) of the essay. If you consistently score the highest marks on Summary Essays, you may, if you would like generate your own arguments about the work in question, provided some summary of the material is included in your text. The essays will be submitted on UM BOX as Microsoft Word Docs. The essays have two important components: content and form. All essays must be free of grammatical and stylistic errors. **\*\*\*Essays that do not go the entire two page length or that are submitted in a format other than Microsoft Word Doc will either be graded accordingly or not graded at all.\*\*\***

**WARNING/ADVICE: The tone of the essay must be respectful and engaged: responding writers would do well to remember that they are engaged with respected and published authors: engaged critical summaries are always appropriate, but ad hominem attacks, personal stories disconnected from the text, counter arguments that emerge from the dark side of the moon and not the text will not earn strong assessments.**

### 1. Content of the Essays:

Aspects of student writing that will be assessed in writing assignments:

- quality, originality and/or intellectual rigor/engagement of summary;
- sound summary judgments unified by a clear message;
- logical linkage of summary judgments and evidence;

### 2. Formal Aspects of the Essay


Aspects of student writing that will be assessed in writing assignments:

- voice that is consistent & appropriate to the audience & purpose;
- correct diction & sentence structure;
- evidence or reasons supporting all judgments: **INCLUDING TEXTUAL CITATION;**
- transitions that connect a series of ideas and evidence; strong paragraph structure;
- correct spelling and punctuation;
- proper MLA style documentation.

▪  
**DO NOT GO UNDER TWO PAGES. THESE ESSAYS WILL BE GRADED ON A 1-5 SCALE WITH COMMENTS. EXAMPLE ESSAYS WILL BE AVAILABLE AND COURSE TIME WILL BE DEVOTED TO WRITING, BUT YOU MUST BE READY TO WRITE ARGUMENTATIVELY CLEAR, TEXTUALLY SUPPORTED, GRAMMATICALLY CLEAN, AND MLA DOCUMENTED ESSAYS (WORKS CITED LIST).**

**B. Reading Notes:** On Thursdays students will turn in a two page handwritten/typed set of notes with the following focus points and headings: **1) questions and/or interesting observations, 2) research work, 3) close readings in response to the readings.**

**THESE READING NOTES WILL BE GRADED ON A  $\square+$ /  $\square$ /  $\square-$  SCALE WITH NO ATTACHED COMMENTS. EXAMPLE NOTES WILL BE HANDED OUT TO HELP GUIDE YOU. THE NOTES WILL DOCUMENT YOUR RIGOROUS AND THOUGHTFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE TEXTS AND PROVIDE MATERIAL FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION. TAKE THIS ASSIGNMENT SERIOUSLY.**

**C. Posting to Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, TikTok:** The class has a social media “presence” on all four platforms—Twitter: @LitTheoryMT / Instagram: littheorymt /TikTok (will require your own account): use the hash tag #LitTheoryMT/ YouTube: LitTheoryMT. Students may substitute **TWO** longer TikTok or YouTube videos for the Summary Essay (or more if the quality is very high) and **FIVE** Tweets or short TikTok or Instagram posts or stories for the Reading Responses (or more if the quality is very high). We will figure out how to post to YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter as the next weeks unfold. Likely I will appoint one student to post the materials (for credit) or get a graduate student to do so. Memes and Giphy and other performative media allow for the dissemination of argument, interpretation, and explanation. Check TikTok for example using the #literary theory or #littheory. Be careful there is a lot of  out there. We want something of argumentative or informative value, albeit playful and performative in its execution. (Opportunities for collaboration and duets here too.)

**Class Structure:**

Class structure is subject to alteration if the material dictates it, but in general classes will proceed the following way:

11:00-11:10: Roll Call, Quizzes (if any) and Discussion of Class Business and any postings.

11:10-11:40 Group Discussion of Readings OR Lecture and/or General Discussion.

11:40-12:20: Lecture and/or General Discussion OR Group Discussion of Readings.

There may be days that are more lecture heavy and hence time for discussion may be limited to group conversations and questions. Please feel free to ask questions during my “lectures” about anything: concepts, history, the word I just used that you think is probably made up, and etc. Simply raise your hand and ask.

One note about **General Discussion**: it is hard, even in a smaller class, to accommodate all

ideas, questions, comments, etc. Often participants will get stacked up in a discussion line like airplanes. I do my best to fulfill the role of dialogic air-traffic controller, but you should feel free to break in if, in the excitement of discussion, you get passed over.

If you do not enjoy lively, engaged, playful, and every-so-often chaotic discussion, this is not the class for you.

**Final Research Essay with Abstracts and Drafts:** You will turn in an abstract and draft of your essay before submitting the final version. This 8-10 page analytic and scholarly essay with attached bibliography represents the principal writing exercise of the semester. The essay will argue for the relevance of a distinctive, personal analysis of a text/set of texts and/or issues surrounding a textual constellation of issues and ideas germane to the class. In addition, you will be responsible for accessing and harnessing the larger debates surrounding the literary artifact, historical phenomenon, and/or interpretive issue. To that end you will use library resources to familiarize yourself with the reading histories of the text(s) you have chosen and you will incorporate those materials in the argument of your essay. **Here you must use AT THE VERY MINIMUM FOUR outside sources**—peer-reviewed, culturally and theoretically oriented sources we have not read in class, but I do encourage you to incorporate more. **NO SOURCES FROM OUTSIDE THE REALM OF CULTURAL CRITICISM WILL BE ACCEPTED AS "OUTSIDE SOURCES."**

#### **Final Essay Production Schedule:**

1. On Tuesday October 5<sup>th</sup> you will spend time in the library with Professor Jill Howard who will help you to begin the process of researching for your paper. We will meet at Buckhous Classroom, MLIB 284. At this time you should begin to solidify some choice about the novel/films/video games etc. that interest you. The topic selection procedure solidifies here. **Students who miss this class without being excused due to circumstances beyond their control will have one letter grade deducted from their final paper grade and will be asked to do a five page paper on research in archives with an annotated bibliography.**
2. On Tuesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, and on Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, you will turn in an abstract (precis, plan, blueprint, conceptual map) of your final paper to the class collective during class. You will also be asked to provide fellow students with a brief (three to four minute) summary of your planned project and a copy of your abstract and sources. **Please read your two page text.** You will need to include a working **annotated** bibliography of the sources and texts you will be working with. Abstracts without an annotated bibliography will be docked at least five (of ten) points. Abstracts that are not two page single spaced in length will be docked at least five (of ten) points. **Please bring 22 paper copies with you to class.**
3. Friday November 19<sup>th</sup>, Monday November 22<sup>nd</sup>, Tuesday November 23<sup>rd</sup>, and

- (depending upon when you schedule your conference) your Rough Draft will be due. You will meet with me in consultation over the rough draft in LA 111 in conference. The Rough Draft must be a minimum of four pages long.
4. The Final Draft of the essay is due on Monday December 13<sup>th</sup>, by 5:00. **Upload to UMBox.**

**Attendance:** Attendance is required and will be recorded: three or more unexcused absences are grounds for failure of the course itself. Late arrivals and early departures will, if they occur frequently, count as absences. If you do arrive late you will be responsible for letting me know after class that you were present for the day. Absences due to medical and family emergencies will be excused, provided you come and discuss the situation (**ASAP**) with me. Lengthy crises that require multiple absences may require your reconsideration of enrollment in school this semester. Strolling in and out of the classroom, if it happens with frequency will result in your attendance being affected and a note sent to the dreaded Starfish, and NOBODY wants that.

**Disabilities Accommodation:**

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations for coursework. To request accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible in the semester. I will work with you and with Disability Services in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umt.edu/dss/>, or call 406.243.2243 (Voice/Text)."

**Pronouns/Names:**

Please let us know what pronoun that you would like the class to use.

If you have an alternative name or nickname that you would prefer to be called, please let me know. In both cases, I ask for your patience as I navigate my neurological eccentricities.

**Moodle:** Minimal to No Involvement. Unless something unusual happens: like the end of the world.

**UM Box:** Yes. PDF Documents will be shared on UM Box and you will upload Response Essays and Final Paper onto the platform, as well.

**All Response Essays** will be uploaded and returned through UMBox via a folder that only the individual student and I will be able to access. All assessment will be done online. Papers are due before class and UMBox timestamps will let me know when you have uploaded your papers. Papers will be graded on a rolling basis, and you may check to see when the graded papers are uploaded. A one week turn-around time is the usual for response, but depending upon circumstance it may take slightly longer.

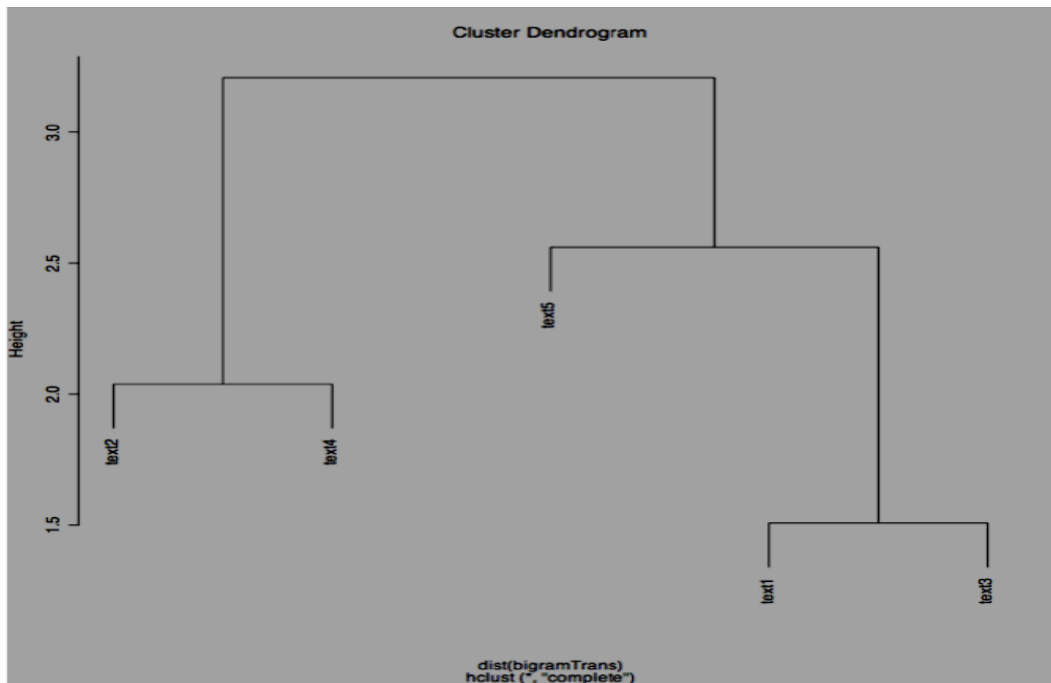
**PLEASE LABEL ALL FILES WITH YOUR NAME AND THE NAME OF THE ARTICLE (eg. Smith Response 1 Eagleton). Remember: ALL ESSAYS MUST BE UPLOADED IN MICROSOFT WORD DOC/DOCX FORM. IF YOU UPLOAD ANY OTHER FORM I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCESS IT OR TO READ IT. I WILL SEND YOU AN INVITE TO THE SUBMISSION FOLDER.**

**Scholastic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty—in as much as they keep the individual student as well as the collective community from learning—will result in an automatic F and may entail a variety of other sanctions up to and including expulsion from the University. FOR A DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM SEE <http://www.lib.umt.edu/services/plagiarism/index.htm>. The Provost's Office has asked all faculty at the University of Montana to attach the following statement on plagiarism to their syllabi: "All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student.conduct.php>

#### **THE PURCHASED PAPER**

"The Internet and email are now the tools of choice for plagiarism. Advertisements in college papers and in the regular press as well as on the Internet announce the availability of student and professional services, sometimes couched in such euphemistic terms as 'editorial assistance,' but often blatantly offering commercially prepared essays, academic papers, and even theses for sale. The easy availability of such assistance from various web sites has increased student 'cut and paste' activity to the degree that it is now expected and regarded as a common practice (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2000 a)" (31, Source).





“Lack of integrity and unethical behavior within the educational sector is inconsistent with one of the main purposes of education; that is to produce ‘good [critical] citizens, respectful of the law [and willing to challenge it when necessary], of human rights and fairness (it is also incompatible with any strategy that considers education as one of the principle means of fighting corruption)” (10, “Combating Academic Fraud: Towards a Culture of Integrity” <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001330/133038e.pdf>)

**English Department Goals for the Study and Use of Models of Literary Interpretation:**

- familiarity with the vocabulary of contemporary literary interpretation;
- working knowledge of schools of literary interpretation;
- overview of recent debates;
- development of skills of logical argument and interpretation;

**Goals for Student Writing:** We will work to develop and hone the following skills in all of our writing exercises this semester.

- voice that is consistent & appropriate to the audience & purpose;
- correct diction & sentence structure;
- sound judgments unified by a clear message;
- evidence or reasons supporting all judgments;
- logical linkage of judgments and evidence;

- transitions that connect a series of ideas and evidence;
- correct spelling and punctuation and proper MLA style documentation

Also: Marxism of a very literary kind will be discussed in this class, if you cannot abide the sound of the word "Marxism/Marx/Marxist" you should drop this class. Arguments that Literary Marxism is an analogue to Soviet Russia will not be entertained unless they are substantially located in fact rather than in mere knee-jerk ideological emotionalism unmoored from analysis and evidence.

#### **UNIVERSITY WIDE COVID PROTOCOLS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST**

- Mask use is required within the classroom or laboratory.
- If you feel sick and/or are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, please don't come to class and contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330.
- If you are required to isolate or quarantine, you will receive support in the class to ensure continued academic progress.
- UM recommends students get the COVID-19 vaccine. Please direct your questions or concerns about vaccines to Curry Health Center.
- Where social distancing (maintaining consistent 6 feet between individuals) is not possible, specific seating arrangements will be used to support contact tracing efforts. [FRANKLY, I HAVE NO IDEA HOW THIS WILL LOOK. WE WILL ATTEMPT SOCIAL DISTANCING.]
- Class attendance will be recorded to support contact tracing efforts.
- Drinking liquids and eating food is discouraged within the classroom.

# Course Calendar

## **August**

**Week One: Facts, Truth, and Research.**

T 31: TBA

## **September**

R 2: TBA

**Week Two: The Nature and History of English Literature. TBA**

T 7: TBA

R 9: TBA

**Week Three: Formalism and Structuralism.**

T 14: TBA

R 16: TBA

**Week Four: Authority/Authors and TBA**

T 21: TBA

R 23: TBA

**Week Five: Zadie Smith, "Meet the President."**

T 28: TBA

R 30: TBA

### **October—Subject to Change**

#### **Week Six: Essay Research at the Mansfield Library. Gender/Feminist Criticism KANE at ASA.**

T 5: **Essay Production: Step One.** Database and Research Day at The Mansfield Library, led by Professor Jill Howard. Mlib 283 [aka The Student Learning Center]. **MANDATORY ATTENDANCE.**

R 7: Borges, Jorge Luis, “The Garden of Forking Paths.” **PDF.**

#### **Week Seven: Post Structuralism/Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis**

T 12: TBA

R 14: TBA

#### **Week Eight: The Male Gaze and Feminist Film Analysis.**

T 19: TBA

R 21: TBA.

#### **Week Nine: Queer Studies and Trans Studies. Last Reading Essay Due.**

T 26: TBA

R 28: TBA

### **November**

#### **Week Ten: Workshops on Essays Due**

T 2: **Essay Production: Step Two.** In Class Presentations of Abstracts.

R 4: **Essay Production: Step Two.** In Class Presentations of Abstracts.

#### **Week Eleven: Ecocriticism. Holiday.**

T 9: TBA

R 11: Veteran’s Day Observed.

**Week Twelve: TBA**

T 16: TBA

R 18: TBA

**Week Thirteen: HOLIDAY Essay Production: Step Three: Rough Draft Due**

T 23: Class Cancelled: Rough Drafts Due in Conferences.

R 25: NO CLASS HOLIDAY.

**Week Fourteen: TBA**

T 30: TBA

**December**

R 2: TBA

**Week Fifteen: TBA**

T 7: TBA

R 9: TBA

**Week Sixteen: Finals Week.**

M 13: **Essay Production: Step Four.** Final Draft of Essay Due. 5:00 uploaded to UMBox.

R 18: **No Final Exam**, although one is listed on the schedule for Friday, December 13<sup>rd</sup> at 10:10-12:10 in the same room.