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LIT 300.01: Literary Criticism

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LIT 300 02 Literary Criticism Spring 2022

LIT #300: 01 /CRN 302244

T/R: 11:00-12:20 LA 205

Instructor: Katie Kane (she/they)

Co-Instructor: Abby Seethoff (she/her/hers)

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Spring Semester 2022

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: