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FLLG 501.01: Research Methods and Criticism and Theory

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Syllabus
FLLG 501: Research Methods and Criticism & Theory

Instructor: Christopher Anderson

Office: LA427

Office hours: Wednesdays 3-5, Thursdays 3-4

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Texts: David Lodge & Nigel Wood, eds. *Modern Criticism and Theory, a reader.* Second edition. (Essex, U.K., Person) 2000

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness.* Norton Critical Edition.

Goals: Successful students of this course can expect to master the research procedures (use of library card catalogues, bibliographies, indexes and electronic databases) essential for scholarship and necessary for graduate level study. Furthermore, students will be introduced to a wide variety of critical theories necessary for rigorous literary interpretation, and given the opportunity to apply one or more theories to literary texts. This course should be viewed ideally as an apprenticeship in rigorous and professional literary criticism.

Methods: Four sessions during the semester will take place in the Mansfield Library and be devoted to library research procedures. The remaining classes will be devoted to discussion of various critical models and how they apply to literary texts. The theories will be arranged thematically, beginning with linguistic theories (structuralism, semiotics, narratology) and moving through deconstruction theory, psychoanalytic theory, Marxist and ideological theories, feminist theories, hermeneutics and reception theories, and cognitive theories. The Norton Critical Edition of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* provides practical examples of literary criticism from a variety of critical approaches.

There will be **three papers** (5-7 pages) due, each requiring an application of a separate critical theory to a literary text (for example, an interpretation of a literary text using a psychoanalytic theory, an interpretation using reader-response theory, an interpretation using feminist theory). Note the due dates on the following schedule and plan ahead in order to present your best effort.

Your comprehension of all the critical models studied in the course will be assessed through a **mid-term exam** and a **final exam**.

Your responsibilities: Active participation in class discussions is required. This means that reading assignments must be completed before class, and questions and comments formulated about what a critical theory might mean to literature, film and popular culture and how such theories might be applied to specific texts. Papers must be turned in on the due date in order to receive a grade.

My responsibilities: Assure a high level of discussion centered on the texts at hand, devise paper topics and test questions that will further your learning, apply the same grading standards to all, and, when necessary, make myself available to you for individual instruction during my office hours.

Reading Schedule

The four sessions devoted to library research (schedule to be announced) will have no effect on reading assignments, i.e., you must prepare the required readings even if the class period is devoted to learning research procedures.

Week 1: Structuralist poetics

January 29 Introduction to course
January 31 *MC&T*, pp. 1-9, pp. 30-60; *HD*, pp.7-33

Week 2 Structuralism & Narratology

February 5 *MC&T*, pp. 104-136; 137-144; *HD*, pp. 33-54
February 7 *MC&T*, pp. 145-172; *HD*, pp. 54-76

Week 3 Structuralism & Narratology

February 12 *MC&T*, pp. 206-216; 393-402; *HD*, pp. 262-268
February 14 *MC&T*, pp. 331-347; *HD*, pp. 358-374

Week 4 Deconstruction

February 19 *MC&T*, pp. 88-103 **Library MLIB 283 Student Learning Center**
February 21 *MC&T*, pp. 241-253; 254-262

Week 5 Deconstruction

February 26 *MC&T*, pp. 331-347; 403-412
February 28 *MC&T*, pp. 475-493; 374-386 **First paper due**

Week 6 Psychoanalysis

March 5 *MC&T*, pp. 61-87; 217-229
March 7 *MC&T*, pp. 217-229; 263-270

Week 7 Psychoanalysis

March 12 *MC&T*, pp. 374-386; 387-392; 413-423
March 14 **Midterm Exam**

Week 8 Politics, ideology, cultural history
 March 18-22 **SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS**
 Readings: *MC&T*, pp. 10-29; 104-136; *HD*, pp.251-262

Week 9 Politics, ideology, cultural history
 March 26 *MC&T*, pp. 173-187; 206-216; *HD*, pp.268-280
 March 28 *MC&T*, pp. 271-286; 348-359

Week 10 Politics, ideology, cultural history
 April 2 *MC&T*, pp. 360-373; 387-392; *HD*, pp.280-285
 April 4 *MC&T*, pp. 403-412; 448-474; *HD*, pp.336

Week 11 Politics, ideology, cultural history
 April 9 *MC&T*, pp. 475-493; 494-511; *HD*, pp.336-357
 April 11 *MC&T*, pp. 494-511 **Second paper due**

Week 12 Feminism
 April 16 *MC&T*, pp. 263-270; 307-330
 April 18 *MC&T*, pp. 387-392; 413-423

Week 13 Feminism
 April 23 *MC&T*, pp. 424-447
 April 25 *MC&T*, pp. 448-474; 475-493

Week 14 Hermeneutics, reception theory, reader-response
 April 30 *MC&T*, pp. 188-205; 230-240
 May 2 *MC&T*, pp. 287-306; 424-447

Week 15 Cognitive literary scholarship
 May 7 *MC&T*, pp. 230-240; 512-520 **3rd paper due**
 May 10 *MC&T*, pp. 241-253

Week 16
 May 13-17: Final Exams: see class schedule, Spring 2002 for day and time of final exam for this class