ENLT 301.02: Applied Literary Criticism

Kathleen Kane

The University Of Montana

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi

Recommended Citation
Kane, Kathleen, "ENLT 301.02: Applied Literary Criticism" (2000). Syllabi. 4981.
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/4981

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
**Course Description**

In this introductory course in literary and cultural theory, we will attempt to explore representative schools and issues of contemporary criticism on their own terms and, further, to remain grounded during that analytic work in the material of specific literary and cultural texts. We will be working, therefore, to build an analytic and critical vocabulary for the activity of reading texts of various kinds. However, in addition to this “first-principles” objective, we will also attempt to engage with such complexities of current theoretical debate as “the question of the author,” the reconciliation of form and context, the agon of canon formation and canon-busting, and the late-twentieth century literary insurgencies of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Throughout the course we will be moving toward the present moment in which the range and the scope of the labor of the literary critic seems—in light of the rise of a whole host of non-traditional representational and narrative forms—to be expanding.

The course will culminate in an 8 week practicum involving consideration of the multiply incarnated cultural text of *Frankenstein*: Mary Shelley’s novel, James Whale’s films, Robert DeNiro’s monster, and other contemporary avatars.

**Policy Statement**

**Texts:**

Richter, David. *Falling Into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature.*
Wollstonecroft-Shelley. *Frankenstein.* (Smith ed.)

NB: Your texts are currently available in the Bookstore. You must bring the requisite text with you to class.
**Coursework:** Final grades will be determined by your performance in five separate categories of coursework:

1. Quizzes 10%
2. Critiques 30%
3. Midterm Examination 30%
4. 1 final research essay 30%
5. 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.

**Quizzes:** Over the course of the semester you will take a number of reading quizzes designed to ensure that your have read and thought about the readings for the day. I will administer these short quizzes at the beginning of the class. There will be no chance for make up quizzes for those who are absent or late on the day they were administered.

**Critiques:** Four times during the semester (Sept. 14 and 28, Oct. 12, and Nov. 16) you will submit written responses to assigned readings. These two-page (500-600 word) responses will involve engaging thoughtfully with a variety of theoretical arguments. Critical Responses are not short essays but are meant to fulfill three different interpretive tasks in about a couple of paragraphs apiece:

1) Summarize either one important or interesting problem that the text explores or a purpose that it serves in a way that explains what precisely it is that you find important or interesting about the problem or purpose.
2) Define one significant comparison, contrast or relationship between the text you’re writing about and an earlier work on our syllabus.
3) Copy down a specific passage of the text (from a phrase to a paragraph in length) that especially piqued, delighted, irritated, challenged, troubled or changed you and explain in an engaged fashion what it is about the paragraph that affected you in such a way.

**Midterm:** You will take your midterm on October 19, during regular course hours. The exam will consist of questions from the following categories:

1. short essay questions
2. long essay questions

**Final Essay** (includes Abstract and Rough Draft): This 8-10 page analytic and scholarly essay with attached bibliography represents the principal 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 circulating in the textual constellation of *Frankenstein*. In addition, you will be responsible for accessing and harnessing the larger debates surrounding the literary artifact, historical phenomenon, or theoretical 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 least two outside sources. (Consider purchasing a handbook like The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.)

**Production Schedule:**

1. On Tuesday, November 21, you will turn in an abstract (precis, plan, blueprint, conceptual map) of your final paper to me during conference in LA 111. You will need to include a working annotated bibliography of the sources and texts you will be engaged with.
2. On Tuesday, December 5, your Rough Draft will be due. As was the case with the abstract, you will meet with me in consultation over the rough draft in LA 111.
3. The Final Draft of the essay is due on the last day of class, Tuesday, December 19.
Attendance and Participation: Because this course depends upon the active and vocal support of all its members, attendance is required and will be recorded: four 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.

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.

Course Calendar

September

Week One: Beginnings & What is Literature?
T 5: Introduction to the course

Week Two: Questions of Readers and Reading

Week Three: English Literature in the World

Week Four: What We Read: Texts, Value, and the Canon
T 26: Richter, “What We Read: The Literary Canon and the Curriculum After the Culture Wars,” FiT 121-136; Tompkins, “Masterpiece Theater,” FiT, 137-146.
October

Week Five: Texts, Value, and the Canon


Week Six: Author, Reader and Text


R 12: Fish, “How to Recognize a Poem When You See One,” FiT, 267-278, Dasenbrock, “Do We Write the Text We Read?” FiT, 278-289. Critique #3 Due

Week Seven: & Midterm

T 17: Booth, “Who is Responsible in Ethical Criticism, and for What?” FiT, 349-355

R 19: Midterm Examination

Week Eight: Frankenstein

T 24: Library Orientation Day. Details TBA


Week Nine: Frankenstein

T 31: Frankenstein, 79-144.

November

R 2: Frankenstein, 144-189.

Week Ten: Filming Frank

T 7: Election Day: No Class


Week Eleven: Frankenstein on the Couch

Week Eleven: Frankenstein on the Couch

R 16: Smith, "Feminist Criticism and Frankenstein," 296-305; Smith, "'Cooped Up' with 'Sad Trash': Domesticity and the Sciences in Frankenstein, 313-331. Critique #4 Due

Week Twelve: Abstracts of Essay & Conferences

T 21: No Class: Conferences with Kane in LA 111. Abstract of Essay Due in Conference.

R 23: Holiday: No Class

Week Thirteen: Lesbian Panic, Marx, and Frankenstein


December

Week Fourteen: Rough Draft, Conferences

T 5: No Class: Conferences with Kane in LA 111. Rough Draft Due in Conference


Week Fifteen:

T 12: Film: Branagh, DeNiro, et al., Frankenstein. Screening TBA.

R 15: Film: Condon, McKellan, Redgrave, et al., Gods and Monsters; Last Class Day:

Week Sixteen: Finals Week

No Final in this class

T 19: Final Draft of Essay Due