Spring 2-1-2018

LIT 300.01: Literary Criticism

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Objectives and Expected Outcomes

This course introduces you to various literary theories and their application to interpreting/analyzing literary texts. You will familiarize yourself with critical approaches that have emerged since the 1900s, and then apply their theoretical frameworks to your interpretation of literature. After this course, you will be able to understand:

- major principles, arguments, and aims of major literary theories
- common terminology used in literary criticism
- the background, premises, and distinct characteristics of each critical theory
- the role of the author, the text, and the reader in modern, postmodern, and contemporary literary criticism
- the transnational turn in literary studies since 2000

You will demonstrate your understanding of literary criticism through your critical essays and research, and through your well-informed response to literary texts (both in class discussion and in your writing).

Required Texts

- Vincent B. Leitch, *American Literary Criticism since the 1930s*
- Ana Castillo, *So Far from God*
- Mariama Bâ, *So Long a Letter*
- David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly*
- Carson McCullers, *The Ballad of the Sad Café and Other Stories*
- Ntozake Shange, *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*

Classroom policies

1. You are not allowed to read newspapers or class-unrelated materials while class is in session.
2. The use of cell phones, beepers, or other electronic devices is prohibited during class.
3. Any persistent talking or sleeping while the instructor or another student is speaking will result in (1) a warning and (2) then your dismissal from the classroom.
4. You are permitted to use laptops during class for note-taking and other class-related work only.
5. Behave in a courteous and respectful manner toward your instructor and your fellow students.

E-mail correspondence
Please use your UM e-mail account for electronic correspondence with the instructor. You may expect my response within 48 hours (except weekends and holidays). I expect you to use a professional tone in your correspondence with me. E-mails that have no greeting or express a disrespectful tone will not be answered.

**Attendance and Tardiness**

1. Tardiness of between 5 and 10 minutes will be noted: each such tardiness after the first two will be counted as an unexcused absence; tardiness of 20 minutes or longer will be treated as an unexcused absence.
2. If you have to leave class early due to personal problems, inform me before class starts.
3. You are allowed TWO free absences. After your second unexcused absence, 15 points will be deducted for each additional absence. More than 5 unexcused absences will result in the failure of the course.
4. If you schedule an appointment with me and don’t show up, it counts as an unexcused absence.
5. If you miss no class, I will add 10 bonus points to your course grade.

**Assignments**

- 3 Essays: 
  - Essay # 1: four pages (100 points)
  - Essay # 2: six pages (150 points)
  - Essay # 3: eight pages (200 points)
- 2 In-class exams
- 1 Oral presentation
- Weekly reading quizzes

**Grades**

Grades will be assigned as percentage scores (0-1000) throughout the term. Ultimately, your final grade will be converted to the university’s letter grade system using this scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>931 &amp; above</td>
<td>A (900-930)</td>
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<tr>
<td>870-899</td>
<td>B+ (840-860)</td>
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<tr>
<td>770-799</td>
<td>C+ (740-760)</td>
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<tr>
<td>650-699</td>
<td>D (640 or below)</td>
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<tr>
<td>900-930</td>
<td>A- (890-900)</td>
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<tr>
<td>840-860</td>
<td>B (830-840)</td>
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<tr>
<td>740-760</td>
<td>C (730-740)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>640 or below</td>
<td>F (600 or below)</td>
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</tbody>
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- Essays 450 points
- Two exams 250 points (125 points/exam)
- One presentation 50 points
- Reading Quizzes 200 points
- Discussion 50 points

**TOTAL: 1,000 points**

**Policies on written assignments and in-class tests**

1. Late papers will be penalized with a 10% deduction for each day after the due date, including weekend days. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from turning in a paper on time, please talk to me BEFORE the paper is due. I am not likely to make allowances after the deadline has come and gone.
2. All papers are to be typed in 12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced. Please follow the MLA guidelines for formatting, citations, and documentations.
3. For each formal essay, you will have one week to enter all of my corrections and turn in the revised version. Failing to do this will result in a zero on the assignment.
4. Do not ask me to proofread your essays electronically (via email). If you need help with your papers, please schedule an appointment, or just come during my office hours.
5. Make-up assignments are for EXCUSED absences only (valid documents required).

Grade Appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade, you should first consult with me. You will have 5 days, from the time the grade is assigned/posted, to set up an appointment with me to discuss the grade. After 5 days, all grades are final.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations for coursework. To request accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible in the semester. I will work with you and 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).

Academic Integrity

Refer to http://life.umt.edu/VPSA/Student_Conduct.php for information about academic misconduct. If you are found guilty of academic misconduct, legal action will be taken. It is your responsibility as a student to understand the Student Conduct Code described in the link above.

Reading Schedule (subject to change)
The symbol [■] indicates readings that will be emailed to you.

WEEK 1: Jan. 22-28
Tues: Syllabus & Introduction
Thurs: Intro. to literary theory & criticism ■

WEEK 2: Jan. 29-Feb. 4
Tues: Marxist criticism since the 1930s (pp. 1-20) + Everyday Use ■ ABBY H.
Thurs: The New Criticism (21-51) + Snow + Monologue for an Onion ■ LAUREN

WEEK 3: Feb. 5-11
Tues: Flying Home + In the Garden of the North American Martyrs + Gravity ■ ISABEL
Thurs: Psychoanalysis + The Rocking Horse Winner ■ BRENDA N

WEEK 4: Feb. 12-18
Tues: I Want to Know Why + The Lottery + In Dreams Begin Responsibilities ■ MADISON
Thurs: Myth criticism (pp. 100-127) + The Enormous Radio ■ DAVIS
WEEK 5: Feb. 19-25
Tues: Reader-reponse criticism (pp. 181-202) + The Grave ■ KAYLA
Thurs: Literary structuralism and semiotics (pp. 203-227)

WEEK 6: Feb. 26-Mar. 4
►Essay # 1 due: Monday, 12:00 Noon, my office
Tues: Deconstructive criticism (pp. 228-261) + The Astronomer’s Wife ■ CATHARINE
Thurs: Postmodernism + The Garden of Forking Paths + How to Tell a True War Story ■ JAMES

WEEK 7: Mar. 5-11
Tues: Exam # 1
Thurs: Feminist criticism (262-282) + The Birthmark ■ CASSANDRA

WEEK 8: Mar. 12-18
Tues: So Far from God (pp. 1-129) WILLIAM
Thurs: So Far from God (pp. 130-end) JAKE

WEEK 9: Mar. 19-25
Tues: Black aesthetics (pp. 283-311) + The Screamers + Sanchez’s poems ■ JILLIAN
Thurs: For Colored Girls … PETER
►Essay # 2 due: Friday, 12:00 Noon, my office

WEEK 10: Mar. 26-Apr. 1
Spring Break

WEEK 11: Apr. 2-8
Tues: Playing in the Dark* + Everything That Rises Must Converge ■ CALLIE
Thurs: American criticism since 1987 (347-370)†

WEEK 12: Apr. 9-15
Tues: A Chicano Poem + The Billion Dollar Skeleton + Borders‡ ABBY F.
Thurs: So Long a Letter + Slingshot ■ BISHOP

WEEK 13: Apr. 16-22
Tues: Queer Theory+ Porcelain ■ JASON

* https://www.westga.edu/~jmasters/PlayingInTheDark0001.pdf
† With a focus on Postcolonialism
‡ https://uit.no/Content/329345/Thomas%20King%20Borders-1.pdf
THURS: The Ballad of the Sad Café + M. Butterfly ■ MICHAEL

WEEK 14: Apr. 23-29
► Essay #3 due: Monday, 12:00 Noon, my office
TUES: New Historicism + Once Upon a Time ■ EMILY
THURS: Trauma Theory§ + A Soldier’s Burial + Brother, When Will You Return? ■ DENAE

WEEK 15: Apr. 30-May 6
TUES: Environmentalism & ecocriticism + Two Big-Hearted River ■
THURS: Conclusion & Review (last day of class)

Exam #2: TBA