"So few of the hours of life are filled up with objects adequate to the mind of man..."
Samuel Johnson, The Rambler

Class room and time: Hagey Hall 139, Tu/Th 8:30-9:50
Instructor: Craig Love
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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-11:00, or by appointment

Course Description and Aim
In ordinary usage, the word criticism implies an action that most of us would prefer not doing, often with good reason. The pejorative sense of the word is also implied in the derivatives criticise, critical, and critic. We are more likely to find bitter, harsh, fierce, or scathing before the word criticism than good, great, fair, or incisive. The phrase constructive criticism is no less pejorative, at best implying an emperor in new clothes; for to "offer" such criticism is still to judge another person, to condemn them—or at least urge them—to change. Our language teaches us that criticism can be damning. The main goal of this course is to explore how it might prove a blessing as well: to seek the most productive—or better, creative—practices of criticism.

To achieve this goal we will learn and apply a variety of terms and techniques for literary and rhetorical analysis. We will survey different forms of ‘literary’ and ‘non-literary’ discourse, reading short works of prose and poetry, with a special emphasis on the latter. More generally, we will aim to be kritikoi, ‘discerning’ (in OED, sense 4: “recognizing or perceiving distinctly”). After some concentrated training and practice, you will emerge from this course with enhanced skills for literary study and greater strength for making literary-critical arguments.

Texts
The following texts are available at the UW Bookstore:

Other readings are either included in the free course reader (available to download on UW-ACE under “Lessons”), on reserve at the Dana Porter library, or on-line.

Assessment:
Attendance: 10%
Discussion Posts: 20%
Midterm Test: 20%
6-8 page essay: 30%
Final Test: 20%
Schedule of Classes

Readings are listed in abbreviated form after each date below. The legend:
CR = Course Reader
DPR = Reserves (Dana Porter Library)
JD = Jeffery Donaldson, Palilalia
NPH = New Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms
PHA = Plato, Phaedrus
TAL = text and article links posted on UW-ACE under “Lessons”

Tuesday, Sept. 15
Introduction: Greetings and Explications
Reading: Donaldson, “Rescue”; Birney, “1984 minus 17 & counting at u of waterloo”

Thursday, Sept. 17
Literature, Reading and Criticism
CR: Wilde, selections from The Critic as Artist; Emerson, selections from “Self-Reliance”
NPH: “Interpretation” (136-41)

Tuesday, Sept. 22
Words, Syntax
CR: Keats, “Ode to a Nightingale”

Thursday, Sept. 24
Paradox and Ambiguity
NPH: “Ambiguity” (15-16), “Paradox” (216)

Tuesday, Sept. 29
Patterns of Sound and the Line
CR: Skelton, selection from “Colin Clout”
TAL: Auden, “Musée des Beaux Arts”

Thursday, Oct. 1
Dialogue, Monologue, and Soliloquy in the Drama
CR: Shakespeare, two scenes from King Lear (1.1, 4.6), Launce’s “When a man’s servant shall play the cur with him,” Falstaff’s definition of “honour,” Richard II’s “I have been studying how to compare”

Tuesday, Oct. 6
Dramatic Monologue and the Lyric
CR: Browning, “My Last Duchess”; Dickinson, “Because that you are going”
NPH: “Lyric” (172-80)

Thursday, Oct. 8
*Guest Lecture by Jeffery Donaldson, poet and Associate Professor (McMaster University)*
JD: Palilalia
NPH: to be announced
Tuesday, Oct. 13
Reference, Allusion, Echo
CR: “Selected Chapters and Verses from the King James Version of the Bible”; Dickinson, “A little east of Jordan,” “It always felt to me a wrong,” “Because that you are going,” “Abraham to kill him”

Thursday, Oct. 15
Rhythm, Line, Stanza
CR: “Selected Passages Illustrating Various Meters”; Dickinson, “Where bells no more affright the morn,” “I never felt at home below”; Watts, “When I can read my title clear,” “There is a land of pure delight”

Tuesday, Oct. 20
***MIDTERM TEST***

Thursday, Oct. 22
The Essay

Tuesday, Oct. 27
Metaphor (Four Master Tropes, Part 1)
CR: Herbert, “Prayer (I)”; Vaughan, “The Retreat”; Shelley, selection from “To a Skylark”; Fielding, two extended similes from Tom Jones
NPH: “Metaphor” (185-90), “Simile” (271-73)

Thursday, Oct. 29
Entr’acte le premier: Allegory
CR: Bunyan, excerpt from The Pilgrim’s Progress
PHA: Plato, “Socrates’ Second Speech” (244a-257b)
NPH: “Allegory” (7-12)

Tuesday, Nov. 3
Interlude: Guest lecture by Randy Harris, Professor of Linguistics, Rhetoric, and Communication Design (U of W)
CR: “Some Figures of Speech: A List”; Thucydides, Pericles’ funeral oration
NPH: “Anaphora” (17-18), “Figure, Scheme, Tropé” (90-92), “Hyperbaton” (109-11), “Parallelism” (217-19)

Thursday, Nov. 5
Metonymy and Synecdoche (Four Master Tropes, Parts 2 and 3)
CR: “Some Examples of Metonymy and Synecdoche: A List”
NPH: “Metonymy” (190-91), “Synecdoche” (302-03)
***ESSAY DUE***

Tuesday, Nov. 10
Entr’acte le deuxième: Sentimentalism
CR: Vane, “Are we almost there?”; Stowe, selection from Uncle Tom’s Cabin
Thursday, Nov. 12
Irony (Four Master Tropes, Part 4)
CR: Owen, "Dulce Et Decorum Est"
PFA: Socrates’ discussion of writing (274b-277a)
NPH: "Irony" (147-49)

Tuesday, Nov. 17
Two Basic Functions of Plot

Thursday, Nov. 19
Focalisation
CR: Joyce, “Eveline”
TAL: Anthony Hecht, “More Light, More Light”

Tuesday, Nov. 24
Narrative Setting
CR: Shakespeare, King Lear, 1.1, 4.6
PFA: Plato’s scene-setting (227a-230e)

Thursday, Nov. 26
The Varieties of Discourse
PFA: complete dialogue

Tuesday, Dec. 1
The Varieties of Discourse, continued
PFA: “Appendix: Early Greek Love Poetry”

Thursday, Dec. 3
***FINAL TEST***
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Class Structure and Expectations
With some exceptions, we will use our classroom as a “workshop”—a place to learn and practise certain techniques of criticism. I will lecture as necessary. We will spend most class time discussing a set of prescribed topics and readings, and regular contributions to the conversation will be encouraged from everyone. We will also do some work in small groups.

Each person is expected to have read all the assigned texts in their entirety before each class. Most of the texts are quite short, and those which aren’t have been assigned for specific reasons. In class, we will read one of the texts (and often only a short passage of one) closely, drawing on the other readings to help do so. In addition to a copy of all appropriate texts, everyone must bring his or her copy of the Princeton Handbook. We will consult it frequently in class.
I expect everyone to make the classroom a pleasant place for everyone else. This means we should demonstrate courtesy and respect to all—in a word, 'openness' in the broadest sense—and hostility to none. This means sarcasm and irony are 'out,' tolerance and sympathy are 'in.' This includes not only listening and responding to what others say but refraining from gossip (whispering, passing notes) as well as the great temptation to read what others are writing down. This does not mean we should not disagree with each other, but our aim in doing so should always be to further the discussion, not trounce a fellow discussant. Although I hope each discussion holds some excitement for everyone, I hope nobody will get too heated.

I am happy to answer emails, but expect to wait at least a day or two for a reply. Complex matters are better discussed *viva voce*—in person or by phone.

**Participation:**
I hope everyone will participate regularly in the form of questions posed to other class members, comments on the reading, etc., *whenever you wish to*. But this mark is based on your group work in class. Each group will submit an attendance sheet listing the names of members.

**Discussion Posts:**
Discussion posts must consist of three parts: (1) a quotation from one of the assigned readings, (2) your commentary upon the passage quoted, with reference to the NPH or one of the critical readings, (3) a question relating to *something specific* beyond the passage. Note that by "something specific" I'm leaving you free to specify whether this will be a critical term or another text. The mark for this assignment is based on your posting five discussion posts and being ready to discuss these in class, respond to questions relating to them, etc. You need only be prepared to represent these in class; you may not have a chance to.

Discussion posts will be read but not graded. I reserve the right to request that you rewrite a post if it fails to show a high level of engagement with the topic and the same level of clarity and organisation in expression and argument.

**Midterm Test:**
This is a 'half-openbook' test, the 'half' referring to *The New Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms*, which you are expected to bring and allude to in the essays of both tests. You need not quote from the handbook; you need only demonstrate that you can use it as an effective reference tool.

For **Option A**, you will begin the test by transcribing a short poem from memory. This means that part of your test preparation will involve memorising this poem, which you will choose from a list I'll post on ACE by the third week. After transcribing the poem, you will proceed to write a short essay (roughly four to five pages, double-spaced, by hand). The essay (worth fifteen marks) must present an argument in response to one of several questions. You must substantiate your argument by careful attention to the poem. The same is true of **Option B**, except that in this case you will transcribe two poems from memory (two and a half marks each). You will then proceed to write two shorter essays (roughly two to three pages each)—the same ones described in Option 1 (worth seven and a half marks each). You will be able to make a choice between these two options on the day of the test, as long, of course, as you have memorised two poems in preparation for the test.
Although your transcription will be graded according to its accuracy (a perfect transcription is worth five marks), this test is principally designed for you to display how well you have internalised the critical methods we will have covered up to this point. It is assumed that you will practise using these methods on the poem beforehand.

In addition to memorising the poem (or two), you might prepare further by reading over *The Princeton Handbook* terms we’ve covered from the beginning of the course to the last class before the test. (I’ll help you make a ‘short list’ of terms if asked.)

**6-8 page essay:**
The essay will be an analysis of a work of your choice, chosen in consultation with me. It will give you an opportunity to put to work some of the terms and techniques you’ve learned during the course. Essays will be graded according to the methods you employ, the appropriateness of these methods for your chosen text, and generally how clear and cleverly formed they are in expression and argument. In a word, they will be graded according to how well they demonstrate criticism. Such demonstration requires the sensible articulation of sound critical methods, both of which are likely to emerge only through a series of major revisions. You are strongly encouraged to approach a classmate for help in your revisions.

Use MLA style for documenting all page and line references, and for formatting your works cited page. If you compose your work on computer, be sure to back it up regularly to prevent technological mishaps.

**Final Test:**
This test will require that you bring all of the texts covered since the midterm. You will be given a list of around ten terms and texts to use. You will then write four short-answer analytical responses demonstrating how a given term can illuminate a given text (five marks each). You are expected to use the handbook, as well as other critical reading, when helpful.

**Deadlines, Extensions:**
In his great *Book of Ephraim*, James Merrill personifies the Deadline as an “ancient foe.” It is hoped that you will conquer this “foe” not simply by handing things in on time but by discovering some creative pressures in your contest with it.

All discussion posts must be submitted by midnight two days prior to the class to which they relate (either Sunday or Tuesday). You have eleven chances to submit and be present to discuss five posts, so no extensions will be given. The point of these posts is to prepare everyone (not just the person posting) for class discussions, and this leaves little more than a day for others to read all posts.

All essays are to be submitted to me in person in class or during office hours; I will also use these times to return them once graded. You may also use the drop box in the main corridor of the English Department in Hagey Hall (just down a bit from Jenn Basler’s office). Extensions must be negotiated at least a week beforehand, except in the case of medical emergencies. Unless an extension has been granted, I will subtract one percent per day from the essay grade.
If you miss a test, you will receive a grade of zero unless you have prearranged a different date for writing it or have a documented excuse.

"Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term."

"Academic Integrity: in order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information."

"Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of her or his university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance."

"Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his or her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm."

"Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm."

All sources of information that you use in your written work in this class must be cited fully and scrupulously. If I suspect that you have committed an academic offence, including plagiarism, I will report it to the Associate Dean; if the offence is confirmed, the normal result is a failing grade on the assignment and academic probation.