Course Description:
English 251B, a course on literary theory and critical regimes, prepares you to inquire into and write about art and literature from various perspectives. We will survey debates over millennia on the making and receiving of literature, its social role, the motives of the writer and the reader, the relation between fiction and reality, and identity. The course will cover various orientations in literary theory and strategies with which they have theorized about representation and meaning. We will proceed roughly chronologically while attempting to relate theories that established Literary Study as a discipline. Literary criticism has developed a language of its own and for you to be able to understand and write about literature and other artifacts, you will also be taught a number of literary-theoretical concepts to gain the ability to discourse coherently, concisely and effectively on issues that both literary texts and literary theory raise.

Objective:
- a basic understanding of the evolution of literary theory from ancient times to the present,
- the ability to deploy the key theoretical concepts in the study and critique of literary texts,
- the ability to discourse concisely and effectively on issues in literary theory,
- the ability to write well-evidenced arguments about literary theory and literature,
- an enhanced sense of the social value of literature and of art

Class Work (main tasks): to “participate” and “produce” in all of these ways:
- To come to class prepared with the assigned readings in front of you;
- To communicate verbally ideas about literary theory clearly in class and group discussions;
- To show your grasp of the course material, specifically through writing about and discussing ideas in tests, essays, and in-class exercises;
- To ask questions in each meeting, listen to your peers, and respond to them, based on careful reflection, analysis, and revision.

Assignments and Values:
Two tests: 15% each: 1) May 31; 2) June 21
An essay (1500-2000 words), due July 17: 30%.
Final exam: 30%.
In-class work: 10%.
Full description of this mark break-down is at the end of the reading schedule.
Texts:

Required:

*Required “on reserve”* at Dana Porter Library:

Recommended:
Recommended Object Studies: to instantiate some of the concepts, I might refer to the following, but not always:
Novels 1. Cormac McCarthy *The Road*
2. Chuck Palahniuk *Fight Club*
Movies 1. *The Road*
2. *Fight Club*

Approximate Schedule of Readings:

*ALWAYS BRING YOUR TEXT TO CLASS!*

*Primary readings are in theory from the anthology and texts on reserve. Readings range in length from two to about 20 pages. Use fast reading to finish the readings and grasp the main ideas. This is one of your most important courses in our discipline and it can direct you to your future studies in the field.*

May 1  Introductions

**Literary Theory: Overview of Orientations**

May 3
Introduction to Theory and Criticism (1-33 N)

**Representation**

May 8 10 Augustine (154-160 N); Levi-Strauss (1277-1286 N) John Lock (106-111 S); Ferdinand De Saussure (850-866 N); Ludwig Wittgenstein (115-119 S)

**Literariness**

May 15 17 Boris Eichenbaum (925-950 N); Cleanth Brooks (1217-1229 N); Shklovsky (274-277 S)

**System and Structure**

May 22 24 Northrop Frye (1304-1314 N); Nietzsche (383-385 S); Bakhtin (1076-1106 N); J. L. Austin (1289-1301 N);

May 29 Tzvetan Todorov (2023-2030 N); F. Jameson (265-267 S) and (1822-1846 N)
Test One: May 31st

Reader and Text

Jun 5 7 I. A. Richards (146-149 S); William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley (1232-1261 N); Roland Barthes “Death of the Author” (1322-1326 N)

Jun 12 Stanly Fish (1974-1992 N); Wolfgang Iser (1524-1532 N); Hans Robert Jauss (1406-1420 N).

Affect and Emotion

Jun 14 19 Aristotle (88-112 N, read with a focus on emotions); Rene Rapin (193-194 S); Freud (225-227 S); William Empson (196-197 S); George Poulet (200-202 S); Longinus (167-169 S); Edmund Burke (454-460 N); I. A. Richards (146-149 S)

Test Two: June 21st

Culture and Politics

Jun 26 Plato (476-477 S); Raymond Williams (431-434 & 526-530 S); Althusser (1335-1360 N); Laura Mulvey (2081-2095 N)

Jun 28 Foucault (437-438 S); Dick Hebdige (2481-2488 N); Benjamin (447-452 S); Pierre Macherey (463-466 S)

Sexuality

Jul 3 5 De Beauvoir (1265-1272 N), Haraway (2190-2220 N), Cixous (1942-1959 N); Judith Butler (2540-2553 N)

Sexuality

Jul 10 Gloria Andalzua (2098-2109 N); Eve Kosofsky Sedwick (2466-2477 N)

Poststructuralism/Deconstruction

Jul 12 17 Jaccques Derrida (1688-1698); Roland Barthes (1326-1331 N)

ESSAY DUE July 17th

Post-Colonialism

Jul 19 24 Edward Said (1886-1888 N); Benedict Anderson (1916-1922 N); Gayayatri C. Spivak (2114-2126 N).

Assignments and Values:

Two tests: 15% each. An essay (1500-200 words), due July 17: 30%. Final exam: 30%. In-class work: 10%.

1. Each test is worth 15%. Each test will consist of a series of questions for each of which you will write mini-essay answers. The tests will examine you only on the material that have been taught by the time of the test. The final exam tests you on all the course material; that is, the final exam will include the material already examined in test 1 and test 2.

2. You will write an essay (30%) applying the work of three theorists on the course to a literary or other text (including film); I encourage interdisciplinary papers applied on both literature and film. Length of the essay is 1500-2000 words. The essay is not particularly long but I expect it to be well-written, thoughtful, and based on a thorough reading of both theory and text. Essays
must be well-referenced. My marking will take into account organization of your discussion, argumentation; rhetorical skill, written style, use of evidence, insight in analysis, and the validity and interest of your argument. I will distribute an assignment sheet by July 3. If you want to develop your own topic, see me.

3. The final 2.5-hour exam (30%) will take place during the final exam period. It will consist of mini-essays on passages from the course reading. A prep sheet will be distributed at the last class.

4. In-class work (10%) refers primarily to participation and informal writing assignments. Participation means attendance, asking considered questions, sharing impressions and ideas, and responding to other students. You must attend classes to keep up with material, grasp the tenor of the course, and understand the contextual dimensions of the material you read at home. In-class writing (about once a week) will help you prepare for writing tests and the essay. These exercises will receive comments but no mark; they will be assessed as part of your overall in-class performance.

Policies:

Attendance: If you want to make the most of the course, regular attendance will be important for a number of related reasons. 1. “LEARN” will be used in a limited way. All information about the course, with a couple of exceptions, will be disseminated in class. 2. Literary knowledge is rhetorical, that is, it emerges from and is sustained in ongoing debate by scholars, teachers, critics, students, and readers generally. You have to participate in it to know it. 3. You will learn best not just by reading texts passively on your own, but by attending class and participating in discussion. I will know all your names and will call on you, at the very least, to read aloud in class. 4. You will have to know what goes on in class to prepare for the two tests and the final exam.

Submitting papers: Hand in essays to me in class on the due date. But also submit your papers on LEAR uploaded to the designated mail boxes. Alternatively, leave your essay in the English department drop box on the second floor of Hagey Hall before 4 p.m. on the due date. Print essays on white paper, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point or similar font. Do not submit your paper in a duo-tang or plastic cover. A cover sheet is not necessary either. Your name and course information along with the date should appear in the top left corner of the first page of your essay. All pages should be stapled. Prospective English majors should get to know MLA style.

Late papers: Late papers will be penalized 10% per day late, but no essay will be graded over 5 days late. A paper may be submitted one or maximum two days late when you make a request, explaining reasons, for an extension before the due date. Longer extensions will be given only in the case of documented incapacitation.

Plagiarism: Outside of the university, plagiarism may be “actionable.” That is, legal action may be taken against you for using the words or ideas of other people without proper attribution. Plagiarism is also an ethical matter. It is your responsibility to understand and avoid plagiarism. See “Notes from the Arts Faculty” below.

Office location and hours: My office is 1089 in PAS; office hours are T/Th 11-12:20. My office hours are for you; please do not hesitate to drop by and see me to discuss any aspect of the course. I am often in my office outside of posted hours, and I would be happy to discuss course matters with you whenever you find me in and not too busy.

Laptops: I strongly discourage you from using a laptop in class. It is simply too easy to click to email, facebook, or other sites during class. Anyone would be tempted. And when you do things
other than notetaking with your laptop, you’re not the only student mentally checking out: everyone around you will be distracted. Finally, the screen itself is a barrier between you and the class and therefore a barrier to participation. If you choose to use a laptop, I may require you to sit immediately in front of me or, if you appear to be surfing the internet, to close the laptop for the remainder of the course.

Notes from the Faculty of Arts

Academic Integrity:
**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/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 offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 – Student Discipline, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm)

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.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](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (University):** [http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)