Spring/Summer 1998

**English 251B - Criticism 2 (Literary Theory)**
T Th 8:30-10, HH150

Instructor: Kevin McGuirk HH263; phone x2419; office hours: T Th 11-12; T 6-7

This course will introduce you to a number of theories relevant to literary study.

**TEXTS:**
James Joyce, *The Dead: Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism*, ed. Daniel Schwartz, St Martin’s
Gerald Graff, “Disliking Books at an Early Age” (on reserve at Porter Library)
Laura Mulvey, from “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (on reserve)

**SCHEDULE** (minor adjustments may be made as we proceed):

May 5 introductions
May 7 Graff, “Disliking Books at an Early Age” (on reserve)

**NOTE:** from May 12 to June 25 all page references are to *The Theory of Criticism*

May 12 *literature and “life”:* Arnold 494-501, James 501, Leavis 507
May 14 *19th century theories of poetry:* Wordsworth 86, 175, Mill 178

May 19 *symbolism:* Plato 12, Yeats 31, Stevens 36
May 21 *realism:* Zola 51, Auerbach 56, 328, Brecht 66

May 26 *modernisms:* Pater 249, Eliot 310; Pound 307; Schlovsky 275
May 28 *structuralism:* Culler 379, Jakobson 367, Lodge 371

June 2 de Saussure 113, 351, Barthes 318
June 4 *the “New Criticism”:* Tate 283, Ransom 279, Brooks 286

June 9 *narrative theories:* James 335, 336, Booth 337
June 11 Propp 353, Genette 365

June 16 *poststructuralism:* Nietzsche 383, Derrida 386, Hartman 394
June 18 *ideology and politics:* Althusser 459, Macherey 463

June 23 Marx 446, Benjamin 447, 449, De Beauvoir 533

**ESSAY DUE**

NOTE: from June 30 to July 21 all page references are to *The Dead*

June 30 screening of film *The Dead*
July 2 *psychoanalytic criticism:* Schwarz 102-24 plus preceeding introductory material

July 7 *reader-response criticism:* Rabinowitz 137-49 plus preceeding introductory material
July 9 *the “new historicism”:* Levenson 163-77 plus preceeding introductory material
ASSIGNMENTS AND VALUES:

1. In-class assignments: 30%
2. Essay, due June 25 (June 26 at the latest): 30%
3. Final exam (two hours): 30%
4. Recitation, presentation, poem, or brief narrative: 5%
5. Class participation: 5%

1. You will perform about 10 brief unscheduled written assignments in class during the course of the term. Six of these will be counted (5% each towards your final mark). Each assignment will be relevant to the work under discussion on the day it is given. Sometimes assignments will take place at the beginning of class, sometimes at the end. They will vary a good deal, but their intent will always be to test your engagement with ideas; they will not be tests of memorizable facts. In most cases, you will be able to perform them with your text open. For example, at the beginning of a class, I might ask you to choose what you regard as the key sentence of a piece you have just read for class and to explain why it is the key sentence. At the end of class, I might ask you to summarize the important points of the class. I will mark these assignments quickly and with few comments. Their purpose is less to evaluate you than to keep you engaged with the course material. The best way to learn theory is to work with it: write about it, talk about it. That only (the best) six of them will count towards your final grade allows you some latitude for missed readings, lapses in critical attention, etc.

2. An essay of about 1500 words. Topics will be distributed in advance of the due date (June 25).

3. A final exam, two hours in length, during the exam period. Format will be explained in class during the term.

4. Choose one of the following for 5% of your grade:
   i) write a poem of at least 14 lines or a brief narrative responding to a theoretical reading on the course (not including the story “The Dead”) and 100 words explaining the relation between the theory and your poem or narrative.
   ii) recite from memory, to the class, a passage of theory from the course about the length of a sonnet.
   iii) produce a 5-minute critical and/or creative presentation, preferably with a partner or group, relating to one or more readings (not “The Dead”) on the course.

NOTE: In week two or three, I will pass around a sheet on which you should indicate your intentions with respect to assignment 4 (what you want to do and when you will do it).

5. “Class participation” means, at a minimum, regular attendance. It means, at a maximum, attendance, commentary on the readings, and questions.