ENGLISH 251B

The Practice and Theory of Criticism
(emphasis on fiction, drama, and satire)

Co-op Section

SYLLABUS for SPRING, 1985

Following on English 251A, this term course completes the introduction to close reading of literary texts, focussing on examples of fiction, drama, and satire. The theoretic part of the course is integrated with the applied, being concerned with theories of the genres examined.

The texts for the theoretic part are three prescribed for English 251A: Kaplan's Criticism: The Major Statements, Holman's Handbook to Literature, and Thomas's The Fizz Inside. These will be supplemented with a number of hand-outs. The test at the end of the course will allow for the testing of theories against the practice, and vice versa. As for marks, the test will weigh as heavily as one of the critiques.

Examples of the various genres will be approached in this order (and in the texts indicated):

- short stories, in Mark Schorer's The Story, 2nd ed. (Prentice-Hall)


- tragedy, viz., The Plough and the Stars in Sean O'Casey's Three Plays (Macmillan)

- comedy, viz., Arms and the Man in Shaw's Plays Pleasant (Penguin)

- satire, viz., Giraudoux's Tiger at the Gates, tr. Fry (to be distributed)

For the writing and submitting of critiques, the class will form two groups: those with surname initials in the first half of the alphabet will constitute Castor group, and those with surname initials in the second half will populate Pollux group. These two groups will write on parallel topics,
after an oral discussion, in the classroom, of analogous works. On those occasions when only one group has submitted a critique, the members of the other group will be expected, even more than is usual, to answer questions and to contribute to the analytical discussion of the work being examined.

**Schedule**

Critiques are to be submitted to HH 263 by 5:00 p.m. on the following days:


1 (b) May 21. Pollux's critique (1000 words) on a short story.

2. June 3 (Monday). Both Castor's and Pollux's critiques (1500 words) on an aspect of *Heart of Darkness*.

3 (a) June 18. Castor's critique (1500 words) on tragedy.

3 (b) July 2. Pollux's critique (1500 words) on comedy.

4 (a) July 16. Pollux's critique (1500 words) on satire.

4 (b) July 19 (Friday). Castor's critique (1500 words) on satire.

In addition, all students will write


**Topics for Critiques**


1 (b). Pollux critiques on the use of narrative voice in *Sausage and Beer*, due May 21.

2. Critiques by both Castor and Pollux on *Heart of Darkness*, due June 3.

One of the following:

(a) The use of various characters to illustrate the presence or absence of restraint.

(b) The use to which is put the account of the journey up the river from the central station to Kurtz's station.
3 (a). Castor critiques on *The Plough and the Stars*, due June 18. One of the following:

(a) The use made of the character Bessie Burgess.

(b) The use made of Act III in the creation of tragedy.

3 (b). Pollux critiques on *Arms and the Man*, due July 2. One of the following:

(a) The contribution of Louka and Nicola to the communication of the theme.

(b) The contribution to the communication of the theme by the scenes in Act II from the entry of Sergius to the re-entry of Raina dressed for an excursion (pp. 45-53).

4 (a). Pollux critiques on *Tiger at the Gates*, due July 16. One of the following:

(a) The ways in which human war-mongers are satirized.

(b) The ways in which "the elements" are satirized for causing war.

4 (b). Castor critiques on *Tiger at the Gates*, due July 19 (Friday). One of the following:

(a) The ways in which Hector is satirized in his attempts to preserve peace.

(b) The ways in which characters other than Hector are satirized in their attempts to preserve peace.