AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In this second part of the Practice and Theory of Criticism we will continue training in close reading, applying it to drama and prose fiction. Also, we will study the ideas that have shaped and controlled the changing ways in which authors have written, readers have read, and critics have examined literature.

We will study two kinds of tragedy -- Sophocles' Antigone and Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra and a popular comedy, Shaw's Arms and the Man.

Among the critical ideas are the seminal works of ancient writers -- Plato, Aristotle, Horace and Longinus -- and in the work that made them accessible to the English -- Sidney's Apology for Poetry. Also we will survey selected ideas from the work of succeeding Britons and Americans. Finally, we will sample current literary theory and its application.

We will look at recent fiction to see how critical theory has affected it and how we can use critical theory to understand it better.

WORK REQUIRED

Texts:

Conrad, Heart of Darkness: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism, St. Martin's.
Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra, Pelican.
Shaw, Plays Pleasant, Penguin.

Reading:

Read all the assigned works before we take them up in class. You cannot hope to benefit fully from the lectures (which, unlike book reviews, assume a reading of the book) or discussions unless you have the expected listening and participating readiness.

As you read, take notes, make marginalia, ask yourself questions, answer them as you read on; don't just sit there running your eyes across the page; get actively involved with the reading experience. "Escape" reading or reading strictly for pleasure is great fun, but we don't learn as much as when we pay more active attention. When you finish a work or a section, sum up. Write a brief response, critique, ask questions about elements that puzzled you. Keep a reading journal. Bring it to class and draw on it.

Think about what you have read and be prepared at any time to comment usefully or to ask perceptive questions (or both) about your reading. Have opinions; express them; defend them with citation and interpretation from the works, your critical reading, and your experience of life. If you contribute significantly in class you may earn 20% of your mark that way.
Order of Readings

Sophocles, Antigone
Plato, Republic X
Aristotle, Poetics
Horace, Ars Poetica; Longinus, On the Sublime Selections
Sidney, Apology for Poetry (selection)
Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra
Dryden, An Essay of Dramatic Poesy; Pope, Essay on Criticism (selections)
Johnson, Preface to Shakespeare (selection)
Shaw, Arms and the Man
James, The Art of Fiction (selection)
Eliot, Tradition and the Individual Talent
Brooks, Irony as a Principle of Structure
Frye, The Archetypes of Literature
Conrad, Heart of Darkness
Fish, Is There a Text in this Class?
Iser, Interaction Between Text and Reader
Todorov, Reading as Construction
Reader-Response Criticism and Heart of Darkness
Baym, Melodramas of Beset Mankind
Showalter, Toward a Feminist Poetics
Feminist Criticism and Heart of Darkness
New Historicism Criticism and Heart of Darkness

Written Work

You will have opportunity to submit two critiques on drama (early in June and July) and one on fiction (early in August) of 1000 words each. You may also write two tests on theory and its practice (26 June & 24 July [or early in August]). Each written assignment is worth 20% of your mark.

Oral Participation

You may wish to participate actively enough to earn marks for class discussion. Announce your intention to me in writing by 3 June. Participation is worth 20% of your final mark. In addition or instead, you may present an oral seminar (15 minutes) on one of the readings (20%).

EVALUATION

If you have been counting, the work so far totals 140%, intentionally so. You may wish to do only 100% or you may wish to try 120-140%, forcing me to consider only the best 100%. However, be sure you submit at least five pieces of work (oral and written). There will be no excuses for coming up short. Late critiques will not be allowed and missed exams will not be made up without appropriate medical documentation.

THE PROFESSOR

I am available outside of class as well as in and enjoy talking with students, professionally and socially, so come by. I have been known to serve a good cup of tea. Or just sit and talk business. Although I am often in my office, I also work elsewhere (in the library or at home), so please do not come by expecting to find me outside office hours. Instead, stop after class or call me for an appointment. If I'm not in when you phone, leave a message with the secretary who answers my phone. I will return your call.

Office HH 270
Phone: 2419

Office Hours:
9:30-12 MW
and by appointment