ENGLISH 251B (002)
LITERARY CRITICISM: THEORY

HH 138
Instructor: Paul Kreller
Office: HH 262
Office Hours: Mon. & Wed.
11:30 – 12:30

Mon. & Wed., 10 – 11:20
Telephone: (H) 519-669-2421
Home (I) 519-888-4567 ext 33398
Email: pdwkrell@uwaterloo.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

While English 251A focuses on the practical application of literary criticism, English 251B emphasizes the theoretical approach. English 251B centers on the questions: What is literature? What is language? How are they related? A key issue concerns representation. How can marks on the page or sounds in the air represent life? This leads to questions about what writers and readers do with literature, and about the cultural, social and political contexts in which they do it.

The course is not a historical survey. Readings emphasize 20th-century theories, but representative works from the classical period (Plato, Aristotle, Longinus) and from the 19th century (Blake, Wordsworth, Mill, Nietzsche, Wilde) are included for background and comparison. Because we will not be concerned with what critics have said about specific texts, the course will not require you to do secondary research.

OBJECTIVES:

The basic aim of English 251B is to help you to become a more thoughtful and perceptive reader of both literary and theoretical texts. Specifically, the course introduces you to some terms and theories in literary criticism and explores how they can be applied to texts. Written work should help you to articulate your understanding of these theories and your responses to texts. I hope that, in the process, the course will also aid your enjoyment of reading.

TEXTS:

The following texts are required:
Raman Selden, Theory of Criticism (Longman)
Robert Louis Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Broadview)
English 251B: Courseware Package (available in the Bookstore)

The following text is recommended:
Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArthur, The Little, Brown Compact Handbook, 3rd
Canadian Edition (Addison-Wesley).
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

I. Weeks beginning May 2, 9, 16: Representation:

Mimesis and Realism:
    Plato (12-18); Aristotle (45-51); Zola (54-56); Brecht (66-73); Shklovsky (274-76)

Nature, Truth, and Art (The Views of Classicism, Romanticism, Aestheticism):
    S. Johnson (89); Wordsworth (86-88); Blake (91-94); Wilde (252-53)

II. Weeks beginning May 23, 30; June 6: Subjectivity and Reader Response:

Subjectivity and Emotive Theories:
    Longinus (153-54); Wordsworth (175-78); Mill (178-80).

"New Criticism":
    Richards (182-84); Wimsatt (314-16)

Reader Response:
    Manguel (Courseware Package: “The Last Page,” “Endpaper Pages”);
    Poulet (200-202); Iser (214-17); Barthes (299-302); “What Is Reader Response
    Criticism?” (Courseware Package)

Unconscious Processes:
    Freud (225-27); Holland (handout); “What Is Psychoanalytic Criticism?”
    (Courseware Package)

What You Read; What You Should Read: The Western Canon:
    Bloom (Courseware Package: “An Elegy for the Canon,” “Elegiac Conclusion,”
    “Dumbing Down American Readers”)

III. Weeks Beginning June 13, 20, 27: Structuralism and Deconstruction:

Structure and System (Structuralism):
    Aristotle (350); de Saussure (351-53)

Structure and Indeterminacy (Deconstruction):
    B. Johnson (397-400); Nietzsche (383-85); Derrida (385-90); “What Is
    Deconstruction” (Courseware Package).
IV. Weeks Beginning July 4, 11, 18: History, Ideology, and Feminism:

The Old and New Historicism:
  Tillyard (428-31); Williams (414-15); “What Is the New Historicism?”
  (Courseware Package)

Ideology and Power:
  Althusser (460-63); Foucault (Courseware Package: “The Eye of Power”)

Feminism:
  Woolf (532-33); de Beauvoir (533-37); “What Is Feminist Criticism?”
  (Courseware Package)

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Three short essays* of approximately five double-spaced, typewritten pages (1250 words) will account for 60% of the final grade (i.e., 20% each).

The final exam will account for the remaining 40% of the final grade.*

*NOTE: You may substitute a fourth essay for Section B of the final exam (20%)

I will give up to three bonus marks for class participation, including participation in the online Coffee Club. Up to three marks may be deducted if your attendance is irregular.

One number grade (1%) may be subtracted for each day that a paper is late unless an extension has been granted in advance. No paper will be accepted after the other students’ papers have been returned to them.

ON-LINE ACTIVITIES (UW-ACE):

The following are available through UW-ACE:
  o Responses to Jekyll and Hyde (See page [10] of the Courseware Package for suggestions)
  o Course Announcements (You should check for Announcements at least once a week.)
  o Coffee Club (I’ll post questions for further discussion, and you’re invited to do the same. I’ll give bonus marks for active participation.)
  o Downloadable Handouts (Notes for you to copy)
  o Student Essays (I’ll request that some good essays be posted for the class to read.)
  o Links (These will direct you to some additional resources on the internet.)
  o Dropboxes for your essays, but please submit a hard copy.
The Faculty of Arts requires that we notify you of the following:

**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](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity) for more information.

**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) 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/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (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. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult Policy 71 (Student Discipline): [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](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](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm)

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition), or Policy 71, Student Discipline, may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals: [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

**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.

*******************************
ENGLISH 251B—ASSIGNMENTS

For these essays, organize your ideas clearly, and proofread carefully at the end. Ask me before you consult sources that are not on the syllabus; you may, of course, use dictionaries and reference encyclopedias. Please use MLA style for documenting your sources.

ESSAY 1:

- **Due:** Monday, June 6, 2011
- **Length:** Five double-spaced typewritten pages (1250 words)
- **Topic:** One of the following:
  1. What do you understand by the term *mimesis*? How is it related to literature? You should refer to two or three of the following critics: Plato, Aristotle, Zola, Shklovsky, Brecht.
  2. The picture view of language suggests a one-to-one correspondence between the “word” and the “thing.” In the introduction to Part 1, Chapter 4 of *The Theory of Criticism*, Raman Selden writes, “Both Wittgenstein and de Saussure have contributed to the undermining of the picture view of language and its accompanying common-sense philosophy” (96). Discuss the “picture view” in *either* Jonson (pp. 99-101) *or* Locke (Book 3, chapter 11: pp. 107-110), *and* show how *either* de Saussure (pp. 113-15) *or* Wittgenstein (pp. 115-119) undermines it.

ESSAY 2:

- **Due:** Monday, July 4, 2011
- **Length:** Five double-spaced, typewritten pages (1250 words)
- **Topic:** One of the following:
  1. Referring to aspects of reader-response theory (including at least one of Poulet, Iser, Barthes, Holland), analyse your peers’ responses to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Comment on the similarities and differences between these responses and those of Stevenson’s contemporaries in Appendix F of your text.
  2. Discuss the process of your reading *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Consider the horizon of experience and expectation, and relate the process of your reading to issues raised by phenomenology and the hermeneutic circle. To what extent do the theories of Poulet and Iser (or, if you wish, the theory of either one of them) align with your experience of reading? Since this asks for a personal response, you may use an informal style, e.g., the pronoun *I*.
  3. Analyse the first paragraph of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in terms of Barthes’s five codes. To what extent do your observations from the first paragraph play out in
the rest of the story? How valuable are Barthes’s codes as a theory of reader response?

4. Apply Freud’s interpretation of Hamlet to Dr. Jekyll. If you wish, you may bring Holland into your discussion and/or refer to Appendix K of your text.

ESSAY 3:

- **Due:** Monday, July 25, 2011
- **Length:** Five double-space, typewritten pages (1250 words)
- **Topic:** One of the following:

  1. Show how the structures of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* align with the basic binary opposition of *Good / Evil*. Then show how these structures can be (or are) “deconstructed” by the text.

  2. Give a detailed deconstructionist reading of one of the following passages. Give a brief context for the passage, and briefly relate your reading to the rest of the story:
     - page 32, last paragraph (“Well it was this way . . .” to page 34, end of first paragraph (“The cheque was genuine”)
     - page 46 to page 47, middle (“this is Sir Danvers Carew”)
     - page 62, line 14 (“Mr. Utterson, sir . . .”) to page 64, line 23 (“was murder done”)
     - page 90, bottom (“I was stepping”) to page 93, end.

ESSAY 4 (Optional: EITHER this essay OR Section B of the Final Exam):

- **Due:** At the beginning of the Final Exam
- **Length:** Five double-spaced, typewritten pages (1250 words)
- **Topic:** One of the following:

  1. How would you interpret *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* from the perspective of Foucault’s discussion of power and power relationships? If you wish, relate your discussion to one or more other critical approaches from the syllabus (Reader Response, Structuralism, Deconstruction, New Historicism, Ideology).

  2. How would you interpret *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* from a feminist perspective? Why do you think that most film versions (like the stage version in Appendix G of your text) have felt obliged to add women’s roles? If you wish, refer to the movie version shown in class, but please don’t let the film become the focus of your essay.

*******************************************************************************