English 251B, Section 02
Course Syllabus, January 2006
Tues/Thurs, 10:00-11:20, CPH 3386

Prof. V. Lamont
Office: HH 226, 888-4567 ext. 6873
Email: via UW-ACE (I check email daily except weekends and holidays)
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 2:30-4:00
Teaching Hours: Tues/Thurs 10:00-11:20; 1:00-2:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS
“An introduction to the theorizing of literary and non-literary texts. Emphasizing contemporary theories, the course will focus on the text, the reader, and culture.” (Undergraduate Calendar)

To theorize a text is to address fundamental questions that need to be answered in order to understand it. In other words, theory attempts to understand how we understand texts. All arguments about texts are based on a theory of some kind. When you write an essay about a novel or short story, you will base your essay on a certain understanding of the relationship between the text, the reader, and the world. This is called a theory. For example, can a text have a meaning that is universal, or does meaning change as cultures change? Whether you are aware of it or not, your position on this question will determine how you proceed with your essay: If you assume that meaning depends on the context, then your understanding of the text will depend upon learning about the context in which the text was written. If you assume that the best literature has a universal meaning, then you will attempt to assess whether or not the text carries a universal message. Thus, the theoretical framework you bring to the text has a profound influence on the method you use to understand it. In this course, you will, through the study of a range of key theoretical texts and examples of applied theory, be introduced to the fundamental questions that critical theory addresses.

TEXTS

Required (Available at the Bookstore or on Reserve)
Peter Barry. Beginning Theory. Manchester UP
English 251B Section 02 Reserve Readings (on reserve in the Porter library. Where copyright permits, electronic copies will also be available on the web as eReserves. To look up reserves and eReserves go to http://www.ereserves.uwaterloo.ca/ereservesSearch.cfm)

Highly Recommended
Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArthur. The Little, Brown Compact Handbook. (Note: all royalties earned from the sale of The Little, Brown Compact Handbook will go to the Department of English Scholarship Fund.)

Macey, David. The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory. (This text has not been ordered for the university bookstore but should not be difficult to obtain from a bookstore of your choice.)
T. Eagleton, Literary Theory, University of Minnesota Press (in library)
R. Selden, A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory (in library)
UW-ACE (access via UW Home Page: www.uwaterloo.ca)

The course UW-ACE page will be used for the following:

• Announcements about exams, assignments, and other activities related to the course.
• Posting copies of the syllabus, handouts, and other learning materials.
• Link to eReserve readings.
• Private communication with me via email.
• "Ask the Professor" discussion board. If you have a question about the course content, please ask it here so that other students may have access to my response.

You are responsible for checking the home page regularly to keep apprised of announcements related to the course.

I will be using the email list set up by the University for all correspondence related to this course. You are responsible for checking your UW email account regularly for course-related communications.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

In the interest of fairness, all students will be evaluated on the basis of the following assignments. There will be no exceptions (i.e. substitute assignments, second exam sittings, etc.) without supporting documentation (usually medical) which convincingly justifies the request for special treatment.

Unless otherwise indicated, values indicated below represent percentage of final mark for the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Mar. 16</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>See below</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>exam week</td>
<td>30%</td>
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"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."

1. Exams

The mid-term exam will consist of questions on material covered in class before the exam date.

The Final Exam will cover the entire course.

Detailed information about exams will be provided in advance of the exam date.
2. Essay (1500-2000 words)

Due Date: Mar. 16

Details about essay topics will follow in a separate handout.

The instructor reserves the right to run all essays through a plagiarism screening service. To this end, you will be required to submit both an electronic and a hard copy of your essay. The electronic copy must be submitted in the form of an email attachment (no disks, please).

The electronic copy of your essay is due before 4:30 p.m. on the due date. A hard copy is also due in class or the English Dept. drop box (located near the main English office, 2nd Floor, Hagey Hall). Please do not ask secretaries to date-stamp your essays.

3. Reading Quizzes

Reading quizzes will be given on a random basis throughout the term. You may miss one quiz without penalty.

If you are having difficulty with any aspect of these assignments, it is important that you consult with me early on in the process.

"Note on avoidance of academic offences: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (section 1; on the Web at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA or course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean."

If you use secondary sources in your essays, you must use correct citation and documentation. If you are uncertain of how to use secondary sources, consult The Little, Brown Handbook. If you are still uncertain, consult with me. Incorrect citation and documentation is a form of plagiarism, a serious academic offense, and could result in academic penalty.

Students are strongly encouraged to consult “Avoiding Academic Offences” (http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html) for important information about avoiding plagiarism and other forms of cheating.

“Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm.”

LATE POLICY

In order to ensure that all students receive fair and equal treatment with respect to lateness or absence, the policy for this course regarding late or missed assignments is as follows:

General Expectations: All students are expected to make their education a top priority. Requests for special treatment will be considered only if circumstances which are totally beyond the student’s
control make it impossible for the student to meet his or her academic obligations without special dispensation.

**Exams:** Exams will not be rescheduled except in the case of documented emergencies. If a student misses a mid-term or final exam, that student will receive a grade of zero for that assignment, except in the case of documented emergencies.

**Essays:** Essay extensions will be considered provided the student consults with me before the deadline. The penalty for late assignments is a deduction of 3% per day or part thereof. Always back up your work on disk, and save hard copies of all assignments you submit. I accept no responsibility for lost assignments. Note that the English Dept. drop box is emptied daily at 8:30 AM and all materials are date-stamped for the previous day. Please do not ask secretaries to date-stamp your essays.

*Emergencies (usually medical) will be fairly dealt with, provided you contact me (by phone, email, or in person) within three working days of the assignment due-date, and are able to provide documentation to explain and justify the missed/late assignment. Medical emergencies must be documented by a UW "Verification of Illness Form." This form can be obtained from Health Services or the Web (http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosa/illness.html). Students are also expected to know University exam regulations (see www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocal/UW/exam_reg.html.) Non-medical emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and must be accompanied with appropriate documentation. While I sympathize with students who encounter computer/printer malfunctions, I do not consider these to be emergencies.

I will not accept any essays at all after the last class of the term.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES & READINGS**

**Please bring your texts to class.**
Scheduled readings are subject to change. Changes will be announced in class. You are responsible for keeping track of changes.

**Week 1**

Jan 3: Introduction to Course

Jan 5: Liberal Humanism & the Transition to Theory: 
Barry: 1-38; Selden: Ransom (279-83), Barthes (318-320)

**Week 2**

Jan 10: Can language reflect reality? 
Selden: "Mimesis and Realism" (39-45); Zola (51-56); Brecht (66-73); Shklovsky (274-76)

Jan 12: Poetry and the reflection theory of language. 
Selden: "Emotive Theories" (163-7), Wordsworth (175-8), Mill (179-82), Yeats (31-35)

**Week 3**

Jan 17: Structuralism 
Barry: 39-49; Selden: Plato (12-18); de Saussure (351-353)
Jan 19: What Structuralists Do  
**Barry:** 49-60; **Reserve:** Will Wright, “The Structure of Myth & The Structure of the Western”

**Week 4**

Jan 24: Post-Structuralism & Deconstruction  
**Barry:** 61-73; **Selden:** Nietzsche (383-85); Derrida (385-90)

Jan 26: How to do Deconstruction  
**Barry:** 73-79; **Reserve:** Lynn, “Opening up the Text”

**Week 5**

Jan 31: Postmodernism  
**Barry:** 81-90; **Reserve:** Baudrillard, “The Precession of Simulacra”

Feb 2: What Postmodernists Do  
**Barry:** 91-94; **Reserve:** Jameson, “Postmodernism and the City”

**Week 6**

Feb 7: Psychoanalytic Criticism  
**Barry:** 96-115; **Selden:** “Unconscious Processes” (222-5); Freud (225-227); Lacan (236-238)

Feb 9: What Psychoanalytic Critics Do  
**Barry:** 115-121; **Reserve:** Zizek, “The Matrix: Or, the Two Sides Of Perversion”

**Week 7**

Feb 14: Catch-up; Review

Feb 16: Mid-Term Exam

Feb 20-24: **Reading Week**

**Week 8**

Feb 28: Feminist Criticism  
**Barry:** 121-133; **Selden:** De Beauvoir, Showalter, Cixous (533-43)

Mar 2: What Feminist Critics Do  
**Barry:** 134-36; **Reserve:** Storey, “Feminism and Romance Reading”

**Week 9**

Mar 7: Marxist Criticism  
**Barry:** 156-67; **Selden:** “Ideology” (455-57); Althusser (459-63); Benjamin (449-52)
Mar 9: What Marxist Critics Do  

Week 10

Mar 14: Historicisms  
Barry: 172-191; Reserve: Foucault, “Panopticism”; Seldon: Williams (431-34)

Mar 16: What Historicist Critics Do  

Week 11

Mar 21: Post-Colonial Criticism  
Barry: 192-199; Reserve: Said, “Orientalism”

Mar 23: What Post-Colonial Critics Do  
Barry: 199-202; Reserve: Gilroy, “The Jubilee Singers and the Transatlantic Route.”

Week 12

March 28, 30: Catch-up; Review; Exam Preparation

April 6-22: Exam Period. Do not book vacation travel or other optional activities until the exam for this course has been scheduled. Exams will be rescheduled ONLY in the case of documented emergencies.