ENGLISH 251B (002)
LITERARY CRITICISM: THEORY

CPH 3388

Instructor: Paul Kreller
Office: HH 253A
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs.
1:00-2:00

Tues. & Thurs. 2:30-3:50

Telephone: (H) 519-669-2421
((O)) 519-888-4567 ext 35882
Email: pkreller@golden.net

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

While English 251A focuses on the practical application of literary criticism, English 251B emphasizes the theoretical approach. English 251B centres 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 (Wordsworth, Mill, Nietzsche) 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: Supplementary Readings (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 January 1, 8, 15: 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, Aesteticism):
S. Johnson (89); Wordsworth (86-88); Blake (91-94); Wilde (252-53)

II. Weeks beginning January 22, 29, February 5, 12: 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 (Supplementary Readings: “The Last Page,” “Endpaper Pages”); Poulet (200-202); Iser (214-17); Barthes (299-302); “What Is Reader Response Criticism?” (Supplementary Readings)

Unconscious Processes:
Freud (225-27); Lacan (236-38); “What Is Psychoanalytic Criticism?” (Supplementary Readings)

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

III. Weeks Beginning February 26, March 5: 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” (Supplementary Readings).
IV. Weeks Beginning March 12, 19, 26: History, Ideology, and Feminism:

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

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

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

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Four short essays of approximately five or six double-spaced, typewritten pages (1250 words) will account for 80% of the final grade (i.e., 20% each).

One in-class final exam will account for the remaining 20% of the final grade. The exam is scheduled April 3.

I will give up to five bonus marks for class participation, including participation in the online Coffee Club. Up to five marks may be deducted for lack of attendance.

Note: 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:

- Introduce Yourself (Say something about yourself, and say something about your response to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde)
- Course Announcements (You should check for Announcements at least once a week.)
- 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.)
- Student Essays (I’ll post some student essays from the past, and I’ll ask some of you to post yours.)
- Links (These will direct you to some additional resources on the internet.)
The Faculty of Arts requires that we notify you of the following:

"Note on the avoidance of academic offenses: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes academic offenses, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy 71 (Student Academic Discipline) which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:11, section 1; on the web at www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infousec/Policies/policy71.htm). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission; how to follow appropriate rules with respect to ‘group work’ and collaboration; or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean."

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

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: Tuesday, February 6, 2006
- Length: Five or six 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 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: Thursday, March 1, 2006
- Length: Five or six 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, Bloom), analyze 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. Analyze 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 want a challenge, bring Lacan and/or Holland into your discussion. You may also, if you wish, refer to Appendix K of your text.

ESSAY 3:

- Due: Tuesday, March 20, 2006
- Length: Five or six 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:

- **Due:** Tuesday, April 3, 2006, but I’ll accept them until Tuesday, April 10
- **Length:** Five or six 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 Foucauld’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?

3. Summarize Harold Bloom’s opposition to such schools of criticism as New Historicism, cultural criticism, post-colonialism, and feminism. How would you defend these “Schools or Resentment”? **Refer to at least two** critics from the syllabus. If you wish, you may, like Bloom, range over your reading experiences.
Information for Students Using UW-ACE

ANGEL is a web-based course management system that enables instructors to manage course materials (posting of lecture notes etc.), interact with their students (drop boxes for student submissions, on-line quizzes, discussion boards, course e-mail etc.), and provide feedback (grades, assignment comments etc.). The degree to which UW-ACE is utilized in a particular course is left to the discretion of the instructor and therefore, you may find a large variance in how UW-ACE is being used from one course to another.

1. Logging Into UW-ACE

Since UW-ACE is a web-based system, you will need a browser. Although you may have success with other Web browsers, we strongly recommend that you use the following for best access results:

2. Choosing a Browser

ANGEL is designed to support the widest variety of client-side operating systems and client-side browsers through its limited use of client-side technologies. While ANGEL products generally function well in many browsers, the following are formally supported and tested:

- With PCs running Windows OS: Internet Explorer, Firefox and Mozilla
- With Macs running OS X: Firefox and Mozilla

Testing is performed on the latest generally available versions for the above platforms and browsers with each General Release of ANGEL products, ensuring full support at that time. For additional information on browser support please visit http://support.angellearning.com.

Note: Internet Explorer for the Mac will not work with ANGEL.

3. Locating UW-ACE on the Web

Once you have started up your browser, type in the following URL:

http://uwace.uwaterloo.ca or go to the University of Waterloo’s homepage and select the UW-ACE hyperlink

Provide your Quest/UWdir userid and password. Once you have logged in, you should see a list of your UW-ACE courses under the Courses header bar. Clicking on the course name will take you to that course.

4. Checking Your Userid and Password

Your password can be checked by going to:
http://ego.uwaterloo.ca/~uwdir/UW-Password.html

If your password check fails, you can unlock your password and receive a new one by going to:
http://ego.uwaterloo.ca/~uwdir/Unlock.html

If you still can not get on after checking and resetting your password, please confirm with your instructor that you are on the class roster. Only students with courses using UW-ACE will have access to the site.

5. Getting Help

A UW-ACE student guide can be found by selecting Help on left hand panel of the UW-ACE home page, and selecting the hyperlink ANGEL 7.1 Student Guide -- Quickstart Overview Guide.

Additional queries can be sent to uwacehelp@ist.uwaterloo.ca.