English 251B (001) Winter 2010
Criticism II
Mon and Wed 11:30am-12:50pm  PAS 2086

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Office hours: Mon 2:00–3:00pm  Wed 1:00–2:00pm or by appointment

Course description: This course will survey some of the major developments in literary and cultural theory that have occurred over the course of the past century (from formalism to post-colonialism) and their impact on the practice of literary criticism. Critical theories offer different strategies for the reading and interpretation of literary texts (i.e. research questions), as well as critical terminologies to describe works of literature, and these two aspects shape the structure of this course. Each theory will be introduced primarily through readings selected from the work of its major representatives, although students will also read about the theoretical texts studied in this course. Theoretical discussions will be followed by explorations of specific textual questions through the prism of each critical paradigm. The emphasis will be on the historical development of literary theory, with special attention dedicated to how each theory approaches the categories of language, literature, reality, author, reader, and subjectivity.

Course objectives: Designed as an introduction to literary and critical theory, this course will seek to equip students with skills to navigate the complex field of contemporary literary and critical theory and to help them acquire a critical vocabulary for dealing with a variety of textual issues. By the end of this course, you will have acquired a basic knowledge of the major developments in thinking and writing about literature since the early 20th century; you will learn to compare and contrast different theoretical perspectives and apply them to textual problems; you will be able to define and apply a number of terms and concepts associated with each critical theory; and you will also develop a critical understanding of the important differences between various theoretical positions.

Required texts:
*English 251B: Course Reader.* Winter 2010. (Danila Sokolov).


Assignments and assessment:

Attendance and participation – 5%
Written summary-responses – 20% (5 papers worth 4% each)
Reading test (January 20) – 5%
Midterm (February 8) – 15%
Research essay (due March 31) – 25%
Final exam – 30%
Attendance and participation: your active involvement in our classroom work is essential to the success of this course. Our classes will alternate lectures and discussions; therefore, you are expected to come to classes, and to come prepared. You are prepared if you have done the following: (a) familiarized yourselves with the suggested reference resources, either in the course textbook (Mary Klages’ Literary Theory: A Guide for the Perplexed) or online (The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism); (b) done the critical readings assigned for this day; and (c) given some thought as to how the readings can be applied to some aspect Shakespeare’s Cymbeline. In addition to the topics indicated on this syllabus, I will provide further suggestions and questions for each class that involves a discussion of the play. Learning about a critical theory always implies a practical application of some of its principles, and our conversations about the Shakespeare play will give you an opportunity to test some of the categories and concepts of various theoretical outlooks. You will also be offered an opportunity to make a short (max. 3 min.) in-class presentation about a theorist whose work we will be discussing on that day as part of your participation grade. Presentation sign-up will take place during the first two classes.

Readings: This course is reading-intensive. Please note that the readings we will engage with are rather challenging, so give yourselves plenty of time to work your way through the assigned texts. For each class, you will be asked to read a section of the course textbook to help us situate and contextualize critical theory; however, there will be no discussions of the textbook readings per se although I may refer to it in my lectures. Remember that the primary focus of the classroom discussions will be on the critical readings. For two weeks of the course (Week 1 and 10), you will use The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism (see below) as a reference source. The topics for these two weeks are not covered in the textbook.

Online Reference Resources: For some classes, our primary reference tool will be The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism (http://litguide.press.jhu.edu/); it is available online through UW library. To access this resource off-campus, you will have to use the “Connect from Home” function on the UW Library website. Other useful Internet resources include Kristi Siegel’s Introduction to Modern Literary Theory (http://www.kristisiegel.com/theory.htm) and Dino Felluga’s Introductory Guide to Literary Theory for Undergraduate Students (http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/). The former is particularly useful as it lists many of the key terms/concepts that each theory proposes for dealing with literary material. In addition to our textbook, I strongly encourage you to further explore the online resources listed here in your preparations for classes, essays, and exams. Note that The Johns Hopkins Guide also provides valuable bibliographical information that may prove germane to your future studies.

Written summary-responses: These will be short (250-400 words) written papers in which you summarize the argument, or one aspect of the argument, advanced in one of the readings for this course. You are expected to use quotation and paraphrase to support your summary. Don’t forget to document your source(s) carefully to avoid plagiarism. You may also include a short response/position paragraph in which you express your ideas about the applicability, practicality, persuasiveness etc. of the reading you have selected. You are allowed to use one additional secondary source (properly referenced) to help you with your summary. There are five papers to
be submitted on five different due dates (January 27, February 10, February 24, March 10 and March 17, but feel free to make this earlier), and you can select any of the course readings that are to be discussed in class before or after the due date for your summary. However, you may NOT select readings from the same week twice. These assignments have to conform to the MLA format in every way (see course policies below), and word count must be included.

**Reading test:** this short in-class assignment will test how familiar you are with Shakespeare’s text. Your knowledge of the play, your ability to navigate its text and find your way around acts and scenes, characters and plotlines will be very important for our in-class discussions. This test will take place during the third week of classes (January 20).

**Mid-term:** an in-class mid-term exam will take place on February 8th; it will occupy the entire time of the class and cover all the material studied prior to this date. A missed exam will be graded zero unless a doctor’s note or other official documentation is provided.

**Essay (due March 31st):** aside from the final exam, this assignment is worth the most in the course. This is a research paper of approx. 1500-1700 words. You will demonstrate an application of one theoretical framework studied in the course to a short literary text of your choice, selected in consultation with me (a poem or a short story). You are not expected to use all the categories and concepts of the theoretical school you will select for this assignment; one or two will suffice. Your goal in this paper will be to show an understanding of the principles of a given theoretical framework. You will be required to use one theoretical source for this essay either from the course reader or from elsewhere; in the latter case a consultation with me will be required. In addition, you are allowed to use up to two scholarly secondary sources, either dealing with the theory you have selected or relevant to your text, author, or period that will help you sustain your argument. In all, there will be at least two sources (your chosen text and a critical reading) and no more than four (additional secondary sources pertinent to your selected theoretical framework or the text you are working with). More information about this assignment will be provided during an essay workshop on February 10th. Your essay topic must be approved by me. This can be done via an email conversation or during my office hours. Essays will be marked for intellectual content, but also for correctness of grammar, presentation, and citation. This assignment has to conform to the MLA format in every way (see course policies below), and word count must be included.

**Final exam:** a 2.5 hour final exam will occur during the final examination period and cover all of the course content. It will draw on lectures, our classroom discussions, and the course readings. In order to prepare for the final exam, please make sure you go over your notes, re-read the excerpts in the course package, re-visit some of the online resources, and review your summary-responses. More information about the structure of the exam and the types of questions will be provided on the last day of classes.

**Policies**

**Communication:** Please feel free to email me with your questions. I normally answer students' emails within 48 hours. However, before asking me a question regarding course policies, schedule etc., please review this syllabus as it is very likely to already contain information you are seeking. Ensure that your emails and other communications with me and other students are
strictly professional in tone, diction, and structure. Also, if you think that your question may be relevant to other students, don’t hesitate to bring it up during the class in an appropriately polite manner. For serious matters (e.g. negotiating a deadline, discussing an assignment or a grade, asking for an extension etc.) please call or – preferably – come to see me during my office hours – an email would be inappropriate in such circumstances.

**Formatting written assignments (MLA):** Using the MLA format is an essential skill for students of English. You are required to use this citation format for your summaries as well as your final essay. You can find information about the MLA style in writing handbooks, such as the *Little, Brown Handbook*, Canadian edition, available from the UW Bookstore, or you can go directly for the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Seventh Edition (New York: MLA, 2009). Some guidelines regarding MLA can be found online, e.g. OWL (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/). Feel free to ask me questions if you require further clarification, but you need to provide evidence of your effort to find a solution to the predicament. Remember, I will mark this aspect of your papers strictly.

**Late assignments and extensions:** Late assignments will be penalized 3% per day including weekends. No extension will be granted unless students have legitimate reasons for requesting an extension. In that case, documentation must be provided (e.g. a doctor’s note). Please do not use email to request an extension on an assignment; come see me during my office hours, call my office or talk to me after class. You must request an extension at least 48 hours in advance of the due date.

**Submission guidelines:** All homework assignments (summaries and essays) are to be submitted in paper format. I do not accept email or other electronic submissions. Late assignments should be submitted through the English Department dropbox located on the second floor of Hagey Hall.

**Other policies**
The Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo requires that the following information be included in the course outline:

**Academic integrity:**
“Note on avoidance of academic offences:
All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their 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 www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infousec/Policies/policy71.htm).
If you need help in learning what constitutes an academic offence; how to avoid offences 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 TA and/or your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.”
Please check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. You can find more information on plagiarism and other academic offences at http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html.

**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. Refer to Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm.

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Refer to Policy 72 - Student Appeals, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm.

When in doubt please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**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. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of their disability (such as alternate test and exam arrangements) please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term and inform the course instructor.

**Course schedule:**

**Abbreviations:**
CR = Course reader  
JHG = Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism (online)  
MK = Mary Klages, Literary Theory: A Guide for the Perplexed

**Week 1: Introduction**
Monday Jan. 4: Introduction to the course
Wednesday Jan. 6: Critical theory or critical theories?

**Week 2: Formalism and New Criticism**
*Reference Shelf:* “Russian Formalism;” “New Criticism” (JHG – online)

*Readings:*
Monday Jan. 11: Viktor Shklovsky, from “Art as Technique” (CR 1-2)

*Shakespeare textual exploration:* instances of defamiliarization of language in the **Cymbeline**

**Week 3: Structuralism**
*Reference Shelf:* “Structuralism” (MK 31-46)

*Readings:*
Monday Jan. 18: F. de Saussure, from *A Course in General Linguistics* (CR 5-9)
Wednesday Jan. 20: Jonathan Culler, from *Structuralist Poetics* (CR 10-12)

*Shakespeare textual exploration:* plot and character structure in **Cymbeline**
Wednesday Jan 20: **Reading test** on Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* (15 minutes)

**Week 4: Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction**
*Reference Shelf:* “Deconstruction” (MK 53-62)

**Readings**
Wednesday Jan. 27: Paul de Man, from “Semiology and Rhetoric” (CR 17-9)

*Shakespeare textual exploration:* nature and culture in *Cymbeline*; blind spots in the text

Wednesday Jan. 27: Summary-response # 1 **due**

**Week 5: Psychoanalysis**
*Reference Shelf:* “Psychoanalysis” (MK 63-87)

**Readings:**

*Shakespeare textual exploration:* desire in *Cymbeline*

**Week 6:**
Monday Feb. 8: Mid-term

Wednesday Feb. 10: Essay Workshop

Wednesday Feb. 10: Summary-response # 2 **due**

**Reading Week:** February 15-19: No classes

**Week 7: Marxism**
*Reference Shelf:* “Ideology and Discourse” (MK 126-35)

**Readings:**
Monday Feb. 22: Karl Marx, from *German Ideology* (CR 27);
   Louis Althusser, “A Letter on Art to Andre Daspre” (CR 28-9)
Wednesday Feb. 24: Louis Althusser, from “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” (CR 30-3)

*Shakespeare textual exploration:* class and exploitation in *Cymbeline*; ideology and the subject

Wednesday Feb. 24: Summary-response # 3 **due**
Week 8: Feminism
Reference Shelf: “Feminism” (MK 91-109)

Readings:
Monday Mar. 1: Annet Kolodny, from “Dancing through the Minefield” (CR 34-7);
Helen Cixous, from “The Laugh of the Medusa” (CR 40-1)
Wednesday Mar. 3: Lucy Irigaray “The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the
Feminine” (CR 38-40);
Julia Kristeva, “A Question of Subjectivity: An Interview” (CR 41-4)

Shakespeare textual exploration: is there a woman in Cymbeline?

Week 9: New Historicism
Reference Shelf: “Interlude: History to Historicism” (MK 121-25)

Readings:
Monday Mar. 8: Michel Foucault, from The History of Sexuality (CR 47-9)
Wednesday Mar. 10: Stephen Greenblatt, from Shakespearean Negotiations (CR 50-4)

Shakespeare textual exploration: containment and subversion of power in Cymbeline

Wednesday Mar. 10: Summary-response # 4 due

Week 10: Reader-Response Criticism
Reference Shelf: “Reader-Response Theory and Criticism;” “Reception Theory” (JHG – online)

Readings:
Monday Mar. 15: Wolfgang Iser, from The Act of Reading (CR 55-6)
Hans-Robert Jauss, from “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory”
(CR 57-60)
Wednesday Mar. 17: Stanley Fish, from “Interpreting the Variorum” (CR 60-3)

Wednesday Mar. 17: Summary-response # 5 due

Your essay topic has to be approved by me this week.
Week 11: Queer Theory
Reference Shelf: “Queer Theory” (MK 111-20)

Readings:
Monday Mar. 22: Eve Sedgwick, from Between Men (CR 64-6);
Michel Foucault, from The History of Sexuality (CR 45-6)
Wednesday Mar. 24: Judith Butler, from “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” (CR 67-70)

Shakespeare textual exploration: male-male desire, cross-dressing and gender bending in the play

Week 12: Post-Colonialism
Reference Shelf: “Race and Post-Colonialism” (MK 147-63)

Readings:
Monday Mar. 29: Edward Said, from Orientalism (CR 71-3);
Homi Bhabha, “Cultural Differences and Cultural Diversity” (CR 74-5)

Shakespeare textual exploration: England, Wales, Rome, and Italy in the Cymbeline; colonizers and the colonized in the play

Wednesday Mar. 31: Essays due

Course revision.