COURSE INFORMATION SHEET

Purpose of Course

The main purpose of this course is to introduce you to the study of English literature as a discipline. Consequently, we will concentrate not on literature itself but on how we read literature and on what assumptions we make when we analyze, interpret, and evaluate works of literature.

No attempt will be made to give either an historical survey of literary theory and criticism through the centuries or a comprehensive survey of contemporary theory and practice. Instead, we will look at a few classic statements, namely those by Plato and Aristotle, and then we will concentrate on a few selected contemporary approaches, especially feminist criticism, reader response criticism, and ethical or evaluative criticism.

In addition, we will approach genre criticism through a concentration on tragic plays.

Finally, we will look at research methods and principles and at standard methods for citing source material, following the current MLA style sheet.

Texts

Sylvan Barnet, et al., Eight Great Tragedies (Mentor)
9 additional essays, 2 of which will be distributed in class; the other 7 will be on reserve in the Arts Library.

Requirements

1st essay, approximately 5 pages, typed, double spaced, on assigned topic which will require you to analyze aspects of genre criticism; 20%
2nd essay, approximately 6 pages, typed, double spaced, on assigned topic which will require you to employ a particular contemporary approach to a play; 25%
3rd essay, approximately 7 to 10 pages, typed, double spaced, on assigned topic which will require you to analyze two contemporary critical essays; 40%
Class work: Panel Discussion, 5%
Attendance, 5%
Contributions to general discussions, 5%

Office Hours

Office: HH 246 Office phone: Ext. 2124
Office Hours: 11:30 - 12:30 MWF; 1:30 MWF
Other hours by chance or by appointment.
SCHEDULE

Ja 4 Introduction
Ja 7 Oedipus Rex
Ja 9 Conventions & Generic Approaches to Literature; the concept of Tragedy
Ja 11 Aristotle's Poetics
Ja 14 Prometheus Bound
Ja 16 Mythic & Archetypal Approaches
Ja 18 Ghosts
Arthur Miller's "Tragedy and the Common Man" (tragedy as a genre)
Ja 21 Desire Under the Elms
Ja 23 Hippolytus
Ja 28 Heart of Darkness
Ja 30 Biographical & Historical Approaches: "The Biographical and Historical Background," pp. 3-16 of casebook
Fb 1 Psychoanalytic Approaches, pp. 113-136 of casebook
Fb 4 1st essay due; Psychoanalytic Approaches continued
Fb 6 Feminist Approaches (also Marxist), pp. 172-195 of casebook
Fb 8 "Elaine Showalter, "Towards a Feminist Poetics," Panel Discussion
Fb 11 "Nina Baym, "Melodramas of Beset Manhood," Panel Discussion
Fb 13 Feminist Approaches continued
Fb 15 Feminist Approaches continued
Fb 18
Fb 20 STUDY WEEK
Fb 22

Fb 25 MLA Biographic form
Fb 28 Reader Response Approaches, pp. 139-169 of casebook
Mr 1 "Tzvetan Todorov, "Reading as Construction," Panel Discussion
Mr 4 "Wolfgang Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader," Panel Discussion
Mr 6 2nd Essay Due; Reader Response continued
Mr 8 New Historical Approaches, pp. 226-254 of casebook
Mr 11 New Historicism continued
Mr 13 Ethical and Evaluative Criticism: Excerpts from *Plato's Republic, Panel Discussion
Mr 15 T. S. Eliot, "Literature and Christianity," Panel Discussion
Mr 18 "Wayne Booth, Excerpts from The Company We Keep, Panel Discussion
Mr 20 Overview of H of D criticism, pp. 97-112 of casebook
Mr 22

Mr 25 Structuralism & Semiotics
Mr 27 Deconstruction, pp. 199-223 of casebook
Mr 29 Good Friday; No classes
Ap 1 Deconstruction continued
Ap 3 3rd essay due

*Essays marked with an asterisk are on reserve in the Arts Library.