COURSE INFORMATION

Purpose of Course

The main purpose of this course is to introduce you to the study of English literature as a discipline. Consequently, although we will read Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and Chopin's *The Awakening*, we will concentrate not on literature per se but on how we read literature, on what assumptions we make when we analyze, interpret, and evaluate literature, and on how these assumptions influence and even determine our analyses and evaluations.

No attempt will be made to give an historical survey of literary theory and criticism through the centuries, although we will look at a few classic statements, namely those by Plato and Aristotle. We will concentrate on contemporary approaches, but once again no attempt will be made at complete coverage. Some approaches, especially those which seem most relevant or most helpful to advanced undergraduate English studies, will be given greater emphasis than others. By the end of the course, the student should have, to a greater or lesser extent, an understanding of formalist or New Critical, historical, psychological, mythic or archetypal, feminist, and reader response approaches to literature as well as some comprehension of the contributions of Marxist criticism, new historicism, structuralism, semiotics, poststructuralism, and deconstruction to contemporary literary studies.

We will also spend some time looking at standard methods for citing source materials, following the current MLA style sheet.

It is recommended that all students keep a notebook which includes outlines, summaries, notes, reflections on their readings.

Texts


Plus:

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. (From Engl 251A)
Student's copy of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Assignments

1) Group Seminar - 15%
2) 1st essay (4 to 6 page summary of an assigned critical essay) 10%
3) 2nd essay (comparison of two applied essays--details to be announced) 25%
4) 3 hour regularly scheduled final exam on all critical material (students will be allowed to bring their notebooks but no Xeroxed materials to final exam)
5) Students can earn extra credit (which will be given in the form of marks added to whatever mark was earned on the 2nd essay) for positive and consistent contributions to class discussions.

Office Hours

Office: HH 246
Office phone: Ext. 2124
Office Hours: 11:30 to 12:40 Tuesdays & Thursdays
Other hours by chance or by appointment
SCHEDULE
(Subject to Change as the Course Develops)

Ja 3 Introduction
Ja 5 Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn”
Ja 10 Chopin, The Awakening
Ja 12 Shakespeare, Hamlet
Ja 17 Contexts for Criticism, General Introduction, 1-8
"Historical Criticism," 9-16
Hirsch, “Objective Interpretation,” 17-28
Ja 19 MLA Form
Ja 24 Seminar #1
Watson, “Are Poems Historical Acts?” 29-33
Fowler, “Intention Floreat,” 34-39
Ja 26 Seminar #2
Bowers, “Hamlet as Minister and Scourge,” 40-47
Austin, “Toward Resolving Keats’ Grecian Urn Ode,” 48-58
Walker, “Feminist or Naturalist,” 59-64
Ja 31 Seminars 1 & 2 Continued
Fb 2 Formal Criticism, 65-73
Fb 7 Seminar #3
Brooks, “Irony as a Principle of Structure,” 74-81
Wimsatt, “The Structure of the Concrete Universal,” 82-90
Brooks, “Keats’s Sylvan Historian,” 103-111
Fb 9 ESSAY #1 DUE (4 to 6 page summary
of Beardsley’s “Textual Meaning and Authorial Meaning,” 91-98)
Readings: Ornstein, “Historical Criticism,” 99-104
May, “Local Color in The Awakening,” 112-118
Fb 14 STUDY WEEK
Fb 16
Fb 21 Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Poetics
(material will be supplied)
Fb 23 Plato and Aristotle Continued
Fb 28 Reader-Response Criticism, 119-29
Mr 2 Seminar #4
Rosenblatt, “The Quest for ‘The Poem Itself,’” 129-36
Iser, “Reader and the Concept of the Implied Reader,” 137-44
Mr 7 Seminar #5
Holland, “The Miller’s Wife and the Professors,” 145-59
Fish, “What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?” 370-79
Mr 9 Seminar #6
Holland, “Hamlet—My Greatest Creation,” 160-65
Wilson, “Reading the Urn,” 166-78
Shaw, “Putting Audience in Its Place,” 179-86
Mr 14 Mimetic Criticism, 187-96
Mr 16 Seminar #7
Nuttall, “The Two Languages of Criticism,” 197-204
Paris, “The Uses of Psychology,” 205-213
Donovan, “Beyond the Net,” 214-25
Mr 21 ESSAY #2 DUE (Comparison of two applications; details and restrictions will be announced)
Intertextual Criticism, 257-70
Mr 23 Poststructural Criticism, 335-346
Mr 28 Historical Criticism II (New Historicism), 419-27
Belsey, “Literature, History, Politics,” 436-44
SEMINAR ASSIGNMENTS
(Determined by lot)

Seminar #1

Seminar #2

Seminar #3

Seminar #4

Seminar #5

Seminar #6

Seminar #7

(Chair)