ENG251B: Criticism 2

The University of Waterloo, Winter 2012
T/Th 1:00 – 2:20 p.m., HH 138
Dr. Emily Simmons
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Office Hours: T 3-4; W 1-2; HH249

“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).

This course introduces students to the history of literary criticism and to key theories and approaches in literary and cultural studies today. 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. In this course we will historicize and examine a number of key theories that have profoundly shaped literary criticism over the last century, including structuralism, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, and a plethora of “isms”: feminism, Marxism, Post-colonialism, New Historicism, and Postmodernism, for example. We will also be reading a literary text (Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*) so that we have a shared ground for discussing the application of these literary theories.

**Required Texts**

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory.*
Bronte, Emily. *Wuthering Heights.*
*Selected readings will be made available through Quest.*

**Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance &amp; Participation</th>
<th>(15%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term: Feb 9</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay: March 8</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop/roundtable</td>
<td>(15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam: take-home</td>
<td>(30%)</td>
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# Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading / Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: J 3, 5</td>
<td>Intro; New Criticism</td>
<td>Barry ch. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2: J 10, 12</td>
<td>Structuralism</td>
<td>Barry ch. 2; de Saussure</td>
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<tr>
<td>3: J 17, 19</td>
<td>Deconstruction</td>
<td>Barry ch. 3; Derrida</td>
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<td>4: J 24, 26</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic</td>
<td>Barry ch. 5; Wion; Bronte</td>
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<td>5: J 31, F 2</td>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>Barry ch. 6; Pykett</td>
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<td>6: F 7, 9</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>Barry ch. 7; <strong>Midterm</strong> (Th)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7: F 14, 16</td>
<td>Postcolonial / Race</td>
<td>Barry ch. 10; tba</td>
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<tr>
<td>8: F 28, M 1</td>
<td>Marxist</td>
<td>Barry ch. 8; Eagleton</td>
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<tr>
<td>9: M 6, 8</td>
<td>New Historicist</td>
<td>Barry ch. 9; <strong>Essay</strong> (Th)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10: M 13, 15</td>
<td>Postmodernism</td>
<td>Barry ch. 4; tba</td>
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<tr>
<td>11: M 20, 22</td>
<td>Workshop/roundtable</td>
<td><strong>Position paper</strong> (Th)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12: M 27, 29</td>
<td>Value; Conclusions</td>
<td>Herrnstein-Smith</td>
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## Evaluation

The **Participation (15%)** grade will reflect your attendance, punctuality and how actively you participate in class, both by contributing to the class discussion and listening respectfully. Where absences are unavoidable, it is your responsibility to find out what was missed and collect the necessary notes and readings from your classmates (please keep in mind that additional literature may be handed out in class that you will be required to read for the next class). Adequate preparation for the class involves reading all assigned materials *at least once and ideally twice* carefully and thoroughly, making notes about these texts (underlining or marking key passages, reflecting on your responses to the text, and so on), and preparing potential questions or comments to discuss in class. The in-class test and final exams will cover material addressed in your readings and in lecture. You are responsible for all of this material.
The Midterm (20%) will consist of short answer questions, passage “application” analysis, and an essay. You will be responsible for material from lectures and discussions held in class as well as from the readings. More details will be given in class during the first week of February.

The Essay (4-5 pages) (20%) will be on Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*. You must submit a written response to the novel based on your reading of one primary theoretical texts (a list of suggestions will be provided during the week of J 24-26. Your response should present a focused argument that uses the theoretical text to provide a reading of one aspect of *Wuthering Heights*. In preparing for this assignment, think about what insights you gained from the theoretical text and how those insights allowed you a new perspective on the novel. Your essay must refer directly to, and use quotations from, both texts.

The Workshop and roundtable (15%) will be comprised of both classes during week 11; attendance is imperative in order to receive a passing grade for the assignment (15%). On the Tuesday the class will break into groups and analyze a shared “text” (this will be provided). On Thursday each group will participate in a roundtable presentation of a specific theoretical “orientation” to the analyzed “text,” including scheduled responses to the positions of other groups. Each presentation will be roughly 5 minutes. On Thursday each group must submit one 2-page position paper summarizing its presentation. Each group will be graded on active participation and collaboration (observed during Tuesday’s class), written work (the position paper), oral presentation, and collegial response. Individual grades within a group may vary.

The take-home Exam (30%) will be distributed on the final day of class, and will be due sometime during the exam period. It will comprise a response to a specific question in the form of an essay.

Course Policies

Classroom etiquette: Good behaviours include active listening, asking relevant questions, contributing to discussion, taking notes, bringing textbooks to class and following along with textual analysis/close reading. Rude behaviours include coming to class late, leaving class early, sleeping, eating a meal, reading a newspaper or your calendar, reading a book from another class, working on homework or assignments from another class, text messaging, using a computer for something other than taking notes (NB—the face and hands of a person taking notes look very different than the face and hands of a person surfing the web), passing notes, talking or whispering. All of these contribute to an impression that you are not participating in the class; they are distracting to me and to your classmates.

Late assignments: The essay must be submitted at the beginning of class on the due date to be considered “on time.” Two percentage points will be lost for each day the paper is late. (The weekend does not count.) For example, the paper is due on a Thursday. If you turn it in on the following Monday, you will lose four points; on Tuesday, six points; and so on. The maximum penalty is -12 points; if a paper is more than six days late, it will receive a mark of zero.

Submission of assignments: Written work should be submitted directly to the professor, if possible. Papers slipped into a mailbox or under the office door are likely to be stolen or lost and therefore it is in the students’ best interest that the professor not accept work submitted in any
irregular manner. I will accept a date-stamped essay (from the English office). Electronic
submissions will not be marked and must be accompanied by a hard copy during the next class.

**Term test and final exam:** Make up tests/exams will be given *only* in the event of health
emergencies, deaths in one’s immediate family, or religious observances. Unfortunately, because a
few individuals will lie about such serious matters in order to gain transient personal advantage, I
must ask that all students provide documentary proof of any of the above reasons for missing tests
or exams.

**Office for Persons with Disabilities:** Students with a disability/health consideration are
encouraged to contact the office for persons with disabilities, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132.
The office 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.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the representation of words or ideas drawn from other sources as one’s
own. Plagiarism covers not only material drawn from published articles and books but also essays
(or other material) found on the Internet or essays written by others, including friends, family, and
professional writing services. Plagiarism is a *very* serious academic offense and will be treated as
such. Cases of plagiarism *must* be brought to the attention of administrative officers when they are
detected and they can result in serious damage to a university career. Penalties range from a zero on
the assignment (often assessed as a “double zero” thereby lowering previous course marks) through
failure in the course to suspension from the university. See the academic integrity website:
[http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)

Unless otherwise indicated, both the language and the ideas of all parts of your essay are assumed to
originate with you. Secondary criticism must be documented in the form of proper MLA notation.
(Listing an item in your bibliography is insufficient.) Failure to properly document your sources is a
breach of scholarly ethics and academic discipline – as well as poor scholarship – and will be treated
as such. In all of your courses, whenever you submit an essay, you are required to retain all your
notes and drafts until the essay is returned. If you are working on a computer, you should get in the
habit of printing off drafts at various stages of composition. This way of working is useful to you in
composing your essay, and these drafts should be retained until the corrected essay is returned to
you by your professor. At any time the professor in any course may request that you submit all notes
and drafts, *and these may be used in ascertaining your final grade on the essay.* As well, you
must always retain a separate copy of the final version of all essays that you submit. Essays
sometimes get lost—especially if they come in at odd hours or in odd places.

**Warning:** I reserve the right to issue an “oral defense” or a written examination (or both) without
further warning, either at the time the essay is returned or shortly thereafter. This defense may be
considered as a part of the essay assignment, and a substantial portion of your grade may be based
on that defense.