Course Information:
instructor: Kevin McGuirk
meeting time & place: MW 10-11:20, HH 336
instructor contact: office HH 263; phone x32419
office hours: MW 4:00-5:00 and by appointment
preferred method of contact: office hours and appointments

Course Description:
What is the point of Art? What is literature and what is, or should be, its purpose? Art in some form has been a crucial part of every culture, but its purpose is less self-evident than, for example, the purpose of science, technology, or business. For millenia it has been the object of intense debate that touches on, not only aesthetics, but morality, politics, gender, economics, religion, history, and science and technology. This debate is the subject of English 251B. The course will have two central concerns: the history of thinking about literature, especially in the 20th century; and inquiry into the shifting structures and values that enable texts to “make meaning.” It is divided into three Parts: 1 Literature and Art; 2 Language and Structure; and 3 Culture and Ideology. We will proceed roughly chronologically while attempting to relate theories topically across history. We will begin, in Part 1, with some ideas about literature from the 19th and early 20th centuries that established Literary Study as a discipline. Then we will move on to writings on language and culture that develop the ideas most closely associated with Literary Theory today. A central concept will be representation, the complex business of putting experience and ideas in words, images, and sounds.

What I want you to get from the course:
Comprehension of the basic topics of Literary Theory.
The ability to respond with increased understanding to the formal and rhetorical dimensions of literature.
Increased comfort with difficulty and opacity—that is, with not-knowing—along with the ability to ask clarifying questions.
An enhanced sense of the social value of literature and of art, and a corresponding growth in both authority and pleasure in your response to intellectual and artistic work.
The ability to theorize language and literature; in other words, to articulate a complex, interesting answer to the question what is literature?
The ability to write more effectively and imaginatively about literature in general.

What I want you to do in the course:
Write about and discuss ideas frequently; formally, in tests, an essay, and brief in-class exercises.
Come to class prepared with the assigned readings in front of you.
Ask questions in class: participate; listen to your peers.
Take notes and make sure you grasp the major concerns of the course as well as the distinctive work of each theorist; write tests and an exam demonstrating this grasp.
Write an extended essay based on careful reflection, analysis, and revision.

Texts:
Selden, Raman, ed. The Theory of Criticism: Plato to the Present, Longman
Abrams, M.H., A Glossary of Literary Terms 10th edition (or recent), Wadsworth
*The following readings are on reserve at Dana Porter Library:
Gerald Graff, “Disliking Books at an Early Age,” pp. 36-43 in *Falling into Theory*
Dick Hebdige, “From Culture to Hegemony,” pp. 357-367 in *The Cultural Studies Reader*
Andrew Ross, “The Day Lady Died,” pp. 380-391 in *Frank O’Hara: To Be True to a City*

**Approximate Schedule of Readings:**

**ALWAYS BRING YOUR TEXT TO CLASS!**

*Primary readings are in theory from the anthology and texts on reserve. Readings range in length from one to about ten pages. The Glossary will be used to provide context and background; readings from the Glossary will be assigned as we proceed. Please bring the Glossary to class along with primary readings. We will read literary and other texts as I bring them in to apply and test the theory.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 4</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Jan 9, 11</strong></td>
<td>Graff, “Disliking Books at an Early Age”</td>
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<td>Arnold (494-501); James (501-505); Lawrence (505-509); Wordsworth (86-88, 175-178)</td>
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<td>Jan 16, 18</td>
<td>Mill (178-82); Keats 306-307; Plato (12-18), Yeats (31-35)</td>
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<td>Jan 23, 25</td>
<td>Zola (51-56), Auerbach (56-59), Brecht (66-73)</td>
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<td>Jan 30, Feb 1</td>
<td>Pater (249-251); Huysman (251-252), Wilde (252-254), Pound (307-310)</td>
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<td>Feb 6, 8</td>
<td>Eliot (310-314), Shklovsky (275-277), Jameson (265-267)</td>
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<td><strong>Test on Part 1 on February 8th</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading week February 20-24</strong></td>
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<td>Feb 13, 15</td>
<td>De Saussure (113-115; 351-353); Propp (353-55); Barthes (76-77, 318-320); Jakobson (367-371)</td>
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<td><strong>Reading week February 20-24</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 5, 7</td>
<td>Lodge (371-375), Genette (364-366); Freud (225-227), Kristeva (238-241); Nietsche (383-385), Derrida (385-390); Culler, “Performative Language” pp. 95-102 (on reserve)</td>
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<td>Mar 12, 14</td>
<td>Blake (457), Althusser (459-463), Brecht (66-70)</td>
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<td>Mar 19, 21</td>
<td>Foucault (437-438), Benjamin (449-452); Hebdige, “From Culture to Hegemony” (on reserve); Culler, “Performative Language” 102-109 (on reserve); Ross, “The Day Lady Died” (on reserve);</td>
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<td>Mar 26, 28</td>
<td>De Beauvoir (533-537), Showalter (537-541), Cixous (541-543); Culler, “Performative Language” 102-109 (on reserve); Ross, “The Day Lady Died” (on reserve);</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>Ross continued; exam prep</td>
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<td><strong>Test on Part 2 on March 14th</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Essay Due March 26</strong></td>
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**Assignments and Values:**

Two tests: 15% each. An essay (1500-2000 words), due March 26: 30%. Final exam: 30%. In-class work: 10%.
1. You will write a test on each of the first two Parts of the course (15% each). Tests will consist of a series of short essays on ideas and essays from the relevant section of the course. Testing on Part 3 will be incorporated in the final exam.

2. You will write an essay (30%) applying the work of three theorists on the course to a literary or other text. Texts will be assigned. The essay is not particularly long but I expect it to be well-written, thoughtful, and based on a thorough reading of both theory and text. My marking will take into account organization of your discussion, rhetorical skill, written style, use of evidence, insight in analysis, and the validity and interest of your argument. I will distribute an assignment sheet after Reading Week. If you want to develop your own topic, see me.

3. The final 2.5 hour exam (30%) will take place during the final exam period. It will consist of brief essays on passages from the course reading and a longer essay that you will be able to prepare ahead of time. A prep sheet will be distributed at the last class.

4. In-class work (10%) refers primarily to participation and informal writing assignments. Participation means attendance, asking considered questions, sharing impressions and ideas, and responding to other students. You must attend classes to keep up with material, grasp the tenor of the course, and understand the contextual dimensions of the material you read at home. In-class writing (about once a week) will help you prepare for writing tests and the essay. These exercises will receive comments but no mark; they will be assessed as part of your overall in-class performance.

**Policies:**

**Attendance:** If you want to make the most of the course, regular attendance will be important for a number of related reasons. 1. “Learn” will be used in a limited way. All information about the course, with a couple of exceptions, will be disseminated in class. 2. Literary knowledge is rhetorical, that is, it emerges from and is sustained in ongoing debate by scholars, teachers, critics, students, and readers generally. You have to participate in it to know it. 3. You will learn best not just by reading texts passively on your own, but by attending class and participating in discussion. I will know all your names and will call on you, at the very least, to read aloud in class. 4. You will have to know what goes on in class to prepare for the midterm and exam.

**Submitting papers:** Hand in essays to me in class on the due date. Alternatively, leave your essay in the English department drop box on the second floor of Hagey Hall before 4 p.m. on the due date. Print essays on white paper, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point or similar font. Do not submit your paper in a duo-tang or plastic cover. A cover sheet is not necessary either. Your name and course information along with the date should appear in the top left corner of the first page of your essay. Prospective English majors should get to know MLA style.

**Late papers:** A paper may be submitted one or two days late when you make a request for an extension before the due date. Longer extensions will be given only in the case of documented incapacitation.

**Plagiarism:** Outside of the university, plagiarism may be “actionable.” That is, legal action may be taken against you for using the words or ideas of other people without proper attribution. Plagiarism is also an ethical matter. It is your responsibility to understand and avoid plagiarism. See “Notes from the Arts Faculty” below.

**Office hours:** My office hours are for you. Please do not hesitate to drop by and see me to discuss any aspect of the course. I am often in my office outside of posted hours, and I would be happy to discuss course matters with you whenever you find me in and not too busy.

**Laptops:** I strongly discourage you from using a laptop in class. It is simply too easy to click to email, facebook, or other sites during class. Anyone would be tempted. And when you do things other than notetaking with your laptop, you’re not the only student mentally checking out: everyone around you will be distracted. Finally, the screen itself is a barrier between you and the class and
therefore a barrier to participation. If you choose to use a laptop, I may require you to sit immediately in front of me or, if you appear to be surfing the internet, to close the laptop for the remainder of the course.

Notes from the Faculty of Arts

Academic Integrity:

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 – Student Discipline,

http://wwwadm uwatertlo ca/insec/Polici es/policy71.htm

**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. Read Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4,

http://wwwadm uwatertlo ca/insec/Polici es/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. Read Policy 72 – Student Appeals,

http://wwwadm uwatertlo ca/insec/Polici es/policy72.htm

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):**

http://arts.uwatertlo ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

**Academic Integrity Office (University):**

http://uwatertlo.ca/academicintegrity/