

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF LETTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Syllabus

Title of the Course: IED 634- 734  
Instructor: Prof. Dr. SERPIL OPPERMANN  
Year and Term: 2016-2017 Spring Monday 13:00-16:45  
Classroom and Hours: Seminar Room  
Office Hours:

Aim and Content:

This is a reading-intensive, both conceptual and applicatory, graduate course on contemporary literary theories, and their application to literary texts. It introduces the major principles and key concepts of contemporary literary theory and criticism. The course aims at developing a critical awareness of theory and its contribution to the interpretation of literary works. Examining and applying the major texts of contemporary theorists from the New Criticism to post-structuralist theories and ecocriticism will provide the students with a broad view of the contemporary debates on reading and interpreting texts. We will discuss literary meaning, nature of literary language, valid reading of texts, creative process, acts of reading, the production of meaning, and environmental readings. We will study feminist theories, the new historicism, reception aesthetics and reader response theory and their impact on the interpretation and understanding of literary texts. Barthes, Derrida, Lacan, Foucault, Cixous, among many others, will provide the students with a broad view of contemporary debates on reading and interpreting literature. The theoretical texts provide occasions for analysis, and help develop an understanding of theory in literary studies.

The major objectives for students can be listed as follows:

1. understanding of the basic theoretical concepts underlying contemporary approaches to literature and of the major differences between them;
2. understanding of the aims of literary criticism; knowledge of key forms and terminology of literary criticism; ability to read the writings of literary scholars and critics with understanding and appreciation;
3. knowledge of the methods of literary analysis;
4. ability to generate and articulate personal responses to literary and critical texts, and to explain the premises and assumptions underlying such personal responses;
5. ability to write a critical essay that states a clear thesis and supports it persuasively, integrating literary research with personal ideas.

Online literary resources- Theory:

<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Lit/theory.html>

<http://www.brocku.ca/english/courses/4F70/index.html>

Course Outline:

Week I-II Introduction to "Theory" in contemporary literary studies: The New Criticism and Formalist approach to the literary texts.  
The New Criticism: Irony, tension, ambiguity, paradox, close reading  
Cleanth Brooks: The Well Wrought Urn (Chapters 7 and 8)  
Wimsatt and Beardsley: "The Affective Fallacy," and "The Intentional Fallacy"  
Russian Formalism: Formal effects, Literariness, Defamiliarization, Fabula, and Sjuzet, Skaz theory, "Material and Device."  
Victor Shklovsky, Roman Jakobson (only)  
Craig Raine- "A Martian Sends a Postcard Home."

Week III- IV	Structuralist Criticism: Principles, application, theorists Relating texts to a larger structure. Figurative levels in the discourse, binary oppositions, metaphor-metonymy, synchronic- diachronic approach. Saussure- "Course in General Linguistics" Barthes- "The Structuralist Activity," <i>Writing Degree Zero, The Pleasure of the Text</i> Claude Levi-Strauss- "The Structural Study of Myth.
Week V- VI	Post-structuralist Approach: Deconstruction and its theorists, texts and reading methods –Intertextuality, Discourse, Logocentrism, Phonocentrism, Differance, Repressed, silenced moments in texts, reading the text against its logic. Jonathan Culler- <i>On Deconstruction</i> Foucault- <i>Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, The Order of Things, The Foucault Reader</i> Barthes- "The Death of the Author" Derrida- "Difference," "Ellipsis" in <i>Writing and Difference</i> , selected chapters in <i>Of Grammatology</i> Lacan-
Week-VII-VIII	Reception Aesthetics and Reader-Response Criticism: Methods and texts Selected texts from Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss Fusion of horizons, implied and informed readers, indeterminacies and gaps
Week IX-X	The New Historicism: Theorists, texts and application Aram Veesser. Ed. <i>The New Historicism</i> Stephen Greenblatt-"The Invisible Bullets"
Week XI-XII	Feminist Criticism: Theorists, application, major texts Gynocriticism, l'écriture féminine, Elaine Showalter- <i>A Literature of their Own</i> . Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar- <i>The Madwoman in the Attic</i> French Feminist Theory: Helen Cixous, Luce Irigaray,
Week XIV	Ecocriticism: Principles, texts and reading strategies Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, eds. <i>The Ecocriticism Reader</i>
Week XV	Exam

Method of Instruction : lectures and student presentations

Requirements: Attendance is compulsory. More than 12 hours of absence will result in F1

The students are expected to study the assigned texts of the theorists and offer critical approaches informed by their ideas. Each student is obliged to read every text listed and is expected to come to class with questions and critical insights concerning the material to be covered. Participating in discussions is a **MUST** for at least 10 minutes of individual contributions. This is a rather difficult course for those who are not familiar with critical and philosophical discourse; therefore an intensive reading and thinking are required. To help the students an introductory survey of theories will be gradually unfolded during my own lectures in the beginning. Additional introductory reading, however, might be necessary. There will be two response papers prepared delivered in class in addition to 10 minute presentation on the material each week. There will be **ONE MIDTEM EXAM, One Major Term Paper to be delivered the last week of the course.**

Each student will have to choose three texts from the theorists mentioned and prepare a critical reading of these texts. The language of theory is the intricate language of philosophy in general, therefore since becoming familiar with it will take some time, there is no need to despair at first sight!!! This language is not a jargon-ridden language as some maintain in their resistance to theory. Concepts and terms that are coined by the theorists come naturally out of the complexity of thought-systems themselves. Human language and human thought evolve together in mutual interaction as the famous scientist Karl Popper once declared, and as Heisenberg famously put it, "It would be our task to adapt our language and thought to this new situation." Once you reach the joy of understanding, the "Pleasures of the text" will show their bliss, joy and wisdom.

Method of Assessment: In grading oral and written work 20% will be cut for language mistakes. The aim here is to encourage the students to have close attention to their style.

The final assessment will be made on the following basis:

Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	50%
Major Term Paper	20%
Class presentations on critical concepts and/or articles	10%

### Reading Material.

H. Adams & L. Searle, eds. *Critical Theory Since 1965*  
R. Young, ed. *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*,  
J.V. Harrari, ed. *Textualist Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*  
C. Brooks. *The Well Wrought Urn* (Chps. 7&8); Wimsatt and Beardsley. "The Affective Fallacy," and "The Intentional Fallacy." in W.K. Wimsatt, Jr. *The Verbal Icon*  
F. Saussure. "Course in General Linguistics;"  
Wolfgang Iser: *The Act of Reading*  
Stanley Fish: *Is There a Text in this Class?*  
D. Wood, ed. *Derrida: A Critical Reader*  
Jacques Derrida: *Of Grammatology*, "Différance" in *Margins of Philosophy*, "Elipsis" in *Writing and Difference*.  
Jacques Lacan: "The Mirror Stage," "The agency of the letter in the Unconscious," "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious" in *Écrits*. "The Freudian Unconscious and Ours" in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. "The Purloined Letter" in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, Book II, "The Symbolic Order" in Book I.  
Roland Barthes. "The Structuralist Activity," "Death of the Author." *The Pleasure of the Text*,  
C. Levi-Strauss- "The Structural Study of Myth." in R. and F. DeGeorge, ed). *The Structuralists from Marx to Lévi-Strauss*  
Michel Foucault: "What is an Author?" in Paul Rabinow, ed. *The Foucault Reader*  
"The Order of Discourse" from *Untying the Text*, ed. Robert Young. "  
"Representing," in *The Order of Things*. "Language to Infinity" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, "The Discourse on Language" from *Critical Theory since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams, Leroy Searle. "Truth and Power" in *The Foucault Reader*.  
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: "Translator's preface" in *Of Grammatology*.  
Jonathan Culler: *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*; *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*  
Helene CIXOUS: "Sorties: Out and Out" *The Helene Cixous Reader* (ed). Susan Sellers "  
Luce IRIGARAY: *The Irigaray Reader*  
T. Hughes. "The Thought Fox,"  
E. A. Poe. "The Tell-tale Heart;"  
C. Raine. "A Martian Sends a Postcard Home,"  
Hemingway. "Cat in the Rain,"  
Marvell "To His Coy Mistress."  
Joseph Conrad- *Heart of Darkness*  
Greenblatt. "The Invisible Bullets;"  
D. LaCapra, L. Montrose, H. White; H. Aram Veese (ed). *The New Historicism*;  
*The Hélène Cixous Reader*. Elaine Showalter. *A Literature of Their Own*  
C. Glotfelty and H. Fromm (eds). *The Ecocriticism Reader*  
Julian Wolfreys, Ruth Robbins and Kenneth Womack- *Key Concepts in Literary Theory*

This List is by no means limited to these texts!!!

### Major Critical Terms:

Lisible and Scriptible Texts, Différance, Trace, Graft, Supplement, Iterability Economy, Epochè, aporia, Arche-writing, logocentricism, Transcendental Signified, Discourse, Dissemination, Écriture, enunciation, Épistème, Intersubjectivity, Intertextuality, Economy, Aufhebung, Gynocriticism, Ecriture Feminine, etc.

### VI. Research Topics:

The role of the reader versus affective and intentional fallacy  
Reading against the grain: deconstructive methods

Ecocentric reading of texts

Historicity of texts or textuality of history: Discussion

Changing language with *écriture féminine*

Is Gynocriticism a viable means of interpreting texts?

Binary oppositions in Structuralist readings

(not limited to these)

In each reading material students are asked to bring into discussion how these ideas, issues and concepts have been incorporated into literary texts. What are the key concepts and questions that have been assimilated in literary texts?

What impact did the theoretical ideas have on the authors? What are the main terms in these theorists' thoughts? In what way have they changed the writing of literature? How did they influence our ways of thinking about the world? What was their impact on the use of language? In what manner did they transform our notions of the world and word, how do they work and construct subjects? In what manner did they influence our living in the world? And why does theory still continue to irritate older generation of scholars?