

LITT 3125 Fall 2007

Literary Theory and Criticism

Section 001: M/W 3:35-5:25pm, F 215

Instructor: Dr. Kristin Jacobson (a.k.a. Dr. J)

Office phone: (609) 626-5581 **Office Location:** J-236

Email: Please use our WebCT email

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:15-3:15pm, Fridays 11:30am-12:30pm, and by appointment

Mailbox: Arts and Humanities, K-150

Course Description: Theory. I bet you've got at least one. In fact, I will wager that once you start thinking about theory, you discover that you use many theories to navigate the world, including the literature you encounter. This course asks you to gain a greater awareness of the theories used to interpret literature. The class surveys the major twentieth-century theoretical approaches. Students should come ready to read and re-read, write and re-write, think and re-think intensively.

In particular, this course has three essential goals. Students should:

- **Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories** (e.g. learn the basic schools of literary theory and criticism and their fundamental principles)
- **Learn to apply course material** (e.g., produce work—papers, presentations—that demonstrates your ability to apply literary theory to primary texts)
- **Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas** (e.g., critically evaluate a range of primary texts using appropriate literary theories)

Other important goals for this course include:

- **Gaining factual knowledge** (terminology, classifications, methods, trends) (e.g., building your vocabulary of literary terms, schools, and methods)
 - **Developing skill in expressing yourself in writing** (e.g., sharpening your critical writing and analysis skills, particularly in regard to your writing about literature and theory)
 - **Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field** (e.g., this course provides foundational knowledge for careers related to literary studies)
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Accommodation for Students with Special Needs: Stockton College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations should contact the Learning Access Program located in the West Quad Building, Suite 110 or by call 652-4988. Additional information on the program may be obtained from <http://www2.stockton.edu/wellness/lap.html>.

Academic Honesty: Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and risk failing the course. Other sanctions may also apply. For more information, see <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=14&pageID=62>

Required Texts:

- *The House of Seven Gables*, (Hawthorne) Norton Critical Edition
- *The Theory Toolbox* (Nealon & Giroux) (N&G in syllabus)
- *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Rivkin & Ryan) Second Edition (R&R in syllabus)
- **MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th Edition**
- **WebCT:** If you have questions about using WebCT, consult a computer lab assistant or your instructor. See also: <http://gannet.stockton.edu/cts/publish/WebCT.pdf>

Recommended Texts:

- *Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* (Murfin)

Email Policy: Please keep the following in mind when communicating with me outside of class:

- (1) Use WebCT email for all course-related correspondence.
- (2) I usually check my email each day in the morning. Please plan your email questions accordingly and, while I often respond immediately, allow a twenty-four hour time frame for my reply.
- (3) Always try to visit my office hours with specific questions about course material. If you were absent, contact a classmate with questions about missed material and then visit office hours if you still have questions.
- (4) Visit instructor office hours to discuss grades. This includes final grades. Grades should be discussed in person during office hours or other arranged meetings. I will not discuss grades via email.

Office Hours: Think of my office as an extension of the classroom and use my office hours to discuss any aspect of the reading and material covered during class: come chat with me about your class projects, writing, questions about the reading, quizzes, lecture or discussion, ideas you wish to develop, reading and interpretive strategies you'd like to try, and so on.

General Course Requirements:

You will be expected to:

- (1) **Attend class:** you are allotted 4 absences for fatigue, illness, cocktail flu, personal reasons, malfunctioning alarm clocks, doctor's appointments, etc. (Note I do not distinguish between excused or unexcused absences. If you miss four days and then get the flu and miss another day, you will lose 50 points for the fifth absence.) **Students entering class after the instructor records attendance or who leave before class ends will be considered absent.** For each absence after your first four, your final grade **will be reduced 50 points per additional absence**, down to and including "F." Regular, spirited class attendance is a crucial component to passing this course;
- (2) **Attend class meetings prepared:** this means DO THE READING WITH GUSTO; this is a discussion-based class and if you haven't done the reading and thought a little about it, you won't be able to contribute and the class (as well as your grade) suffers accordingly;
- (3) **Participate in large and small group discussions and assignments:** this course is what you make of it and will work *only* if everyone actively contributes;
- (4) **Complete all assignments:** passing the course requires timely completion of ALL assignments, long and short, in-class and out-of-class. No late/incomplete assignments will be accepted after the last day of class;
- (5) **Unplug:** silence cell phones, cease text messaging, and do not surf the web or check email during class.

Assignment Descriptions:

- **Class Participation** (200 points): Class participation—both *verbal* contributions and silent *active listening* to your peers and instructor—is a required element of the course. Regular, spirited attendance is a key element of exceptional class participation. Students who attend the Visiting Writer’s series can receive extra credit for the class participation evaluation. Be sure to sign in with the instructor at the event. See our syllabus for event dates and times. The instructor will give unannounced reading quizzes should students not come to class prepared. You will also regularly complete short, informal written assignments in class. Students may also boost their class participation by sending the instructor helpful links on theory-related topics that can be posted in our class WebCT site. So, come to class prepared with ideas and questions about the readings: for yourself and for your peers.
- **Individual Class Presentation** (200 points; approx. 20 minutes): Each student will sign up for an individual class presentation day. The purpose of the class presentation is to break down the theory/concept/theorist being discussed. If you address a theorist, do not include biographical information in your presentation. Focus on his/her ideas and what they mean. Each presenter will provide the class with a “cheat sheet” (1 typed page) that outlines/explains their presentation topic. This sheet should provide a handy reference guide to the topic. Each presenter will also provide the class with an annotated bibliography of at least five sources related to their presentation topic. Follow MLA format. The best presenters will not just lecture, but elicit discussion and activity from the class. Be creative! Have fun! Ask us to do crazy things to make the ideas come alive.
- **Close Reading Theory Paper:** (5 typed pages; 300 points): This paper asks you to select one of the essays from Rivkin and Ryan’s anthology and perform a close reading of it, just as you would a piece of literature. Focus on identifying its argument and how the author goes about supporting that argument. If you select a reading we did in class, be sure your close reading does not duplicate class discussion. Your paper should take the discussion further or in a different direction. Depending on the essay you select, you may only be able to close read (analyze) a portion of the author’s entire argument. That’s okay! Focus on that section and in your conclusion place that section in the context of the author’s larger argument. No outside research is required for this paper. Include a Works Cited. Follow MLA format.
- **Theory Application Paper** (8-10 typed pages, 300 points): For this assignment you will apply one of the theories or concepts discussed in this class to a literary work or to a film. See below for a list of approved primary texts. This paper may build from your close reading theory paper. However, rather than explaining the theory, this paper uses theory as a tool to help elucidate the primary text. This paper should draw from scholarly sources such as literary and/or film criticism. Include a Works Cited. Follow MLA format.

Approved List of Literary Works and Films for Theory Application Paper

Films

- *Stranger Than Fiction* (2006)
- *Thank You for Smoking* (2006)
- *Brokeback Mountain* (2005)
- *Grizzly Man* (2005)
- *Transamerica* (2005)

Literary Works

- “Brokeback Mountain,” Annie Proulx
- *The House of the Seven Gables*, Nathaniel Hawthorne
- *The Eyre Affair*, Jasper Fforde
- *Gilead*, Marilynne Robinson

Grading Scale

100-95: A	89.9-87: B+	79.9-77: C+	69.9-67: D+
94.9-90: A-	86.9-83: B	76.9-73: C	66.9-63: D
	82.9-80: B-	72.9-70: C-	62.9-60: D-
			59.9 & below: F

Grades

- Class Participation 200
- Class Presentation 200
- Close Reading Theory Paper 300
- Theory Application Paper 300

Total— 1000

Late Assignment Policy:

I understand that life is full of surprises and sometimes those surprises influence your coursework and your ability to complete assignments. As a community of learners, we also recognize that we have a responsibility to the group, to our instructor, and to ourselves. We understand that every action has a consequence—even when circumstance may limit our power to act. To balance individual and community needs, we have the following guidelines for late assignments.

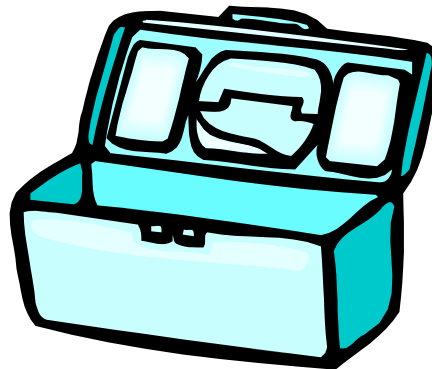
Written Assignments: *Papers are due at the beginning of class.* Late papers will be docked 5 percentage points per day late. So, if a B (85%) paper due on Tuesday were passed in on Wednesday, the recorded grade would be B- (80%). If it were passed in on Thursday, the paper would earn a 75%. And so on and so forth.

Paper Extensions: Any student who asks the instructor **prior to** the due date may receive a 2-day extension from the due date listed on the syllabus. After 2 days the late paper penalty will go into effect. No exceptions. *Due to the College's grade submission deadline for graduating seniors, no graduating senior may receive an extension for the final paper.*

Of course, the extension policy will only help students who have drafted a paper and follow the expected practice of backing up documents. Back up all your files and you will be a much happier and successful individual. You may not be happy when your computer explodes or your flash drive crashes, but at least you will not be despondent. I also strongly encourage all students to keep a personal copy of every assignment and to keep all returned assignments with my feedback until the end of the term. Reminder, no assignments will be accepted after the last class meeting.

Paper Revision Policy:

This course is based on the principle that revisions take place *before* a paper is evaluated by the instructor for a grade. To this end, consider dropping in during office hours or other arranged meetings to discuss your papers in advance of due dates. Drop in at any stage of the writing process: from your initial brainstorming to nailing down those final brass tacks. The instructor will happily read and comment on thesis statements (usually between 1-3 sentences) via WebCT email. If you wish the instructor to read longer drafts, drop by her office hours. Additionally, Dr. J encourages you to use your peer resources during the draft and revision process, including Stockton's Writing Center: <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=70&pageID=2>.

WHAT'S IN YOUR THEORY TOOLBOX?

Syllabus—LITT 3125—Fall 2007¹

Please bring *House of Seven Gables* to Every Class.

Week 1: Introductions, Taking Stock of Your Theory Toolbox

Sept 05: **Introductions:** to course, WebCT, assignments, students and instructor.

Week 2: Why Theory?—New Criticism

Sept 10: **Why Theory?:** N&G: 1-8; Hawthorne: 3-52

Sept 12: **Formalism:** R&R: 3-6; Hawthorne: 52-103

Week 3: New Criticism

Sept 17: **New Criticism:** R&R: 15-21; Hawthorne: 104-150

Sept 19: **New Criticism:** R&R: 22-27; Hawthorne: 150-200

Week 4: Reader-Oriented Criticism

Sept 24: **Reader Response:** R&R: 127-30; N&G: 9-20; Hawthorne: 200-225

Sept 26: **Readers and Subjectivity:** N&G: 21--50; R&R: 217-221; 237-53

Week 5: Psychoanalytic Criticism

Oct 01: **Psychoanalytic Criticism:** R&R: 389-430

Oct 03: **Psychoanalytic Criticism:** R&R: 462-69; 487-502

Oct 3: Visiting Writers Series: Stephen Dunn (poet), 8pm, TRLC

Week 6: Deconstruction

Oct 08: **Deconstruction:** R&R: 257-61; 278-99

Oct 10: **Deconstructing Culture:** N&G: 51-82

Week 7: Political Criticisms

Oct 15: **Political Criticism:** R&R: 643-49; 666-72; Hawthorne: 348-385

Oct 17: **Hegemony & Ideology:** N&G: 83-94; R&R: 673; 693-702

Week 8: Historicisms

Oct 22: **Historicisms:** N&G: 95-108; R&R: 505-507; 567-583

Oct 24: **Historicisms:** N&G: 109-124; R&R: 549-566; Hawthorne: 418-438

¹ Class Schedule subject to changes with notice. Readings and assignments are listed on the day they are due.

Week 9: Feminism

Oct 29: **Feminisms**: R&R: 765-769; 770-793

Oct 31: **Feminisms**: R&R: 854-881; Hawthorne: 385-407; 460-472 **Close Reading Theory Paper Due**

Nov 1: **Visiting Writers Series/Ravenswood Reading: Tony Hoagland (poet), 8pm**

Week 10: Gender Studies

Nov 05: **Difference**: R&R: 885-888; N&G: 157-191; Hawthorne: 472-493

Nov 07: **Gender**: R&R: 899-911; 935-956

Week 11: Ethnic Literary and Cultural Studies, Critical Race Theory

Nov 12: **Critical Race Theory**: R&R: 959-963; 964-986;

Nov 14: **Ethnic Literary and Cultural Studies**: R&R: 1031-1050; Hawthorne: 438-459

Week 12: Colonial, Post-colonial, Transnational Studies

Nov 19: **(Post)Colonialism**: R&R: 1071-1074; 1185-1196; 1051-1067.

Nov 21: NO CLASSES. THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY.

Week 13: Cultural Studies

Nov 26: **Cultural Studies**: R&R: 1233-1234; 1242-1246; 1258-67

Nov 28: **Cultural Studies**: R&R: 1268-1284

Week 14: Film Theory

Dec 03: *Stranger Than Fiction* Screening. **Posts**: N&G: 125-155

Dec 05: *Stranger Than Fiction* discussion. **Posts & Agency**: N&G: 193-206

Week 15: Taking Stock of Theory

Dec 10: **A Sense of an Ending**: Complete *Stranger Than Fiction* Discussion. Theory Post-mortem. **Theory Application Paper Due**

Presentations

- 1) **New Criticism (Sept. 19):** _____
- 2) **Reader-Response (Sept. 26):** _____
- 3) **Freud (Oct. 1):** _____
- 4) **Psychoanalytic Criticism (Oct. 3):** _____
- 5) **Derrida (Oct. 8):** _____
- 6) **Deconstruction (Oct. 10):** _____
- 7) **Marxism (Oct. 15):** _____
- 8) **Historicisms (Oct. 24):** _____
- 9) **Feminisms (Oct. 31):** _____
- 10) **Gender Studies (Nov.7):** _____
- 11) **Critical Race Theory (Nov. 14):** _____
- 12) **Post-Colonial Studies (Nov. 19):** _____
- 13) **Cultural Studies (Nov. 28):** _____