

George Drake
English 518
Spring 2016
M W 1:00 – 2:40
Farrell 401

Office: LL 423B
Hours: M F 11:00 – 12:00
and by appointment
Office Phone: 963-1552
e-mail: drakeg@cwu.edu

SYLLABUS

History of Literary Theory and Criticism

Literary theory and criticism have been around almost as long as literature itself. No doubt Homer had his critics, and when he invokes the muses at the beginnings of his epics, he is articulating a theory of poetry: that it is divinely inspired. The critics, philosophers, and poets we will be reading have debated many of the same kinds of questions we ask today: What is good literature? What is literature good for? How are we to interpret literature? What is the relationship between author, text, reader, and world? We will be reading selections from classical, neoclassical, Romantic, Victorian, Modernist, and later twentieth-century writers. The selection of texts is based on two principles: first, I have included many of the texts traditionally regarded as the high points in the historical dialogue. Second, I have included texts that continue to inform recent critical practices.

Course Text: Richter, David H. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Shorter 3rd Ed. (note: the full hardcover 3rd edition is also fine).

Course Objectives: The primary objective for the course will be a clear understanding of important texts in the history of theory and criticism. Unlike most English courses, we won't be as focused on interpretation as on analysis and identifying key ideas. Beyond that, my aim is to make these texts useful to you as students, readers, and—for some of you—as teachers. To that end, we will be discussing their practical value for understanding historical attitudes toward literature, for clarifying current issues in literary theory, and for use in the classroom. We will also examine how theory and criticism has shaped the discipline we study.

Learner Outcomes	Assessment
Identify major advances in literary and critical theory and evaluate their relevance to the analysis of literary works.	Presentations, papers, and classroom discussion.
Explain the critical approaches informed by these theories and analyze their historical and cultural background.	Presentations and papers.
Apply selected critical approaches to literary works.	Paper(s).
Recognize and critique the argument underlying critical writings.	Classroom and Canvas discussion and response papers.
Examine at least one theory or theorist in depth.	Presentations and papers.

Course Requirements and Grading: The course will be structured in a slightly different way than usual. I want to have you writing often so that you can engage a variety of theorists, so you'll be writing shorter work frequently. Assignments will include the following:

- **Three short papers** (2 pages each). The first will be on Aristotle. For the second and third papers, you will have a choice of topics, but they will include response and comparison. The papers should demonstrate your understanding of the texts and ability to identify key points.
- **A presentation on related theorists.** You will be doing these in pairs, and they should focus on theoretical works we are not reading. The theorists could be paired in terms of historical period, critical schools (e.g. New Historicism, feminism). Your presentation should identify key ideas and why their work is important.
- **Discussion questions.** We don't read from the history of criticism because these writers had all the answers. We read them because they asked and discussed important questions. Because posing productive questions is a critical part of our discipline, I will ask each of you to contribute at least one question for discussion each week, for a total of ten (you'll need to double up one week). You will be posting these to Canvas *before* we discuss the author, and you should have a fallback question (or questions) in case someone else has already asked it.
- **Final Paper** (10-12 pages). Your final paper will be on a specific problem or question in literary theory, or on applying a theoretical approach to a particular literary text. It should incorporate ideas from multiple theorists. I will ask you to turn in a draft for feedback and to do peer reviews.

Classroom Participation	100
Short Paper #1 (Aristotle)	100
Short Paper #2	100
Short Paper #3	100
Presentation	150
Discussion Questions (total)	100
Draft of final paper + peer review	100
Final Paper (including draft)	250
Total	1,000

Papers should be submitted to Canvas via the assignment link. Late papers will be graded down 1/3 grade point for each day they are late (i.e. a B will become a B-, a B- a C+, and so on). Papers must be correctly documented to credit sources. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade—please ask me if you have any questions about documenting sources.

Attendance: Your prepared participation will be essential. Since the course will rely extensively on discussion and only meets twice a week, missing even one session will put you behind. If you must miss a class, please let me know ahead of time. If you do miss a session, it is your responsibility to get notes, assignments, and handouts from a classmate. Please feel free to drop by my office during office hours or make an appointment if you have questions or just want to talk more about the interesting works we'll be reading. I am also happy to discuss drafts of your papers.

Canvas: I will post assignments, power points, and handouts on Canvas, and I will ask you to submit your papers to Canvas. We'll also be using it for discussion questions.

Diversity: In my classroom, diversity is welcomed and celebrated. I will not tolerate any forms of prejudice or discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation,

race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status. We are here to learn in a climate of civility and mutual respect.

Students with disabilities: Central Washington University is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning, discuss your concerns with the instructor. Students with disabilities should contact Disability Services to discuss a range of options for removing barriers, including accommodations. Student Disability Services is located in Hogue 126. Call (509) 963-2214 or email ds@cwu.edu for more information.

Some useful books:

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory*

Cambridge History of Literary Criticism (9 volumes)

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*

---. *After Theory*

Groden, Michael, Martin Kreiswirth, and Imre Szeman, eds. *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*

---. *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory*

Habib, M. A. R., *A History of Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to the Present.*

Harmon, William and C. Hugh Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*

Murfin, Ross and Supryia M. Ray, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*

Selden, et al. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Theory*

Stevens, Anne H.

Our text also has a very helpful bibliography for each of the authors we will be reading and for contemporary trends.

Reading and Assignment Schedule for 518

Monday		Wednesday	
3/28		3/30	
			Course Introduction
			Classical Criticism
4/4	Classical Criticism Plato, from <i>Republic</i> and <i>Ion</i>	4/6	Classical Criticism Aristotle, from <i>Poetics</i>
4/11	Classical Criticism Horace, <i>The Art of Poetry</i> Longinus, from <i>On the Sublime</i> Short paper on Aristotle due	4/13	Renaissance and Early Modern Sidney, <i>An Apology for Poetry</i> Behn, "Epistle to the Reader"
4/18	Eighteenth Century Pope, <i>Essay on Criticism</i> Johnson, all	4/20	Romantic Kant, from <i>Critique of Judgement</i> Schiller, from <i>On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry</i>
4/25	Romantic Wordsworth, <i>Preface</i> Coleridge, from <i>Biographia Literaria</i> Paper #2 due	4/27	Romantic Shelley, <i>Defence of Poetry</i> Wollstonecraft, from <i>Vindication</i>
5/2	Modernism Eliot, <i>Tradition and the Individual Talent</i> Woolf, all	5/4	Modernism/Formalism Bakhtin, all Shklovsky, "Art as Technique"
5/9	Formalisms Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy" Cleanth Brooks, "Irony as a Principle of Structure" Paper #3 due	5/11	Structuralism and Deconstruction Saussure, all Barthes, "Death of the Author" Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play"
5/16	Marxism and New Historicism Williams, from <i>Marxism and Literature</i> Foucault, "What is an Author?" Armstrong, "Some Call it Fiction"	5/18	Reader-Response and Cognitive Theory Booth, "Control of Distance in Jane Austen's <i>Emma</i> " Fish, "How to Recognize a Poem" Zunshine, "Theory of Mind"
5/23	Feminism Kolodney, "Dancing through the Minefield" Kristeva, "Women's Time"	5/25	Gender Studies and Queer Theory Butler, <i>Imitation and Gender Insubordination</i> Foucault, from <i>The History of Sexuality</i> Draft of final paper due
5/30	Memorial Day	6/1	Postcolonialism Said, from <i>Orientalism</i> Gloria Anzaldúa, "La conciencia de las mestiza"
Final paper due to Canvas June 9th by 11:59 p.m.			