

Sam Houston State University  
Department of English  
Summer 2008  
ENG 568

PROFESSOR: Dr. Kandi Tayebi  
OFFICE: Smith Kirkley 250  
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OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed to accomplish two goals: (1) to familiarize you with a broad cross-section of the leading theories current in literary criticism today, and (2) to help you develop your own critical perspective on literature. In order to do this, we will survey various traditional and modern literary theories. The aim is to explain and to evaluate both traditional accounts of literary value, which emphasize the objectivity of literature, the autonomy of the critic, the structure of genres, and the rationality of history, and recent accounts, which show that the biases and prejudices of social life, desire, the unconscious, ideology, gender, race, and history influence our evaluations of literature. In the process of addressing these issues, we'll also address a range of other questions about literature: How are literary texts structured? How are they different from non-literary texts (if indeed they are)? How do literary texts affect audiences/readers (i.e. what does literature DO to you)? Is there such a thing as a specifically "literary" language, and if so, what is it like? How does literature relate to other aspects of a culture, such as politics, or gender relations, or philosophy, or economics? What is the function of literature? Although the initial questions may seem basic, they lead to very complex answers, so you should be prepared to read and discuss difficult material.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** The student will be able to

1. Identify basic assumptions of major literary theories
2. Apply literary theories to literary selections
3. Read current literary studies scholarship and identify the theories utilized, the assumptions of the author, and the relevant literary theorists
4. Write a paper based in literary theory.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Richter, David. The Critical Tradition: Classical Texts and Contemporary Trends.

Bressler, Charles. Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice.

Smith, Johanna M. Editor. Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein. \*\*\*This is the edition of Shelley's work you need. No other edition can be substituted since we will be focusing on the critical essays in the back.\*\*\*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Midterm and Final—Both tests will be essay exams that ask you to apply particular theories to a text supplied by me.

Five short (3 page) papers –You will pick a short passage or a short poem and apply the particular theory we are discussing to it. The papers will be double-spaced with one-inch margins.

**Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory. This is difficult material, and we only have a short time to cover it. Therefore, if you will be absent for more than one day during the class time, you should not sign up for the class. It is essential that you come PREPARED! Read the material carefully (more than one time through).

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in either an "F" on the paper or an "F" in the course.

**Papers:**

Papers should be double-spaced on a word processor. Papers should follow MLA documentation style. Late papers will receive a "0."

**Conferences:**

You may meet with me as often as you wish. My door is always open.

**Grading:**

Midterm	25
Final	25
5 papers	<u>50</u>
	100

**Classroom Rules of Conduct**

Please read the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline available at <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>

**Academic Dishonesty, Students with Disabilities, Religious Holidays, and Visitors in the Classroom**

Information on the above policies can be accessed at <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>  
Please be sure to read the policies.

## Class Schedule

Introduction to the course. What is theory and why study it?

Wednesday, July 9--In Richter large book, Plato, *Republic*, Book X, 30-38; Aristotle, *Poetics*, 59-81; Horace, *The Art of Poetry*, 84-94; Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, 135-159. In Bressler, Chapter 2, "A Historical Survey of Literary Criticism," 16-36.

Thursday, July 10--In Richter large book, Marx, "Consciousness Derived from Material Conditions" 406-409; Freud, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming," "The Dream-Work," and "The Uncanny" 500-532; Bakhtin, "The Topic of the Speaking Person: From *Discourse in the Novel*," 578-587; Jung, "The Principal Archetypes" 554-564.

Friday, July 11—In Richter large book, Woolf, "Shakespeare's Sister," 599-601; de Beauvoir, "Myths: Of Women in Five Authors," 676-678; Frye, "The Archetypes of Literature," 693-701; Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," 537-541.

Monday, July 14—Formalism; New Criticism

In Richter large book, Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," 811-818; Brooks, "Irony as a Principle of Structure," 799-806; I A Richards, "Principles of Literary Criticism," 764-774. In Bressler, Chapter 3, "New Criticism," 37-54.

Tuesday, July 15—Reader-Response Criticism

In Richter large book, Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," 1002-1014; Holland, "The Question: Who Reads What How?" 1015-1022; Fish, "How to Recognize a Poem When You See One," 1023-1030; Fetterley, "Introduction to *The Resisting Reader*," 1035-1042. In Bressler, Chapter 4, "Reader-Response Criticism," 55-74. Handout: "Reader-Response Criticism and Frankenstein."

Wednesday, July 16—Structuralism

In Richter large book, De Saussure, "Nature of the Linguistic Sign," 842-851; Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," 860-867; Jakobson, "From Linguistics and Poetics," 852-859. In Bressler, Chapter 5, "Structuralism," 75-93.

Thursday, July 17—Deconstruction

In Richter large book, Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," 915-926; Foucault, "What is an Author," 904-914; Barthes, "From *Work to Text*," 878-882; De Man, "Semiotics and Rhetoric," 882-893. In Bressler, Chapter 6, "Deconstruction," 94-118.

Friday, July 18— Deconstruction cont.

Monday, July 21— Midterm.

Tuesday, July 22— Psychological Criticism.

In Richter large book, Bloom, “A Meditation upon Priority,” 1156-1160; Lacan, “The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud,” 1129-1155. Handouts: Gallop, “From *Reading Lacan*”; Kristeva, “Psychoanalysis and the Polis.” In Bressler, Chapter 7, “Psychoanalytic Criticism,” 119-141. In Smith, “The Monster and the Maternal Thing: Mary Shelley’s Critique of Ideology,” 280-295.

Wednesday, July 23— Psychological Criticism cont.

Thursday, July 24— Marxist Criticism

In Richter large book, Lukacs, “The Ideology of Modernism,” 1218-1232; Eagleton, “Categories for a Materialist Criticism,” 1308-1319; Williams, “From *Marxism and Literature*,” 1272-1290; Jameson, “From *The Political Unconscious*,” 1291-1306. In Bressler, Chapter 9, “Marxism,” 161-178. In Smith, “The Workshop of Filthy Creation,” 384-395.

Friday, July 25— Class does not meet.

Monday, July 28— Feminist Criticism

In Richter large book, Gilbert and Gubar, “From Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship,” 1532-1544; Kolodny, “Dancing Through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism,” 1550-1562; Smith, “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism,” 1600-1610. Handout: Showalter, “Toward a Feminist Poetics,” 1374-1386. In Bressler, Chapter 8, “Feminism,” 142-160. In Smith, “‘Cooped up’ with ‘Sad Trash’: Domesticity and the Sciences in *Frankenstein*,” 313-333.

Tuesday, July 29-- Gender and Queer Criticism

In Richter large book, Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” 1643-1655; Foucault, “From *The History of Sexuality*,” 1627-1636; Sedgwick, “From *Epistemology of the Closet*,” 1687-1691; Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” 1707-1718. Handout: Irigaray, “This Sex Which is Not One,” 1466-1471. In Smith, “Lesbian Panic and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*,” 349-367.

Wednesday, July 30-- New Historicism

In Richter large book, Foucault, "Las Meninas," 1357-1366; Geertz, "Thick Description," 1367-1383; Greenblatt, "Introduction to *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*," 1443-1445, White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," 1384-1397; Armstrong, "Some Call It Fiction: On the Politics of Domesticity," 1419-1432. In Bressler, Chapter 10, "Cultural Poetics," 179-196.

Thursday, July 31— Cultural Studies, Post-Colonialism

Said, "From the Introduction to *Orientalism*," 1801-1814; Bhabba, "Sign Taken for Wonders," 1875-1890; Gates "Writing, Race and the Difference it Makes," 1891-1902; Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," 1837-1849. In Bressler, Chapter 11, "Cultural Studies," 197-213.

Friday, August 1—Class does not meet.

Monday, August 4— Ecological Criticism

Buell, "The Ecocritical Insurgency," 1433-1442. See Handouts.

Tuesday, August 5—Catch up in course. Review for final.

Wednesday, August 6—Review for final.

Thursday, August 7—Final Exam.

Each smaller paper is due the class day after we talk about the theory you are using. You must use 5 theories. Any theory covered after New Criticism can be used. All small papers must be completed by Monday, August 4.

This schedule is subject to change during the semester.