

Sam Houston State University
Department of English
Spring 2018
ENGL 4390-01
Evans Room 351, 9:30-10:50 T/TH

PROFESSOR: Dr. Kandi Tayebi
OFFICE: 413
OFFICE PHONE: 4-1439
OFFICE HOURS: T/TH 12-2 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will closely examine the major modes of literary theory. It is designed to accomplish three goals: to familiarize you with a broad survey of leading theories current in literary criticism today, to help you learn to apply these theories to texts, and to help you understand current scholarly articles in English studies. In the process of studying these theories, we also will 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, gender relations, philosophy, or economics? What is the function of literature?

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to

1. Delineate the major assumptions of current literary theories,
2. Apply literary theory to texts,
3. Explain the differences between major theoretical schools,
4. Recognize the theoretical positions used in scholarly articles.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Robert Dale Parker *How to Interpret Literature*

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism* (Ed. Johanna M. Smith)

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE:

Midterm and Final—You will take two exams, which will consist of an in-class essay that applies a theory to a given text.

Paper—You will write a 6-8-page paper (typed, double-space, 1-inch margins, no extra spaces, MLA style). This paper will apply a theoretical approach to a text of your choosing. You cannot use New Criticism as your approach. You must have at least 2 scholarly sources.

Discussion Questions—You will be asked to bring two discussion questions each Thursday, which point to areas you need clarification on, don't understand, or find interesting in the articles on Blackboard.

2 *Frankenstein* events—You will need to attend 2 *Frankenstein* events, sign in, and write a one-page summary of the experience.

GRADING:

Midterm	25%
Final	25%
<i>Frankenstein</i> Events	5%
Paper	30%
Discussion Questions	15%
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100%	

COMING PREPARED:

It is impossible to discuss the theories if you do not read the assignments. Therefore, if it appears that the class is not reading the material, we will have short reading quizzes that will be factored into the *Frankenstein* Events grade.

ABSENCES:

You will be allowed 2 absences. After that, any absence will result in a full letter grade reduction for each subsequent absence. Any work missed during this time is your responsibility to complete. Papers or other assignments due on that day will not be accepted at a later time. Please send the assignments with a friend or classmate.

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you use another person's words without giving them credit, you will receive an "F" in the course.

PAPERS:

Papers must be double-spaced and typed. Please use standard margins and font for MLA style.

OTHER POLICIES:

Be sure to check out the information on Academic Dishonesty, Student Absences on Religious Holy Days, Students with Disabilities Policy, and Visitors in the Classroom Policy at the following URL:

www.shsu.edu/syllabus

I look forward to a terrific semester. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me. You can drop by the office, leave me an email, or call. Good luck!

"With how many things are we on the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries." Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

IMPORTANT DATES

February 1—Last day to drop without a Q and receive 100% refund.

March 12-16—Spring Break

April 6—Last day to drop with a Q.

Class Schedule

January 18—Introduction to Course. If you have not read *Frankenstein*, please read it over the next three weeks, so you are finished by February 13.

January 23, 25—New Criticism

Read Parker book, pages 11-42.

Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy" On Blackboard.

January 30, February 1—Structuralism

Read Parker book, pages 43-65.

Saussure, "Nature of the Linguistic Sign" On Blackboard.

February 6, 8—Deconstruction

Read Parker book, pages 85-101.

Foucault, "What is An Author?" On Blackboard.

February 13, 15—Psychoanalytic Theory

Read Parker book, pages 127-140.

Freud, "The Uncanny" On Blackboard

In *Frankenstein* book, "The Monster and the Maternal Thing: Mary Shelley's Critique of Ideology."

February 20, 22—Feminist Theory

Read Parker book, pages 148-183.

Smith, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" On Blackboard

In *Frankenstein* book, "'Cooped Up' with 'Sad Trash': Domesticity and the Sciences in *Frankenstein*."

February 27, March 1—French Feminists

Read Kristeva, "Psychoanalysis and the Polis" On Blackboard

Irigaray, "This Sex Which Is Not One" On Blackboard

March 6, 8—Midterm Review, ***Midterm***

March 12-16—Spring Break

March 20, 22—Gender and Queer Theory

Read Parker book, pages 185-200.

Butler "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" On Blackboard.

In *Frankenstein* book, "Victor's Secret: Queer Gothic in Lynd Ward's Illustrations to *Frankenstein*."

March 27, 29—Marxism

Read Parker book, pages 220-241.

Williams, "Marxism and Literature" On Blackboard

In *Frankenstein* book, "'The Workshop of Filthy Creation': A Marxist Reading of *Frankenstein*."

April 3, 5—New Historicism

Read Parker book, pages 259-268, 270-274.

Greenblatt, "Introduction to *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*" On Blackboard.

April 10, 12—PostColonialism

Read Parker book, pages 285-303, 308-311.

Said, "From the Introduction to *Orientalism*" On Blackboard

Anzaldúa, "La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness." On Blackboard.

April 17, 19—Race and Ethnic Studies

Read Parker book, pages 311-324.

Gates, "Writing, 'Race,' and the Difference It Makes" On Blackboard

In *Frankenstein* book, "'This Thing of Darkness': Racial Discourse in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*."

April 24, 26—Ecocriticism. ***Paper due April 26***

Read Parker book, pages 355-367.

Kroeber, "Ecological Literary Criticism."

May 2, 4—Reader Response. Final Exam Review.

Read Parker book, pages 330-333, 340-344.

Fetterley, "Introduction to *The Resisting Reader*" On Blackboard.

Final Exam—Thursday, May 10, 9:30-11:30.