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ENG 5061B-600: Special Topics in Literature and Literary Theory

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Special Topics in Literature and Literary Theory
Graduate English 5061B
Fall 2021 / Online

Dr. Suzie Park

email: sapark@eiu.edu / conferences by appointment

Welcome to Zombies, Bugs, and Literary Theory!

When it's morning and people are using
words and expecting things from me



Course Overview and Introduction

Getting Started

Please read carefully through this Course Overview. Here, I will introduce the following:

- 1) purpose and structure of the course
- 2) netiquette
- 3) course policies
- 4) minimum technology requirements
- 5) minimum technical skills
- 6) prerequisite knowledge
- 7) information about the instructor
- 8) assignment asking you to introduce yourself

The remainder of the course syllabus will explain the learning objectives, assessment (or grading policy), instructional materials, learning activities, course technology, and learner support resources.

1. Purpose and Structure of the Course

Also known as **English 5061B: Special Topics in Literature and Literary Theory**, “Zombies, Bugs, and Literary Theory” will be entirely taught and experienced online over the span of fifteen weeks, August 23 – December 10, 2021.

This graduate-level special topics course focuses on literary theory and reading closely, largely through the lens of objects and creatures that frighten and fascinate us. I have designed this course as an introduction to the world of literary theory and a fun foray into the mind-scape of things I (and many other people) fear. This includes zombies, bugs, and, strangely enough, literary theory!

Drawing from my many years of experience as a close reader of literature, I can tell you that literary theory is challenging, rigorous, heady stuff—*but* it is absolutely well worth your time to be patient with this demanding material. Why? It can serve as a useful tool for becoming an even more sophisticated, higher-order reader of literature and of the world around you.

This class will be appropriate for anyone pursuing masters-level work in literary studies or anyone planning to enrich his or her own teaching of wildly popular cultural objects such as (zombie-centered) novels and films.

Graduate Course Catalog Description

ENG 5061B: Special Topics in Literature and Literary Theory

Special topics in language and literature not ordinarily treated in standard courses. The topic will vary from semester to semester.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does the hungry student of literature *do*? Does she devour texts, feed on the brains of others with a desire to feed her own? Does she behave like a parasite, both feeding on and feeding her host, the literary work? Is she a discrete, individual body, or a unit within a swarm? Whether zombie or parasitic bug, we ought to learn about table manners—the rules of etiquette to follow when unleashing our appetite on texts. Through an examination of major rule makers and rule breakers, we will sample a whole buffet of schools of thought that have shaped literary studies. We will focus on thinkers that have questioned the boundaries of science, understanding, and habits of consumption. Students can expect viewings of *Night of the Living Dead* and *28 Days Later*, alongside readings of *Pride and Prejudice* (and the zombie version).

English 5061 is organized into seven modules, or thematically-driven topics, that fall over the course of fifteen weeks of classes. **Important: This means that some modules are two-three weeks long while other ones are only a single week in duration.**

Module I (week 1)

Literary Theory: An Introduction

This module provides a brief overview of literary theory, the discipline and the practice. We will reflect on what we already know of literary theory, even if we are not in the habit of calling it by this name. We will read a selection of thesis statements featuring “zombies” in order to examine our habits of reading theoretically.

Module II (weeks 2 and 3)

What We Can’t See Will Probably Kill Us: Hypochondria and Close Reading

This module will consider the condition of hypochondria; it is both a way of viewing the world and a useful metaphor for how close reading helps us understand what remains hidden and invisible to us as readers. We will begin our foray in to Jane Austen’s classic Regency novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, and learn from narrative theorists.

Module III (weeks 4 and 5)

Schools of Thought, Part One: Formalism and Structuralism

This module concentrates on Formalism and Structuralism, or when literary study turned into a science. We will read Ferdinand de Saussure’s groundbreaking “Course in General Linguistics” and consider how this new reading habit forever changed our understanding of difference and/in language.

Module IV (weeks 6 and 7)

Schools of Thought, Part Two: Psychoanalytic Theory and Feminist Theory

This module examines the destabilizing force of the unconscious on habits of reading. Sigmund Freud’s concepts of the uncanny and the death drive play central roles in this segment, as they teach us to pay closer attention to repetition and its meanings.

Module V (weeks 8 and 9)

Schools of Thought, Part Three: Labor Theory

This module addresses the inescapable importance of Karl Marx’s labor theory and the patterns through which characters (and real people) divide work amongst themselves within economies of meaning.

Module VI (weeks 10 and 11)

The Panopticon

We examine Michel Foucault’s influential concept of panopticism as it operates in modern society. We will consider a number of zombie films that interrogate the modern surveillance state and the ideas underpinning a “disciplined” populace.

Module VII (weeks 12 through 15)

Swarms

The final module addresses insect architecture, swarms, and other behaviors that at first glance seem non-human.

2. Netiquette

Please see [EIU's Online Learning Netiquette Guide](#): In an online course, most communication is done through written messages either in private posts or public discussions. It is important that students in online courses be especially sensitive to how messages and sentiment are communicated and received.

3. Course Policies

Late Policy

Essays are due at the specified time. Late essays will be marked a full grade lower for every day late. Essays turned in a week past the deadline will be given a “zero.”

Essay Policy

Your paper should include page numbers. Format: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Always submit your papers using correct MLA (Modern Language Association) format.

Email Policy

I will try to respond to all emails to sapark@eiu.edu within 24 hours of receipt. Please use a descriptive subject line (“question about primary sources,” etc.), a proper salutation (“Dear Dr. Park”), and a proper closing (“Best, Frankie Avalon,” “Thank You, Marilyn Manson”). Email professionalism is very important.

Academic integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Students with disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1210, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

The Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee Gym, Room 1301.

Eastern Illinois University Learning Goals (<http://www.eiu.edu/learninggoals/revisedgoals.php>)

EIU graduates reason and communicate clearly as responsible citizens and leaders in diverse personal, professional, and civic contexts.

Critical Thinking

EIU graduates question, examine, evaluate, and respond to problems or arguments by:

1. Asking essential questions and engaging diverse perspectives.
2. Seeking and gathering data, information, and knowledge from experience, texts, graphics, and media.
3. Understanding, interpreting, and critiquing relevant data, information, and knowledge.
4. Synthesizing and integrating data, information, and knowledge to infer and create new insights
5. Anticipating, reflecting upon, and evaluating implications of assumptions, arguments, hypotheses, and conclusions.
6. Creating and presenting defensible expressions, arguments, positions, hypotheses, and proposals.

Writing and Critical Reading

EIU graduates write critically and evaluate varied sources by:

1. Creating documents appropriate for specific audiences, purposes, genres, disciplines, and professions.
2. Crafting cogent and defensible applications, analyses, evaluations, and arguments about problems, ideas, and issues.
3. Producing documents that are well-organized, focused, and cohesive.
4. Using appropriate vocabulary, mechanics, grammar, diction, and sentence structure.
5. Understanding, questioning, analyzing, and synthesizing complex textual, numeric, and graphical sources.
6. Evaluating evidence, issues, ideas, and problems from multiple perspectives.
7. Collecting and employing source materials ethically and understanding their strengths and limitations.

Speaking and Listening

EIU graduates prepare, deliver, and critically evaluate presentations and other formal speaking activities by:

1. Collecting, comprehending, analyzing, synthesizing and ethically incorporating source material.
2. Adapting formal and impromptu presentations, debates, and discussions to their audience and purpose.
3. Developing and organizing ideas and supporting them with appropriate details and evidence.
4. Using effective language skills adapted for oral delivery, including appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.
5. Using effective vocal delivery skills, including volume, pitch, rate of speech, articulation, pronunciation, and fluency.
6. Employing effective physical delivery skills, including eye contact, gestures, and movement.
7. Using active and critical listening skills to understand and evaluate oral communication.

Quantitative Reasoning

EIU graduates produce, analyze, interpret, and evaluate quantitative material by:

1. Performing basic calculations and measurements.
2. Applying quantitative methods and using the resulting evidence to solve problems.

3. Reading, interpreting, and constructing tables, graphs, charts, and other representations of quantitative material.
4. Critically evaluating quantitative methodologies and data.
5. Constructing cogent arguments utilizing quantitative material.
6. Using appropriate technology to collect, analyze, and produce quantitative materials.

Responsible Citizenship

EIU graduates make informed decisions based on knowledge of the physical and natural world and human history and culture by:

1. Engaging with diverse ideas, individuals, groups, and cultures.
2. Applying ethical reasoning and standards in personal, professional, disciplinary, and civic contexts.
3. Participating formally and informally in civic life to better the public good.
4. Applying knowledge and skills to new and changing contexts within and beyond the classroom.

4. Minimum Technology Requirements

In order to take this online course, you will need a reliable internet connection, a computer, access to D2L (Desire to Learn) and Adobe Acrobat Reader (<https://get.adobe.com/reader/>). You may want to watch a D2L tutorial (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtAqQI4q_DY) and read the [D2L quick guide](https://online.eiu.edu/d2l/home/6909) (<https://online.eiu.edu/d2l/home/6909>).

5. Minimum Technical Skills

You will need to know how to establish a reliable internet connection, access and navigate D2L (Desire to Learn), and open pdfs with Adobe Acrobat Reader. For class discussions and conferences, you will need to learn how to use Zoom. You can also find several resources and instructions for using D2L at <https://www.eiu.edu/d2lsolutions/index.php>.

6. Prerequisite Knowledge

This course is designed for graduate students and advanced undergraduates who are eager to learn about literary theory and more sophisticated reading practices. While no previous knowledge of literary theory or zombie films is required, it would be useful for students to have read *Pride and Prejudice* (the original) at least once.

7. Information about the Instructor

Here is some rather formal information about [me](#) (Dr. Suzie Park) on EIU's website. I'm a British Romanticist by trade (think William Wordsworth and Jane Austen, all in one big canonical breath), but I have an abiding interest in literary theory, information culture, the medical humanities, and the slow burn of literature and its philosophical contemplations of death. For the next little while, you can read even more about me and watch a [short video](#) in which I ask for the vote of Phi Beta Kappa (most prestigious National Honors Society in the U.S.) delegates for re-election to a National PBK Senate seat (I won, so it's all good!).

And here I am with my significant other, Ryan Gosling, in Paris. Surprising, non?



8. Your First Assignment: Introduce Yourself to the Class!

For your very first assignment, you will introduce yourself to our class. **Instructions:**

Step 1: Log onto EIU's D2L website for this class: <https://online.eiu.edu/d2l/home>.

Under the "Communication" drop-down menu (in the middle of the navigation bar at the top of the page), click the "Discussions" tab (third item down).

Step 2: Under the **FORUM** labeled "Self-Introductions," add a **NEW TOPIC** and label it: [your name: self-introduction]. I've included mine: Suzie Park: Self-introduction.

Post a two-paragraph-long brief introduction of yourself. This should include your name (and any nicknames), academic history (major and/or minor, favored courses), professional pursuits (current and future), reason for taking this course (what do you enjoy most about reading literature, for instance?), and history of encounters with literary theory (are you totally new to theory, have you had brief encounters with Foucault, or are you a theory-head-whiz?). If you so desire, you may add a picture or short video of yourself doing something, using the camera on your phone or computer. You could, for example, tell the story of "how I became acquainted with zombies" or "what scares me most about zombies."

Learning Objectives

The primary aim of this course is to introduce you—through reading, writing, and discussion—to the field of literary theory. In this course, I expect that you will:

- navigate a wide range of theoretical texts and methodologies
- familiarize yourself with theoretical schools of thought
- communicate effectively in writing and speech
- reflect upon your own beliefs and consider the viewpoints of others
- economically incorporate and correctly document sources of ideas

Assessment

Your course grade will be calculated out of a total of 1000 points. Thus each percentage point for the class is equal to 10 points. You may find your grades and instructor's feedback on D2L for all assignments, except for Participation in Seminar Discussion, which is ongoing.

Here is the grade breakdown by assignment:

“Word” Essay (100 points or 10% of total course grade)

Theoretical Summary Essay (100 points or 10%)

Regular Participation in Seminar Discussion (300 points or 30%):

A holistic score for a *minimum of ten Responses to Discussion Posts* (5 Responses in each essay category, 200 points or 20%)

--and--

A holistic score for further Discussion Posts about and Responses to the instructors' course materials and Responses to students' Proposal Abstracts (100 points or 10%)

Proposal Abstract for Final Essay (100 points or 10%)

Final Essay (400 points or 40%)

Here is the link to the [grading rubric](#) for this course that will open in D2L.

The grading scale is as follows:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89.9% = B
- 70-79.9% = C
- 60-69.9% = D
- 0-59.9% = F

Grading Time Frame

I will try my very best to respond to and grade your three shorter writing assignments and proposal abstract within the following time frame: 3 days (ideally) to 6 days.

Instructional Materials

The materials we will use in this course are available as books sent to you by Textbook Rental and as pdfs on D2L. The pdfs are of critical and theoretical essays, assignment sheets, and handouts. All films will be available on D2L for your viewing pleasure.

Course materials include but are not limited to:

THEORETICAL TEXTS

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 1975. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Random House, 1995.

Woloch, Alex. *The One vs. the Many: Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel*. Princeton UP, 2003.

PRIMARY TEXTS

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. 1813. Edited by Donald Gray. Norton, 2000.

Austen, Jane, and Seth Grahame-Smith. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. Quirk Books, 2009.

HANDBOOKS

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2000.

Mikics, David. *A New Handbook of Literary Terms*. Yale UP, 2010.

FILMS

Night of the Living Dead. Dir. George Romero. 1968. (95 min.)

28 Days Later. Dir. Danny Boyle. Fox Searchlight, 2002. (113 min.)

Les Revenants [They Came Back]. Dir. Robin Campillo. Haut et Court, 2004. (103 min.)

Shaun of the Dead. Dir. Edgar Wright. Universal, 2004. (99 min.)

World War Z. Dir. Marc Forster. Paramount, 2013. (116 min.)

Contagion. Dir. Steven Soderbergh. Warner Bros., 2011. (106 min.)

I Am Legend. Dir. Francis Lawrence. Warner Bros., 2007. (100 min.)

Microcosmos. Dirs. Claude Nuridsany and Marie Pérennou. 1996. Miramax, 2005. (80 min.)

Angels & Insects. Dir. Philip Haas. Samuel Goldwyn, 1995. (117 min.)

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies. Dir. Burr Steers. Lionsgate, 2016. (108 min.)

Learner Activities, Learner Interaction, and Course Technology

This is a graduate-level seminar for which **class discussion will be vital** to developing a greater understanding of the primary texts and the theoretical texts, and the possibilities for teaching literary theory within sophisticated, rigorous, and culturally popular (zombie-inflected) contexts. To make discussion possible in an online setting, you will write two formal essays and then convert each of these essays into less formal versions (Discussion Posts) for sharing with our class on D2L. You will not only create two Discussion Posts on our site, but also write several Responses to Discussion Posts on a regular basis. Everyone will write at least ten Responses (five Responses to others' Discussion Posts under each of the essay categories: word essay and theoretical summary; and further Discussion Posts about and Responses to the instructors' course materials and Responses to students' Abstract Proposals).

Sign-up sheet for assignments posted online:

You will be required to sign up for a "word" essay and a theory summary on the following google doc:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sH_NRtrw4OjbKaKlqEipmpyMWHEC79XyAilBGO1vyoU/edit?usp=sharing

You must sign up for one of both of these assignments over two different weeks. Choose wisely and keep track of your chosen weeks. **Be careful not to erase or overwrite another student's name on the sign-up sheet.** See the accompanying [instructions](#) (including due dates and format requirements) for each type of online assignment.

Here are instructions for ["Word" Discussion Posts](#).

For class discussions and conferences:

We will use Zoom to conduct individual conferences and online discussions. The button for "Zoom" is located on the right side in the top navigation bar of our D2L class page.

For lectures related to course materials:

Using D2L, you will access lectures via presentation software or learning modules that contain recorded lectures. You will also access through D2L assigned readings, links to multimedia, discussion threads, other written assignments, rubrics, and an electronic drop box.

Technical Assistance

Help with technical support on D2L: <https://www.eiu.edu/d2lsolutions/index.php>
Call 217-581-4357 or email support@eiu.edu

<i>module</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>theory readings</i>	<i>novel readings</i>
<i>Module 1</i> Literary Theory: An Introduction	Week 1 August 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ zombie thesis statements ▪ View slideshow lecture: Theory: An Introduction 	Make sure you have both novels: Austen and Austen zombified!
<i>Module 2</i> Hypochondria and Close Reading	Week 2 August 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Belling, Catherine. "Swimming in the Dark: The Hypochondriac in the Body" ▪ <i>28 Days Later</i>. Dir. Danny Boyle. Fox Searchlight, 2002. (113 min.) ▪ 	PP = Austen, Jane. <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> . 1813. Edited by Donald Gray. Norton, 2000. (Volume I, Chapters I – XI, pp. 3-40)

Module 3
**Formalism
and
Structuralism**

Week 3
September
7

- [Miller, J. Hillis. "Narrative"](#)
- *Night of the Living Dead*. Dir. George Romero. Image Ten, 1968. (95 min.)
-

PP (Volume I, Chapters XII – XXIII, pp. 40-89)

Week 4
September
14

- [de Saussure, Ferdinand. "Course in General Linguistics"](#)
- [Introduction: Formalisms \(Literary Theory: An Anthology\)](#)
- [Introduction: The Implied Order: Structuralism \(Literary Theory: An Anthology\)](#)
- *The Walking Dead*. Season 1, Episode 1. Dir. Frank Darabont. 2010.
-

PP (Volume II, Chapters I – XI, pp. 89-128)

Week 5
September
21

- Eastman, P.D. *Are You My Mother?*

PP (Volume II, Chapters XII – XIX, pp. 128-158)
and (Volume III, Chapters I – X, pp. 158-214)

Module 4
**Psychoanalytic
 and Feminist
 Theories**

Week 6
 September
 28

- [Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny"](#)
- [Freud, Sigmund. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle"](#)
- *Les Revenants* [*They Came Back*]. Dir. Robin Campillo. Haut et Court, 2004. (103 min.)
-

PP
 (Volume
 III,
 Chapters
 XI – XIX,
 pp. 214-
 254)

Week 7
 October 5

- [Wald, Priscilla. "Introduction" and "Imagined Immunities." Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative. Duke UP, 2008.](#)
- *Contagion*. Dir. Steven Soderbergh. Warner Bros., 2011. (106 min.)
-

PPZ =
 Austen,
 Jane, and
 Seth
 Grahame-
 Smith.
*Pride and
 Prejudice
 and
 Zombies.*
 Quirk
 Books,
 2009. (**Ch.
 1-11, pp.
 7-47**)

Module 5
Labor Theory

Week 8
 October
 12

- [Marx, Karl. "Wage Labor and Capital." 1847](#)
- [Marx, Karl. Capital. 1867](#)
- [Introduction: Starting with Zero \(Literary Theory: An Anthology\)](#)
- *Shaun of the Dead*. Dir. Edgar Wright. Universal, 2004. (99 min.)

PPZ (Ch.
 12-23, pp.
 47-103)

Week 9
 October
 19

- Woloch, Alex. Introduction. *The One vs. the Many: Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel*. Princeton UP, 2003.
- [Forster, E.M. "Flat and Round Characters" 1927](#)
- *I Am Legend*. Dir. Francis Lawrence. Warner Bros., 2007. (100 min.)
-

PPZ (Ch.
 24-34, pp.
 103-154)

Module 6 The Panopticon	Week 10 October 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foucault, Michel. "Panopticism." <i>Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison</i>. 1975. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Random House, 1995. ▪ Bentham, Jeremy. Panopticon. 1787 	PPZ (Ch. 35-42, pp. 154-194)
	Week 11 November 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Miller, J. Hillis. "The Critic as Host" 1977 ▪ <i>Microcosmos</i>. Dirs. Claude Nuridsany and Marie Pérennou. 1996. Miramax, 2005. (80 min.) ▪ 	PPZ (Ch. 43-52, pp. 194-265)
Module 7 Swarms	Week 12 November 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parikka, Jussi. "The Genesis of Form: Insect Architecture and Swarms." <i>Insect Media: An Archaeology of Animals and Technology</i>. U Minnesota P, 2010. ▪ <i>World War Z</i>. Dir. Marc Forster. Paramount, 2013. (116 min.) 	PPZ (Ch. 53-61, pp. 265-317)
Write final paper	Weeks 13-15	Work on your final paper	