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ENG 2205-002: Introduction to Literary Studies

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Required texts:
Baker, *Research Guide for Undergraduate Students*
Barnard, *A Short History of English Literature*
Barnet, *An Introduction to Literature*
Chopin, *The Awakening*
Coetzee, *Foe*
Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*
Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*
Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk*
Richter, *The Critical Tradition* (CT)
Richter, *Falling into Theory* (FT)
Lentricchia, *Critical Terms for Literary Study*

Course Description and Requirements:

In this course, you'll be asked to explore the activity that occupies a great deal of your time and yet is taken for granted: the act of reading. You'll become familiar with the rudiments of the history of literary criticism, its main concepts and issues. You will find out why and how a text can be read in different ways, and you'll be asked to evaluate readings. You'll also be introduced to some basic tools and strategies used by a literary scholar. This is an exciting and challenging course. Come to class with questions! I myself have many questions about the readings we'll do, and I look forward to hearing what each and every one of you has to say about them. Your active participation in class discussions is expected.

Attendance policy: If you have more than two unexcused absences during the semester, your grade for the course will be lowered by one point. If you are ill or have to take care of an emergency, CALL and let me know.

Papers: You will write four short (2-page) papers and one longer final essay for this class.

Exams: There will be a midterm and a final exam for this course.

Journal: I would like you to keep a journal for this class. Try to write at least two entries (2-3 pages per entry) every week. These writings can be responses to the assigned reading, a series of questions you may ask, ideas for papers or class discussion, or more general thoughts on connections you find between texts or between this course and others you're taking. I'll ask to see your journal four times during the semester.
Literary Forum: We will have our own website for this course. You need to post one message every week. Workshops will be held to familiarize you with the process.

Grading policy: Four short papers: 40% of your total grade; final essay 20%; midterm 15%; final 15%; journal and literary forum 10%.

Conferences: Please stop by my office to discuss any problem or question related to the course. You can also make an appointment if my regular office hours are inconvenient for you.

The English Department policy on plagiarism states that "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--'the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

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Class meetings:

Week One:
8/26: Introduction. Responses to two poems by Dickinson and Frost

Week Two:
9/2: "How We Read" in Richter, FT, 205-217. Poem: "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
9/4: Richter, "Mapping Critical Theories" in CT, 1-14
Bring also Holman. Look up "New Criticism" "Intentional Fallacy" "Affective Fallacy" "Reader-Response Criticism"

Week Three:
9/9: Poems: "Scorn Not the Sonnet" "Dulce et Decorum Est" "The Red Wheelbarrow" "Anecdote of the Jar" (hand-out or in Barnet). Richter, CT, Introduction to Plato, 17-20
9/11: Richter, CT, from Ion, 29-33. Introduction to Aristotle, Richter, CT 38-42; from Poetics, 42-44. Poem: Dickinson: "I reckon--when I count at all." Turn in Journals

Week Four:
9/16: First short paper due. Presentation of papers (group a,b).
Poem: "My Last Duchess"
9/18: Mitchell, "Representation" and McLaughlin, "Figurative Language" in Lentricchia

Week Five:
9/23: Graff, "Determinacy/Indeterminacy" in Lentricchia (we'll first discuss the two poems by Wordsworth and Keats in the essay). Short Story: Joyce, "Araby"
9/25: Richter, "What We Read" (FT, 107-118); Guillory, "Canon" in Lentricchia (we'll first discuss Donne, "Canonization" included in the essay).

Week Six:
10/2: Visit from the Placement Center

Week Seven:
10/7: Poems: Randall, "The Melting Pot"; Hughes, "Let America Be America Again" "Theme for English B" (all in Barnet); Jehlen, "Gender" in Lentricchia. **Turn in Journals**

Week Eight:
10/14: **Second short paper due.** Discussion and Presentation of papers (group c).
10/16: Coetzee, *Foe* 1-87

Week Nine:
10/21: *Foe* 87-157
10/23: **Midterm Exam**

Week Ten:
10/28: Doing research in the Library (Bring Baker)
10/30: Library Research

Week Eleven:
11/4: **Third paper due (library research projects).** Students present time-lines and "Literary History" projects (group 1, 2, 3, 4)
11/6: Student Presentations (group 5, 6, 7)
**Turn in Journals**

Week Twelve:
11/11: Chopin, *The Awakening* 1-72
11/13: Chopin, 72-137
Week Thirteen:
11/18: "Feminist Criticism and The Awakening" and Showalter, "Tradition and the Female Talent" (158-189).
11/20: "Psychoanalytic Criticism and The Awakening" and Wolff, "Thanatos and Eros"

Week Fourteen:
Dec. 4: **Fourth paper due.** Presentation of papers (group d,e)
*Heart of Darkness*, 1427-1456 (in Barnet)

Week Fifteen:
Dec. 9: *Heart of Darkness*, 1456-1495. **Turn in Journals**
Dec. 11: *Heart of Darkness*, 1495-1506

Final Exam Week:
Dates to be announced:
**Final Paper Due**
**Final Exam**

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Paper Topics for English 2205

**I. Short papers (2 pages, typed):**
1) Choose one of your old essays (a literary analysis of a novel, play, poem, or short story) and write an essay that mainly explores this question: How did I arrive at this interpretation? Other related questions are: What are the critical assumptions and principles that rule the way I read? What are the conventions I follow while reading? The purpose of the assignment is to make you aware of "How I read." Make use of some of the concepts/ideas you've learned about critical approaches in recent weeks. Attach a copy of your original paper to your 2-page analysis.

2) First read the essay "How We Read," pp. 205-217 in *Falling into Theory*. Then choose one of these essays and write a 2-page commentary/critique on it: Barthes, "The Death of the Author"; Fish "Is There a Text in This Class"; Dasenbrock, "Do We Write the Text We Read?"; "Morrison, "Black Matter(s)"; Schweickart, "Reading Ourselves." Define the writer's main arguments and briefly respond to each.

3) The Library Projects
a) Questions on bibliographical research (You'll receive these on 10/28.)
b) The timeline
Sketch or draw a "timeline"--a chronology of British or American literary history. You'll need a long piece of paper for this (computer paper will do nicely). First mark the major
literary periods from 1000 AD to the present. Then in each period, write down the major historical events, authors, and literary works. (See Holman, but be selective). The period names and boundaries will differ depending on the text you're using. The Norton Anthology of English (or American) Literature might give you slightly different dates than Holman does. If you can, provide one visual aid—an illustration for example—for each period. (You can use pictures from magazines or draw your own.) This is something you might keep and use in your own classroom someday, so use your imagination and be as creative as possible!


Group project: One person in the group will be responsible for presenting a general discussion of the literary period. This person will have a one-page handout (make copies for the whole class) containing basic information about this period. The rest of the members of the group will each be assigned two of the major writers of each period. You need to learn about your authors and prepare a two-page paper containing useful information about them (make copies for all members of the class). Attach a brief excerpt from one of each author's works. In your presentation, you'll discuss the authors' life/work. Each group will work together to make their presentation as lively and interesting as possible. You'll be asked to evaluate each group's performance and give them a grade. Ideally, each student should have, by the end of the discussions, a mini-bridged literary history of English literature to take home.

4) Write a 2-page paper discussing the critical essay that you found the most useful among those included in conjunction with The Awakening or Heart of Darkness. Define the writer's main argument, critical approach, and offer reasons for your choice of article.

II. Final Essay (4-page Introduction + selected essays):

Your final project is preparing a casebook on

a) Life and Times of Frederick Douglass
or
b) The Souls of Black Folk
or
c) A text of your choice (but check with me first!).

In your casebook, include 4-5 related critical essays you've found in various publications. Your 4-page Introduction needs to introduce the essays and tell the reader why you've chosen these pieces, how they relate to one another, what their critical approaches are, and why these particular ways of reading are useful in reading/understanding your chosen text.