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ENG 2205-003: Introduction to Literary Study

Susan Bazargan
Eastern Illinois University

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English 2205-003  Introduction to Literary Studies
Fall semester 2002
TTH 11-12:45  CH 3150
Dr. Susan Bazargan
Office: CH3765 Office Hours: Tuesdays: 9-11, 12:15-1:15, Thursdays 12:15-1:15 and by appointment
Office phone: 581-6979
Email: cfsxb@eiu.edu

Required texts:
Barry, Beginning Theory
Beaty, The Norton Introduction to Literature
Fulwiler, The Blair Handbook
Harmon and Holman, A Handbook to Literature
Joyce, The Dead
Richter, The Critical Tradition (CT)
Richter, Falling into Theory (FT)
Wharton, The House of Mirth
A Good Dictionary and Thesaurus

Course Description and Requirements:
Besides being able to write well, every English major needs to have:
1) Basic ("level I") reading skills that would allow him/her to read and understand prose, poetry, and drama
2) A familiarity with the history of English and American literature, the periods, movements, major figures and works
3) A familiarity with the history of literary criticism and theory (where did the ideas we use to talk about literature come from? how have they changed? what issues are relevant today?). Some knowledge of the theories of reading which will allow him/her to develop "level II" reading skills.
4) Skills to do research and collect material relevant to the examination of a certain topic

In this introductory course, we will try to pay attention to all areas of study, but the main focus of our work will be 1 and 3. You'll be introduced to some basic tools and strategies used by a literary scholar. You'll become familiar with the rudiments of the history of literary criticism and theory, the main concepts and issues, and 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 will find out why and how a text can be read in different ways, and you'll be asked to evaluate readings using different theoretical approaches. This is an exciting and challenging course. 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, please let me know.
Assignments, papers, and exams:
1) At the end of each class period, you'll write for 10 minutes in your journal. You can jot down questions, provide a summary of material covered, or record your personal response to a text we’ve discussed. I may ask you to share some of your writings with your peers at the start of the next class.
2) Library project
3) Two papers and a casebook study (see instructions)
   English 2205 is a writing-intensive course, so you can submit one of your essays to your electronic writing portfolio.
4) Exams and quizzes: There will be a midterm exam (covering what we have studied until the date of the midterm) and a final exam (covering what we’ve studied since the midterm). Pop quizzes might be given occasionally.

Grading policy: Paper # 1: 10%; Paper # 2: 15%; Paper # 3 (Casebook): 20%; Library project: 10%; Midterm 15%; Final 15%; Quizzes and Active Class Participation: 15%;

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:

How We Read: A basic review

8/29: Review the following terms in Harmon (and bring the book to class): genre, speaker, tone, stanza, lyric, sonnet, rhythm, scansion, rhyme scheme, figurative language, figures of speech, imagery, metaphor, simile, irony, metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, allegory, allusion, paradox, apostrophe, personification.
Discussion of the following poems (all in Beaty): Dickinson, “I dwell in Possibility” (935), Boland, “The Necessity for Irony” (845), Rich, “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” (842), Snyder, “A Mongoloid Child Handling Shells on the Beach” (900).

9/5: Review the following terms in Harmon (bring the book to class): Dramatic monologue, characterization, narrator, unreliable narrator, point of view. Read pp. 66-69 in Beaty and the poem by Browning “My Last Duchess” (1185) and the following short stories: Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants” and Talent, “No One’s A Mystery”

9/10: Visit to the Library. Bring the list of questions (“Library Project”)

II. How We Read: Some Critical Maps
9/12: Richter, CT, “Introduction” (first 8 pages)
Poems (in Beaty): “Dulce et Decorum Est” (1178), Hughes, “Harlem” (1175)

9/17: Library Project is due.
Richter, CT, Introduction to Plato
Poem: “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (in Beaty 1096)

9/19: Richter, CT, Introduction to Aristotle; from Poetics (first 3 pages)
In Harmon, look up “The New Criticism” “Intentional Fallacy,” “Affective Fallacy.”
In Beaty, read pages A18-A19 and Shakespeare, “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” (830) and Eberhart, “The Fury of Aerial Bombardment” (1179)

9/24: Graff, “Disliking Books at an Early Age” in Richter, FT (41-48)
and Richter “Falling into theory” (1-13)

9/26: Read pages 1-8 and 34-36 in Barry and “How We Read” (235-252) in Richter, FT

III. How we read: Beyond The New Criticism.
Some Issues in Literary Studies
10/1: Paper # 1 is due.
The Canon: Read “What We Read” (121-136) in Richter, FT

10/3: Race and ethnicity
Morrison, “Black Matter(s)” (310-322) in Richter, FT. In Beaty, read Hughes, “Theme for English B” (1277) and Tan, “A Pair of Tickets” (168)

10/8: Gender
Barry, 121-130 and 134; Woolf, from A Room of One’s Own (in Richter, CT)

10/10: In Beaty: Parker, “A Certain Lady” (870); Rich, “Diving into the Wreck” (980)
Read also pp. 1106-1107 and 1119-1127 (all about Adrienne Rich)
10/15: **Midterm Exam**

10/17: Class
Read “Marxist Criticism” (156-168) in Barry. In Beaty, read “Wayman in Love” (831) and Lawrence, “The Rocking-Horse Winner”

**IV: How We Read: Some theoretical approaches**

10/22: Joyce, “The Dead” (21-59)

10/24: “The Dead” (continued)

10/29: “The Dead” (and psychoanalytic criticism). We’ll first read some passages from Barry, pp. 96-118 and then consider the essay by Schwarz in *The Dead* (102-124).

10/31: Psychoanalytic criticism and “The Dead” (continued)

11/5: **Essay # 2 is Due.** Feminist Criticism and “The Dead” (pp. 190-204)

11/7: Wharton, *The House of Mirth*

11/12: Wharton (continued)

11/14: Wharton (continued)

11/19: Wharton (continued)

11/21: Cultural Criticism and *The House of Mirth* (pp. 326-358)

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

12/3: **Paper # 3 (Casebooks) are Due.** Deconstruction. Bring Barry; we’ll discuss some passages from Chapter 3 (61-79) and then consider “Deconstruction and *The House of Mirth*” (419-446)

12/5: Deconstruction (continued)

12/10: “Marxist Criticism and *The House of Mirth*” (375-390)

12/12: Review and evaluation

12/17: **Final Exam** (10:15-12:15)
Assignments for English 2205:

I. Library project

II. Paper #1: The Personal Essay (3 pages or longer)
This essay will have two parts. In part one, write about how you became interested in reading and writing (see Barry, 8-9). You may recall childhood memories and relevant incidents—how you fell in love with books. You can then explore your experiences as an adult reader/writer and the reasons why you decided to become an English major. In part two of the paper, choose one of your old essays (a literary analysis of a novel, play, poem, or short story) and explore 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 yourself as a student of literature and the choices you make as you 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 analysis.

III. Paper #2: The Research Essay (5 pages or longer)
Focus on a special period in English or American literature and research a specific social, political, or cultural problem, change or phenomenon during that time. (This could be an uprising, a reform movement, a notable shift in a cultural practice, an illness, a scientific discovery, a new interest in travel, commerce, etc.) Then choose a literary work from that period and write an essay in which you explore the ways in which the author has directly or indirectly dealt with this issue in his/her work. Please document your sources according to the MLA style.

IV. Paper #3 (the casebook):
Your final project is preparing a casebook on a text of your choice. Follow the examples of the two casebooks you have on “The Dead” and The House of Mirth. See also Beaty, the casebook study of Antigone. In your casebook, include at least 4 related critical essays you’ve found in various academic journals. Write a 5-6-page Introduction in which you 1) briefly introduce the text and the author, 2) introduce each essay and tell the reader why you’ve chosen the piece, and 3) explain how the selected essays relate to one another, what their critical approaches are, and why these particular ways of reading are useful in reading/understanding your chosen text. Your Introduction should be followed by a bibliography. Please document your sources according to the MLA style.

Optional readings/writing for bonus points:
For those of you who want to do extra readings in critical theory or gain “bonus points” (this would require writing a report on the readings), the following essays in Richter’s Critical Theory which are related to the material studied in class are recommended: Karl Marx (introduction) and “Consciousness Derived from Material Conditions”; Matthew Arnold, “The Function of Criticism and the Present Time”; Sigmund Freud, “Creative Writers and Daydreaming”; T.S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”; Virginia Woolf (the two essays from A Room of One’s Own); Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human sciences”; Michel Foucault,