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Here is the description for “Literary and Cultural Criticism and Theory,” according to the university website:

“Basic principles of evaluating the standard literary genres, or tenets of a specific school of criticism, or the examination of major aesthetic questions. Topics to be announced.” And what is the announced topic for this course?

“Mediating Literatures”

This course will focus on some developments in theories of mediation as they relate to literary and cultural studies. We will be discussing the ways in which “mediation” challenges many of the presuppositions of literary scholarship by focusing on some of the following problems in the field: the anthology/canon/archive as medium of “culture”; the role of media studies in literature departments; cultural and technological “interfaces”; the translator as cultural/linguistic mediator; national/monolingual literatures within a transcultural context; intercultural “transference”.

Our readings will include excerpts from some of the following theorists:


We will be applying our critical and theoretical readings to at least two writers. The first, an eighteenth-century physician H.D. Gaubius (pictured above), wrote a treatise in 1759 with the snappy title A Philosophical Discourse concerning the Duty and Office of Physicians in the Management and Cure of Disorders of the Mind. The second, Heinrich von Kleist (right), wrote a number of novellas in the early nineteenth-century that have been sometimes considered grotesque and violent, perverse and ambiguous, irrational and baffling—but thoroughly post-modern, before his time.

Texts


Some of our Key Terms, from an etymological Perspective:

“literary”: (from Latin *littera*, letter)

“culture”: (from Latin *colere*, to attend to, cultivate, till; from Indo-European *kuel* to turn, to spin) influenced by German *Kultur*, both directly and via French. The German word is a 17th-cent. borrowing from French, but the transfer of the meaning ‘state of intellectual development’ from an individual to the whole of a society occurred in German in the mid 18th cent. Related to “colony”, “colonization”.

“criticism”: (from Greek *krino*, to separate, select, choose, judge). Related to “criteria”, and “critical” in the biological, or medical sense.

“theory”: (from Greek *theorein*, a looking at, viewing, contemplation, speculation, theory, also a sight, a spectacle

Immanuel Kant, on Culture vs. Civilization

“We are, to the highest degree through art and science, cultivated. We are civilized up to our ears by all kinds of social niceties and proprieties. But for us to be considered moral, quite a lot is still missing, because the idea of morality still belongs to culture. The practical use of this idea, however, which basically boils down to the moral similitude of honor and of superficial behaviors, is what constitutes civilization.”

---from *Idea toward a universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*

“Wir sind im hohen Grade durch Kunst und Wissenschaft cultivirt. Wir sind civilisirt bis zum Überlastigen, zu allerlei gesellschaftlicher Artigkeit und Anständigkeit. Aber uns für schon moralisirt zu halten, daran fehlt noch sehr viel. Denn die Idee der Moralität gehört noch zur Cultur: der Gebrauch dieser Idee aber, welcher nur auf das Sittenähnliche in der Ehrliche und der äußeren Anständigkeit hinausläuft, macht blos die Civilisirung aus.”

Academic honesty: Students are responsible for knowing Eastern Illinois University regulations and policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism will likely result in your failing the course and in further action by the university. Here is the English Department’s statement on plagiarism:

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 own original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Absence Policy:

When you are absent—especially when you are frequently absent—two things happen. First, your participation grade drops substantially. Second, you naturally fall behind in understanding course material and neither the class nor the Professor can catch you up on everything missed in a day’s class. YOU need to decide when it is absolutely necessary to miss class. Be wise. It bears repeating: you cannot make up missed work and late assignments will be penalized. Whether these are excused or unexcused absences does not matter for this course. Being late for class will be counted as an absence.

If you are late for or miss six (6) class meetings, constituting 20% of the course class time, you cannot pass this course. If you think you will be late for or miss six classes, you should strongly reconsider registering for this class. Once you have missed six classes, you are welcome to continue visiting the class, but you will receive a failure on your transcript.

Emailing Policy:

I want to get to know you and your work this semester. Thus I ask that you call me or stop by my office during office hours (or scheduled times) so that we can talk. DO NOT EMAIL ME TO ASK FOR AN “UPDATE” ON MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, OR TO EXPLAIN AN ABSENCE. Working groups will be assigned so that you can contact group members for notes and missed work.
Requirements

**All Assignments and Exams Must be Completed to Pass the Course**

Paper Policies

Papers—and all other assignments—are due at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be commented upon, and be marked a half grade lower for every day late. Essays turned in a week past the deadline will be given a “zero,” but must nevertheless be submitted in order to pass the course.

Your paper should be stapled and include page numbers. Format: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

Tests (45%)

The tests will consist of identification, short answer, and brief essays questions that will examine your having kept up with the course readings, having engaged with class materials, and having remembered significant information about the theories and writers we have encountered. The third test will take place during the final exam schedule, on Monday, December 15 at 12:30.

Writing Assignments (40%)

During the course of the semester, I would like you to apply one or more of the theoretical texts to one of the primary texts (from Gaubius or Kleist) in two of your three writing assignments. For the third assignment, you will apply one or more of our theoretical course selections to a third text, from one of the other courses in which you are currently enrolled. The due dates for these assignments will be announced in class; approximate dates are the ends of Weeks 5, 10, and 15.

Class Participation (15%)

There may be a number of required, yet ungraded assignments throughout the quarter, constituting a portion your class-participation grade. Most importantly, I will expect you to come to class having read the material, and with questions or comments on the readings. While reading the course material, you should pinpoint specific moments of difficulty, and come to class with questions about them. If you attend class without having read the texts carefully and completely, you will almost certainly fail the tests, and your class-participation grade will suffer immensely.

TESTS AND EXAMS: You cannot make up a test or exam after the class period in which it is administered.

Wharram / English 4775-001: Schedule of Classes—subject to revision

BT = Beginning Theory, Peter Barry
R+R = Literary Theory, an Anthology, Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan

For each class period, you need to have carefully read and be prepared to discuss the assigned selections in their entirety, starting on the page number given.

WEEK ONE
T 8/26
LITERARY, CULTURE, CRITICISM, THEORY,

Th 8/28
“Theory before ‘theory’—Liberal Humanism (BT 211)

WEEK TWO
T 9/2
Gaubius, A Philosophical Discourse

Th 9/4
STRUCTURES of THEORY
“Structuralism” (BT 39)
Culler, “The Linguistic Foundation” (R+R 56)
Saussure, “Course in General Linguistics” (R+R 59)

MONDAY 9/8—Deadline to drop course without a grade