English 100: Intro to Literary Theory and Criticism  
Fall 2018

Literary texts are not inert but organic. Reading a text means entering into a conversation with, among others, the author, competing literary critics, and other readers. This course will serve as an introduction to some of the major approaches and shifts in literary theory and will allow students to apply a variety of critical approaches to any given text with the awareness that there is no one way – or “correct way” -- to read a text.

Attendance is mandatory: after 3 unexcused absences, final grades will be lowered by one ½ letter grade per missed class. i.e. if you miss 4 classes, a B becomes a B-. Athletic events, academic teams, and religious holidays must be documented in writing the first week of class.

Academic Integrity: Any form of academic dishonesty including plagiarism, cheating on exams, or misrepresentation of your own work will result in an F for the class. The university may take further action. Make sure to properly cite all sources.

Access Students: Students with Access or SAS letters must meet with me by the end of the second week of classes.

Course Requirements:

Student-generated Questions: 10%
Annotated Bibliography Assignment: 20%
Short Paper Assignment: 20%
TM/WF Blog Project: 30%: 10% (group grade for the site) & 20% individual critical lens
In-Class work: 20%

Required texts:

William Faulkner’s  As I Lay Dying (Norton Critical Edition)
Toni Morrison’s Beloved
Anne H. Stevens’ Literary Theory and Criticism: An Introduction
Various readings available through Blackboard (BB) – *Articles are to be printed out and brought to class.

**Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change):**

28th Aug: Introduction
30th Aug: Read Richter’s “Falling into Theory: An Introduction” (p1-30) – Blackboard
4th Sept: “Border Patrol” (BB) & “Death of the Author” (BB)
6th Sept: Stevens’ Chapter 8
11th Sept: *As I Lay Dying*
13th Sept: *As I Lay Dying*
18th Sept: *As I Lay Dying* and Critical Reception (153-170)
20th Sept: Doreen Fowler’s “Matricide and the Mother’s Revenge: *As I Lay Dying*” (315-328)
25th Sept: Richard Gray’s “[A Southern Carnival]” (336-347)
27th Sept: Library Day -- Meet in the Media Classroom and Bring Your Laptops
2nd Oct: Marybeth Southard’s “Aint None of Us Pure Crazy: Queering Madness in *As I Lay Dying*” (BB)
4th Oct: Stevens’ Chapter 9 & Annotated Bib Assignment Intro
9th Oct: *Beloved*
11th Oct: *Beloved*
16th Oct: *Beloved*
18th Oct: *Beloved*

*Annotated Bibliographies Uploaded to Class Blog*

23rd Oct: Andrea Dimino’s “Toni Morrison and William Faulkner: Remapping Culture” (BB)
30th Oct: Mae G. Henderson’s Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*: Re-Membering the Body as Historical Text” (BB)
1st Nov: Susan Corey’s “Toward the Limits of Mystery: The Grotesque in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*” (BB)
6th Nov: Mary Jane Suero Elliott’s “Postcolonial Experience in a Domestic Context: Commodified Subjectivity in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*” (BB)

*6th Nov: Ta-Nehisi Coates Public Lecture (TBD)*

*7th Nov: Viet Thanh Nguyen’s Public Lecture (TBD)*

8th Nov: Q&A with Viet Thanh Nguyen: Read “Speak of the Dead, Speak of Vietnam” (BB) to prepare (Location and time TBD) (https://vietnguyen.info/category/essays)
13th Nov: Kimberly Chabot Davis’ “Postmodern Blackness: Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* and the End of History” (BB)
15th Nov: Rafael Pérez-Torres’ “Between Presence and Absence: Beloved, Postmodernism, and Blackness” (BB)
Short Paper Due

20th Nov: Thanksgiving Break: No Class
22nd Nov: Thanksgiving Break: No Class
27th Nov: Workshop Day – First Draft of Critical Entry Due – bring 3 copies
29th Nov: Workshop Day – Bring your laptops
6th Dec: Last Day of Class — “Publishing the Digital Critical Dialogue”

Assignments:

Annotated Bib Assignment:

In preparation for the Digital Critical Dialogue project, you will do an annotated bibliography. What this means is you will have to go to the library and find five articles on either Toni Morrison or William Faulkner; you will list each text following MLA format; you will also generate a 200-word annotation or summary of each text. You may use one article from the class materials. The articles cannot all be based on the same approach or lens; instead, you need to find at least three different approaches to these texts. I have scheduled a research workshop day at Bailey-Howe to help you get started on this.

There are sample annotations available for your perusal on Blackboard; we will look at these together in class after we have gone to the library and you (ideally) have found your articles.

*You must either find three articles about Morrison and two about Faulkner or vice versa; all articles must be more recent than 1990.

You should look at following excellent guide for preparing the annotated bibliography: http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography

Use MLA and Project Muse: JSTOR archives older journals, which might mean the available articles are dated or not applicable.

The reference librarians will be happy to help you; in addition, Patricia Mardeusz, the reference librarian for literature at BH library, is the liaison for the English Department and is familiar with English 100 and all that it entails (patricia.mardeusz@uvm.edu).

Once completed, the annotations will be uploaded to the Digital Critical Dialogue platform.

Rhetorical Discernment -- Knowing Your Audience: Short Paper Assignment

Starting with the idea that theoretical approaches represent a variety of lenses and agendas through which to engage with a text, this assignment asks you to insert yourself into this
ongoing scholarly debate. Choose two theoretical lenses and imagine a conversation between two different literary critics, both of whom want to convince the other that her particular approach is “the way” to read this text. Both of your “voices” are familiar with the language of theory and criticism, which means you don’t have to define your terms overtly. Consider focusing on one or two sections/chapters/moments in the novel instead of trying to discuss all the complexities of either of these two texts.

If you are working on the Morrison digital critical project, you will focus on Faulkner in this assignment; if you are working on Faulkner, then your paper will focus on Morrison.

http://blog.uvm.edu/seturner-tmwf/

Students will demonstrate their working knowledge of a variety of critical approaches through a collaborative construction of an end of term digital essay utilizing WordPress.

The class will be divided into two groups – using either Morrison or Faulkner’s text – and each group will generate the following components of the “essay.”

Each component will have a research as well as a writing element. Students will do an individual annotated bibliography project early in the term in preparation for this project. (We will build in class time for a library workshop on doing effective research). This piece of writing will be publicized on-line, which means the audience might include people outside the academy.

You may choose to include a visual or two – but they are not necessary. We will discuss this further in class on the day we look at the examples listed below.

http://blog.uvm.edu/scalexan-vsf/
http://badger.uvm.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/fpk-2014/introduction

Possible Theoretical Approaches: Keep in mind you are not limited to these few
Feminism
Post-colonialism
Post-modernism
Marxism
Race