

**St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo**  
**Department of English**  
**ENGL 251: Literary Theory and Criticism**  
**T/TH, 2:30-3:50, SJ1 3016, Fall 2018**

**Instructor: Chad Wriglesworth**  
**Email: cwriglesworth@uwaterloo.ca**  
**Office Hours: T/TH 11:30-12:30**

**Phone: 884-8111, ext. 28283**  
**Office: SH 2209**

**Calendar Description:**

What exactly are we doing when we study literature? By examining a selection of critical methods and theoretical approaches, this course will enhance understanding of the many different emphases, values, and priorities critics bring to literature, and the many available perspectives on what constitutes literature's significance.

**Course Overview and Objectives:**

In this course we will survey modern and contemporary theoretical approaches to literary studies by reading and discussing critical essays and book chapters about theories of language and practices of literary criticism. In addition to exploring the central concerns and intellectual underpinnings of various critical traditions, a larger goal of the course will be to investigate, apply, and interrogate the usefulness and applicability of each theoretical approach in question. We will consider, for example, the extent to which issues of race, class, gender, economics, sexuality, ethics, and religion might inform the making, distribution, and reception of texts. Throughout the course, an emphasis will be placed on the development of critical thinking and writing skills, including the acquisition of critical vocabulary and the practical engagement of contemporary theories to literary and visual texts.

**Required Texts:**

Materials on electronic Course Reserve (access through Learn and/or UW library website)  
Lucille Clifton, *Quilting: Poems 1987-1990* (BOA editions, 1991).  
Margaret Edson, *Wit* (Faber and Faber, 1999).

**Highly Recommended:**

A glossary of literary terms such as M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (**or earlier edition**), Boston: Wadsworth, 2015.

**Marking Scheme and Due Dates:**

|  |     |                              |
|--|-----|------------------------------|
| Review Essay (4 pages)                   | 15% | Due: Week 5 (TH, October 11) |
| Application Essay #1 / Clifton (5 pages) | 25% | Due: Week 8 (TH, November 1) |
| Application Essay #2 / Edson (5 pages)   | 25% | Due: End of Term (M, Dec. 3) |
| Final Exam                               | 25% | Exam Time, TBA               |
| Participation                            | 10% |                              |

## General Instructions for Assignments:

Generally speaking, the **review essay** (4 pages) will ask you to review the benefits and / or problems of an argument from readings discussed during the first five weeks of the course. The review will consist of moments of “close reading” from a representative theoretical essay and a discussion of the intellectual underpinnings and assumptions (about readers, authors, texts, cultures, or transcendence) embedded within the argument. By way of conclusion, you will offer your own opinion of the argument in question.

In the **first application essay** (5 pages) you will develop a thesis driven essay that will be sustained by an explication of a poem from Lucille Clifton’s *Quilting*, as well as the application of a theoretical essay studied during the first eight weeks of the term. In the **second application essay** (5 pages) you will use critical vocabulary and theoretical concepts from the course to offer an analysis of some aspect of Margaret Edson’s *Wit*. In both cases, emphasis will be placed on the application of a theory (or theories) to engage in critical analysis of the language and form of the work in question, rather than a critique of the theory itself. Marks will be earned for depth of engagement with the chosen theoretical approach, for the level of believability or demonstrated commitment to the approach taken, as well as the overall clarity and strength of the thesis, close reading, and sense of argumentation.

The **final exam** will be comprehensive. You are responsible for all the readings undertaken in class, including the poems and play, the key terms listed below, and any other entries or readings / handouts assigned in class. It will be a closed book exam and may include short answer, passage recognition, and short essay questions. It may also include an exercise in application by inviting critical engagement with a selected passage.

The following **key terms and concepts** provide a concise reference list of ideas presented in this course. Most of the terms are built directly into the lectures and reading schedule (see below). However, consider yourself responsible for these terms *whether or not they are explicitly taken up in class*. These terms are included in M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, eds., *A Glossary of Literary Terms*.

### Key Terms and Concepts

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Aestheticism              | Imitation ( <i>mimesis</i> )                        |
| Affective Fallacy         | Intentional Fallacy                                 |
| Ambiguity                 | Interpretation and Hermeneutics                     |
| Archetypal Criticism      | Literary Structuralism (second-order structuralism) |
| Author and Authorship     | Marxist Criticism                                   |
| Book History Study        | Metaphor, Theories of                               |
| Canon of Literature       | Modernism and Postmodernism                         |
| Criticism                 | New Criticism                                       |
| Critique                  | New Historicism                                     |
| Cultural Studies          | Objectivist Criticism                               |
| Deconstruction            | Ontology and Epistemology                           |
| Defamiliarization         | Postcolonial Studies                                |
| Dialogic Criticism        | Poststructuralism                                   |
| Epistemology              | Psychological / Psychoanalytic Criticism            |
| Expressionistic Criticism | Reader Response Criticism                           |
| Feminist Criticism        | Repetition / Rhythm / Variation                     |
| Formalism                 | Semiotics (first-order structuralism)Telos /        |
| Gender Criticism          | Teleology   |
| Habituation               | Typological Interpretation                          |
| Hermeneutic               |   |
| Impressionistic Criticism |   |

## **SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

TH-9/6 Course Overview: syllabus, books, assignments, and reading schedule  
Introduction: Defamiliarizing Language and Representation

### **Week One**

T-9/11 An Overview: Literary Theory and Criticism  
Key Terms and Concepts: Epistemology, Ontology, Imitation (mimesis); broadly understood traditions of literary criticism: impressionist, expressionist, objectivist, pragmatic, and hermeneutic  
Reading: Richard Kearney, "Where do Stories Come From?" (Course Reserve, 3-14)

### **The "Science" of Tracing Unity and Order: Russian Formalism and New Criticism**

TH- 9/13 Russian Formalism  
Key Terms and Concepts: Formalism, Defamiliarization, and Ambiguity  
Reading: Rivkin and Ryan, "Introduction: Formalisms" (Course Reserve, 3-7); Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" (Course Reserve, 8-14)

### **Week Two**

T- 9/18 New Criticism  
Key Terms and Concepts: New Criticism, Intentional Fallacy, Affective Fallacy  
Reading: Cleanth Brooks, "The Formalist Critics" (Course Reserve, 15-20)

### **The Power of Structural Order and Patterns: Semiotics, Literary Structuralism, and Archetypes**

TH- 9/20 Semiotics and Structuralism  
Key Terms and Concepts: Semiotics  
Reading: Rivkin and Ryan, "The Implied Order: Structuralism" (Course Reserve, 131-133); from Ferdinand de Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics" (Course Reserve, excerpts 137-141; 167-174)

### **Week Three**

T- 9/25 Literary Structuralism and Archetypes  
Key Terms and Concepts: Structuralist Criticism and Archetypal Criticism  
Reading: Northrop Frye, "The Archetypes of Literature" (Course Reserve, 475-486)

## **The High Art of Destabilization: Poststructuralism and Deconstruction**

TH- 9/27      Questioning the Stability of Origins and Authorship  
Key Terms and Concepts: Critique, Humanism, Poststructuralism  
Reading: Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying" (Course Reserve, 262-265)  
and Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" (Course Reserve, 253-257)

### **Week Four**

T- 10/2      Questioning the Stability of Language  
Key Terms and Concepts: Deconstruction and Teleology  
Reading: excerpt of Jacques Derrida, "Différance" (Course Reserve, excerpt 474-482)

## **Thinking Dialogically: A Conversation about Imagination, the Canon, and Education**

TH- 10/4      Key Terms and Concepts: Canon of Literature and Dialogic Criticism  
Reading: Martha Nussbaum, "Cultivating Humanity: The Narrative Imagination"  
(Course Reserve, 382-401)

### **Week Five**

T-10/9      No Class (Fall Break)

TH- 10/11      Reading: Marilynne Robinson, "Freedom of Thought" (Course Reserve, 3-18)  
**Due: Review Essay**

## **Working from the Margins: Feminist Criticism, Class, Ethnicity, and Canon**

### **Week Six**

T- 10/16      Feminist Literary Criticism: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Canon  
Key Terms and Concepts: Feminist Criticism and Gender Criticism  
Reading: Rivkin and Ryan, "Feminist Paradigms/Gender Effects" (Course Reserve, 893-900); Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision" (Course Reserve, 511-524); excerpt from Toni Morrison, "Playing in the Dark" (Course Reserve, excerpt 1163-1169)

TH- 10/18 Feminist Literary Criticism: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class  
Reading: Audre Lorde, "Poetry is Not a Luxury" (Course Reserve, 36-39) and "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference (Course Reserve, 854-860); Luce Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine" (Course Reserve, 795-798)

**Application of Theories:  
Lucille Clifton's *Quilting: Poems 1987-1990***

**Week Seven**

T- 10/23 Clifton, 1-24

TH- 10/25 Clifton, 25-68

**Week Eight**

T- 10/30 Clifton, 69-84

**Mind, Body, and Place:  
Psychoanalytic Criticism, New Historicism, and Institutional Power**

TH-11/1 Psychoanalytic Criticism  
Reading: Rivkin and Ryan, "Strangers to Ourselves: Psychoanalysis" (Course Reserve, 567-574); Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (Course Reserve, 592-614)  
**Due: Application Essay #1 / Clifton**

**Week Nine**

T- 11/6 New Historicism and Cultural Studies  
Reading: Rivkin and Ryan, "Writing the Past" (Course Reserve, 505-507); Foucault, "Discipline and Punish" (Course Reserve, 549-556)

**Texts, Bodies, and Health:  
Practices of Reading and Writing Texts-Bodies**

TH -11/8 Clinical Practices with Narrative  
Reading: Bessel van der Kolk and Alexander McFarlane, "The Black Hole of Trauma" (Course Reserve, 487- 502)

## Week Ten

- T- 11/13 Clinical Practices with Narrative  
Reading: Arthur Frank, “When Bodies Need Voices” (Course Reserve, 1-25)
- TH- 11/15 Ethics of Reading and Writing Bodies  
Reading: Mark Ledbetter, “Doing Violence to the Body: An Ethic of Reading and Writing” (Course Reserve, 1-21)

### **Application of Theories: Margaret Edson’s *Wit***

## Week Eleven

- T- 11/20 Edson, 1-20
- TH- 11/22 Edson, 21-50

## Week Twelve

- T- 11/27 Edson, 51-73
- TH-11/29 Edson, 73-85

**Due: Application Essay #2 / Edson (Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, in my SJU drop box in SJ1 by 4PM)**

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### **ADDITIONAL DETAILS AND PROCEDURES**

#### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND PARTICIPATION**

- **Late Assignments:**  
All essays and assignments are to be handed in (hard copy) at the start of class on the due date. Late assignments will be penalized 2% per day late, including weekends. **Late assignments must be submitted electronically (so I know when they were completed) and then submitted in hard copy to my drop box (2nd floor of SJ1).**
- **Attendance and Participation:**  
It should go without saying that I expect that you will attend class on a regular basis. I also expect that you will have read the material for each day in thoughtful and critical ways. You should have something to say about the readings each day – meaning that you should contribute to class discussion on a regular basis. If I do not hear from you, I

will likely call on you. In terms of participation marking (10% of the overall mark), you should expect the following: If you do not attend class on a regular basis, your participation mark will be assessed at 0-50; if you attend class but do not contribute to course discussion on a regular basis, expect a mark between 60-70; if you attend class regularly and participate in meaningful ways, you should expect a participation mark ranging from 75-100.

### **EMAIL COMMUNICATION AND OFFICE HOURS**

Students using email to contact me should include the course in which they are enrolled in the email subject line. Feel free to contact me about the course through email, but please keep the following in mind:

- I am unable to provide in-depth email responses about assignments, the content of readings, and proofreading essays. If you wish to discuss these matters, please visit me during my office hours.
- I am unable to provide in-depth email responses about materials and lectures that you missed due to an absence.
- I am unable to answer last-minute emails about assignments, formatting, or editing. For questions about MLA formatting, consult Purdue University's Online Writing Lab. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

### **UW POLICY REGARDING ILLNESS AND MISSED TESTS**

The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations ([www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf](http://www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf)) states that:

- A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the "University of Waterloo Verification of Illness" form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or at [www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health\\_Services/verification.html](http://www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html)
- If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.
- The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations.
- Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

#### **Academic Integrity:**

To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Academic Integrity Office (UW): A resource for students and instructors.

**Discipline:**

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 \(Student Discipline\)](#).

**Grievance:**

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Students who decide to file a grievance should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 70 \(Student Petitions and Grievances\)](#). For more information, students should contact the Associate Dean of St. Jerome's University.

**Appeals:**

A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline or University of Waterloo Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, read [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

**Note for Students with Disabilities:**

The [AccessAbility Services \(AS\) Office](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.