



ST. JEROME'S
UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of English
ENGL 251: Literary Theory and Criticism
M/W, 1:00-2:20, SJ1 3014, Winter 2022

Instructor: Chad Wriglesworth
email: cwriglesworth@uwaterloo.ca

Office Hours: M/W: 2:30-3:30
Sweeney Hall: SH2209

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 approaches to literary studies by reading and discussing critical essays about language, culture, and expressions of literary criticism. In addition to exploring and understanding the central concerns, values, and intellectual underpinnings that characterize ideas from a wide range of theorists and their representative intellectual movements, a larger goal of this course will be to consider the usefulness of theory by bringing critical thought into conversation with selected works of literature. Throughout our time together, we will consider how insights on matters such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ethics, religion, health and well-being—as well as diverse perspectives on the value and meaning of the literary canon—can inform the making and interpretation of texts in both reductive and generative ways. This course will help you develop critical vocabulary and acquire new knowledge about the history of literary criticism, even as it provides opportunities for practical, imaginative, and theoretically informed engagements with literature.

COVID Contingency Plan:

If, during the course of the term, the University of Waterloo must face short term closure (e.g. one week), course readings and pending due dates for assignments will be reassessed and potentially adjusted. If a longer-term cancellation of in-person meetings is required, the course will continue in an asynchronous environment following a pattern of recorded lectures (on M/W). Students who cannot attend class due to temporary illness or self-isolation will be accommodated to the best of my ability (e.g. through access to PowerPoint slides, any materials posted on LEARN, and possibly through adjusted due dates for assignments).

Required Texts:

Materials on Learn

Lucille Clifton, *Quilting: Poems 1987-1990* (BOA editions, 1991)

Margaret Edson, *Wit* (Faber and Faber, 1999)

Recommended:

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

Marking Scheme and Due Dates:

Review Essay (5 pages)	30%	Due: Week 6 (by midnight, Feb. 13)
Application Essay #1 / Clifton (5 pages)	30%	Due: Week 9 (by midnight, March 13)
Application Essay #2 / Edson (5 pages)	30%	Due: Week 12 (by midnight, April 11)
Attendance / Participation	10%	

General Instructions for Assignments:

The **review essay** (5 pages) will ask you to review the benefits and/or problems of an argument from one of the readings discussed during the first six weeks of the course. The review will consist of moments of “close reading” from a representative theoretical essay and a discussion of the intellectual assumptions (about matters such as readers, authors, texts, cultures, or transcendence) embedded within the argument.

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 essays, 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, interpretive close reading, and sense of argumentation.

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 various editions of M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, eds., *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (recommended text).

Key Terms and Concepts

Aestheticism

Affective Fallacy

Ambiguity

Archetypal Criticism

Author and Authorship

Book History Study

Canon of Literature

Criticism

Critique

Cultural Studies

Deconstruction

Defamiliarization

Epistemology

Expressionistic Criticism

Feminist Criticism

Formalism

Gender Criticism

Habituation

Impressionistic Criticism

Imitation (*mimesis*)

Intentional Fallacy

Interpretation and Hermeneutics

Literary Structuralism (second-order structuralism)

Marxist Criticism

Metaphor, Theories of

Modernism and Postmodernism

New Criticism

New Historicism

Objectivist Criticism

Ontology

Postcolonial Studies

Poststructuralism
Psychoanalytic Criticism
Reader Response Criticism

Repetition / Rhythm / Variation
Semiotics (first-order structuralism)
Telos / Teleology

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week One

- M-1/9 Course Overview: syllabus, books, assignments, and reading schedule
Introduction: Defamiliarizing Language and Representation
- W-1/11 An Overview: Literary Theory and Criticism
Key Terms and Concepts: Epistemology, Ontology, Imitation (mimesis); broad traditions of literary criticism: impressionist, expressionist, objectivist, pragmatic, and hermeneutic
Reading: Richard Kearney, "Where do Stories Come From?" (Learn, 3-14)

Week Two

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

- M- 1/16 Russian Formalism
Key Terms and Concepts: Formalism, Defamiliarization, Habituation, and Ambiguity
Reading: Rivkin and Ryan, "Introduction: Formalisms" (Learn, 3-7); Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" (Learn, 8-14)
(No in person class this day; previously recorded lecture on Learn)
- W- 1/18 New Criticism
Key Terms and Concepts: New Criticism, Intentional Fallacy, Affective Fallacy
Reading: Cleanth Brooks, "The Formalist Critics" (Learn, 15-20)

Week Three

Structural Order and Patterns: Semiotics, Literary Structuralism, and Archetypes

- M- 1/23 Semiotics and Structuralism
Key Terms and Concepts: Semiotics
Reading: Rivkin and Ryan, "The Implied Order: Structuralism" (Learn, 131-133); from Ferdinand de Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics" (Learn, excerpts 137-141; 167-174)

W- 1/25 Literary Structuralism and Narrative Patterns
Key Terms and Concepts: Structuralist Criticism and Archetypal Criticism
Reading: Northrop Frye, "The Archetypes of Literature" (Learn, 475-486)

Week Four

Poststructuralism: The High Art of Destabilization

M- 1/30 Questioning the Stability of Origins and Authorship
Key Terms and Concepts: Critique and Humanism
Reading: Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense" (Learn, 262-265)

W- 2/1 Questioning the Stability of Language and Authorship
Key Terms and Concepts: Poststructuralism and Teleology
Reading: Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" (Learn, 253-257)

Week Five

What are We Doing Here?: Imagination, the Canon, and Lived Experience

W- 2/6 Key Terms and Concepts: Canon of Literature
Reading: Peter Wayne Moe, "An Inheritance" (Learn, 58-74)

M- 2/8 Reading: Marilynne Robinson, "Freedom of Thought" (Learn, 3-18)
Due: Review Essay (Monday, February 13th by midnight)

Week Six

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

M- 2/13 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" (Learn, 893-900); Luce Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine" (Learn, 795-798)

W-2/15 Reading: Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision" (Learn, 511-524); excerpt from Toni Morrison, "Playing in the Dark" (Learn, excerpt 1163-1169)

Reading Break (2/19 - 2/25)

Week Seven

M-2/27 Reading: Audre Lorde, "Poetry is Not a Luxury" (Learn, 36-39) and "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" (Learn, 854-860)

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

W- 3/1 Clifton, 1-24

Week Eight

M- 3/6 Clifton, 25-68

W- 3/8 Clifton, 69-84
Due: Application Essay #1 / Clifton (Monday, March 13th by midnight)

Week Nine

Texts, Minds, Bodies and Ethics: Practices of Reading and Writing Texts-Bodies

M-3/13 Psychoanalytic Criticism
Reading: Rivkin and Ryan, "Strangers to Ourselves: Psychoanalysis" (Learn, 567-574); Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (Learn, 592-614)

W- 3/15 Clinical Practice and Narrative
Reading: Roger Pitman and Scott Orr, "The Black Hole of Trauma" (Learn, 469-471); Bessel van der Kolk and Alexander McFarlane, "The Black Hole of Trauma" (Learn, 487- 502)

Week Ten

M-3/20 Clinical Practice and Narrative
Reading: Arthur Frank, "When Bodies Need Voices" (Learn, 1-25)

W-3/22 Ethics of Reading and Writing Bodies
Reading: Mark Ledbetter, "Doing Violence to the Body: An Ethic of Reading and Writing" (Learn, 1-21)

Week Eleven

Application of Theories: Margaret Edson's *Wit*

M- 3/27 Edson, 1-20

W- 3/29 Edson, 21-50

Week Twelve

M- 4/3 Edson, 51-73

W-4/5 Edson, 73-85
Due: Application Essay #2 / Edson (Tuesday, April 11th by midnight)

ADDITIONAL DETAILS AND PROCEDURES

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSIONS AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

- All assignments will be submitted to a dropbox on LEARN. A few days before an assignment is due (for example, Week 6), I will set up a dropbox. Assignments must be submitted (preferably as a Word document) no later than midnight on the due date.
- Assignments submitted after the midnight deadline will be marked 3% per day late, including weekends.
- Late assignments will be accepted for one week after the due date – after that the assignment will be marked as zero.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

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 addition, I also expect that you will have something to say about the readings, meaning that you should attempt to contribute to class discussion (including small group discussions) on a regular basis. In terms of participation marking, you should expect the following: if you do not attend class on a regular basis, your participation will be limited and will be assessed at 0-60. If you attend class regularly, but do not contribute to course discussion on a regular basis, expect a mark between 60-75; 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 their first and last names, as well as 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 responses about assignments, readings, and proofreading. If you wish to discuss these matters after reviewing guidelines for an assignment, please stop by during my set office hours.
- My office hours this term will be: M/W 2:30-3:30; additional times by appointment.

UW POLICY REGARDING ILLNESS AND MISSED TESTS

When illness is the cause of a missed deadline, students should seek medical treatment and provide confirmation of the illness to the instructor(s) within 48 hours by submitting a completed [University of Waterloo Verification of Illness form](#) to support requests for accommodation due to illness. Students in Centre for Extended Learning (CEL) courses must submit their confirmation of the illness to CEL.

The University of Waterloo Verification of Illness form is normally the only acceptable medical documentation. Students who consult their physician or use the services of an off-campus walk-in clinic must provide this form to the attending physician for completion; notes and forms created by the physician or clinic are normally not acceptable. Although not compelled to do so, instructors may accept medical documentation that contains the same information specified on the University of Waterloo Verification of Illness form. Health Services charges a fee for completing the University of Waterloo Verification of Illness form that is not covered by OHIP/UHIP. Fees for this service or those levied by off-campus practitioners are the student's responsibility.

False claims of illness and/or the submission of false supporting documentation of extenuating circumstances constitute an academic offence that will result in disciplinary action under [Policy 71](#).

Adjustment of due dates or deferrals of term tests or final examinations are not automatic upon the presentation of suitable medical verification. Instructors will use this documentation among all information available to them when determining whether accommodation is warranted.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor, TA, and/or St. Jerome's University. Intellectual property includes items such as:

- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA, and/or St. Jerome's University for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).

Permission from an instructor, TA, or the University is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. [Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances.](#) When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. 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 instructor, 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 offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, 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 AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.