English 682: Recent Literary Criticism

Fall, 2013

Instructor: Dennis Allen
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Course Purpose: This course is intended to acquaint you with a variety of contemporary critical methodologies.

Course Requirements: Course grades will be based on a final exam (30%), a 10-12 page typed paper (40%), and a series of reading responses (30%).

The Paper: You may write on any literary or cultural text (e.g. film). Your paper must employ one of the methodologies analyzed in the course and should demonstrate a firm grasp of that critical approach. Your paper should also reflect a mastery of the current secondary materials on the text you have chosen to analyze.

The Reading Responses: Reading responses should consist of a two page typed analysis of one of the essays from each week's reading assignments. Your responses should not summarize the reading but should engage it intellectually. In other words, your response on a particular essay should do one or more of the following: critique the essay, apply it to a literary or cultural text, or relate it to previous reading in the course. Also, if an essay proves exceptionally difficult, your response on that essay could present some focused, specific questions on points that you did not understand. Responses will be collected during the 2nd through the 9th weeks of the semester.

Attendance: Ideally, you will attend all class sessions. If you miss more than one class, you will fail the course. This policy also applies to auditors.

Text (available at the bookstore):
Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan, eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Second Edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004)

Assignments:

Aug. 22: Introduction--Background Lecture: Overview of Current Theories

Aug. 29: Roots of Poststructuralism:
First Response Paper Due
Roland Barthes, "Mythologies," pp. 81-89
Ferdinand de Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics," pp. 59-71

Sept. 5: Poststructuralism and Deconstruction:
Jacques Derrida, "Differance," pp. 278-299
Barbara Johnson, "Writing," pp. 340-347

Sept. 12: Poststructuralism and Deconstruction:
Deleuze and Guattari, "A Thousand Plateaus," pp. 378-386
Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," pp. 365-377

Sept. 19: Psychoanalysis:
Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage...," pp. 441-446
Jacques Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," pp. 447-461

Sept. 26: Marxism:
Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," pp. 693-702
John Fiske, "Culture, Ideology, Interpellation," pp. 1268-1273
Slavoj Zizek, "The Sublime Object of Ideology," pp. 712-724

October 3: Historicisms:
Michel Foucault, "Discipline and Punish," pp. 549-566
Stephen Greenblatt, "Shakespeare and the Exorcists," pp. 592-620

Oct. 10: Gender Studies/Queer Theory
Eve Sedgwick, "Epistemology of the Closet," pp. 912-921
Foucault, "The History of Sexuality," pp. 683-691
Carla Freccero, "Always Already Queer (French) Theory" (Handout)

Oct. 17: Gender Studies Meets Ethnic Studies/Critical Race Theory/Transnational Studies:
Final Reading Response Due
Toni Morrison, "Playing in the Dark," pp. 1005-1016
Lisa Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity," pp. 1030-1050

Oct. 24: Ethnic Studies/Critical Race Theory:
Ian F. Haney Lopez, "The Social Construction of Race," pp. 964-974
Henry Louis Gates, "The Blackness of Blackness…," pp. 987-1004

OCT. 31: Postcolonial Theory/Transnational Studies:
Anne McClintock, "The Angel of Progress…," pp. 1185-1196
Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," pp. 1167-1184

Nov. 7: Postcolonial Theory/Transnational Studies:
Jamaica Kincaid, "A Small Place," pp.1224-1229
Alan Lawson, "The Anxious Proximities…," pp. 1210-1223

Nov.14: Cultural Studies:
Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art…" pp. 1235-1241
Michel de Certeau, "The Practice of Everyday Life," pp. 1247-1257

Nov. 21: Current Trends: Paper Due
Giorgio Agamben (handout)
Zizek (on Alain Badiou) (handout)

Nov. 28: Break

Dec. 5: Final