ENGL 436
Literary Theory
Fall 2012 * MW 10-11:35; F 10-10:40*
Instructor: Babli Sinha
Office Hours, 3-4, W,F in Humphrey House 203 and by appt.

Course Description: This course seeks to introduce students to the variety of theoretical approaches used by scholars in the field of English literary studies. We will read across a variety of critical frameworks from the twentieth century including formalism, Marxism, structuralism, feminism, post-colonialism, historicism, and post-structuralism. These movements take up fundamental questions about the relationship between the text, the reader, and the world being represented, the nature of language, and the social-economic consequences of literature. By the end of the course, students will have gained a familiarity with major critical movements and will be able to contextualize their own writing within these movements.

Course Objectives:
• Understand, evaluate, and engage different movements in literary theory with each other.

• Write analytical essays articulating methodologies and theoretical approaches and engaging literature with theory.

• Become more self-reflexive about your own approaches to literature.

• Be able to incorporate dialogues with critical theory in your analysis of texts.

• Conduct research to create bibliographies for research papers encompassing the major texts in the area of study.

Readings
The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism

Assignments

Paper 1: This is a comparison paper in which you engage two theorists from the course. You’ll want to have a 2-paragraph paraphrase of the two arguments followed by your own analysis. In the analytical portion, you’ll be discussing how the two theorists relate to a particular issue and whether one clarifies or complicates the other. 5-7 pages
**Paper 2:** You will engage the work of a theorist in the Norton with a literary text you have read during your studies at Kalamazoo College. You will want to think about whether and how the theoretical approach is helpful in understanding the aesthetic, historical, or political aspects of the text and whether the text in any sheds light on aspects of the theoretical text. 5-7 pages

**Paper 3:** This paper is open-ended. The only requirement is that you incorporate a theoretical self-reflection, in which you situate your own approach to texts in the work of one or more of the theories or movements with which you either feel a kinship or against which you would like to define your work. 8-10 pages

**Grades**
4 Quizzes 20%
Paper 1 20%
Paper 2 20%
Paper 3 25%
Participation 15%

**Extension Policy on Papers:**
Written work is due on the date specified on the syllabus. If you can't meet a deadline, please contact me at least a day in advance. Unexcused late papers will lose 1/3 grade for each day late (e.g. B to B-) including weekend days. Please submit hard copies of papers.

**Attendance policy:**
You are required to participate actively in the class, as the class will be based on your discussion. Participation is therefore compulsory, and the failure to contribute will lower your participation grade. Missing seven or more classes without an excuse is grounds for failing the course. Tardiness will lower your participation grade as well. If you are late or absent, you are responsible for checking with me or your classmates for notes or handouts.

Health related absences will be excused with documentation from the Health Center. Up to two excused absences per quarter may be taken for college-sanctioned activities (athletic activities, certain field trips, please talk to me before taking such an absence).

**Week 1 Introductions and The New Criticism**
September 10: In class Reading: Cleanth Brooks, “Irony as a Principle of Structure”


**Week 2 Historicism**
September 17: Michel Foucault, Excerpts from *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, 1469-1520

September 19: Stephen Greenblatt, “From Resonance and Wonder” 2146-2160

September 21: **Quiz 1**

**Week 3 Structuralism**
September 24: Ferdinand de Saussure, “Course in General Linguistics,” 845-866

September 26: Roland Barthes, all excerpts, 1316-1331

September 28: Tzvetan Todorov, “Structural Analysis of Narrative,” 2021-2030

**Week 4 Post-structuralism**
October 1: Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* and *Dissemination*, only to “The Pharmakon” 1680-1712

October 3: Jean Baudrillard, “Simulacra,” 1553-1566

October 5: **Quiz 2**

**Week 5 Marxist Theory**
October 8: Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 1818-1859

October 10: Ramond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 1420-1437, **PAPER 1 DUE**

October 12: **Mid-Term Break**

**Week 6 Psychoanalysis**

October 17: Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” 2081-2094

October 19: **Quiz 3**

**Week 7 Feminism & Gender Theory**
October 22: Donna Harraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs,” 2187-2220
October 24: Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 2536-2552

October 26: **PAPER 2 DUE** Julia Kristeva, “Revolution in Poetic Language,” 2067-2080

**Week 8 Post-colonialism**
October 29: Homi Bhabha, “A Commitment to Theory,” 2351-2372

October 31: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “A Critique of Postcolonial Reason” 2110-2125

November 2: Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, 2615-2634

**Week 9 Cultural Studies**
November 5: Jurgen Habermas, “Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,” 1566-1588

November 7: Stuart Hall, “Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies,” 1779-1794

November 9: **Quiz 4**

**Week 10 Race**


November 16: Lisa Lowe, “Work, Immigration, Gender,” 2519-2535

**Tuesday November 20—Final Paper Due**