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English 2100: Introduction to Literary Theory

Foreign Encounter

Texts & Materials

*Critical Theory Today*, Lois Tyson, Routledge, 2nd Edition, 978-0415974103

*Jane Eyre,* Charlotte Bronte,Norton Critical Edition,  978-0393975420

*Wide Sargasso Sea,* Jean Rhys, Norton Critical Edition, 978-0393960129

*Poems***,** Elizabeth Bishop, Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 978-0374532369

Additional Blackboard readings (please bring a printed copy to class.)

Available online (<http://libraryguides.missouri.edu/English/>):

Craft of Research, 3rd Edition, 978-0226065656

Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms

Course Description

This course provides instruction in the fundamentals of writing about literature. Designed with the needs of declared or prospective English majors and minors in mind, it emphasizes literary research, interpretation, and criticism. The course covers three literary genres (fiction, poetry and non-fiction.) Prerequisite: ENGL 1000 or equivalent, sophomore standing. This course is required for English majors and recommended for minors. For further information on majoring or minoring in English, see http://english.missouri.edu or Mary Moore in Tate 107. Although this is not a writing intensive course, it involves a challenging load of reading and writing, particularly formal academic writing.

Students of ENGL 2100 may expect to:

* hone interpretive and argumentative skills in the major literary genres.
* gain familiarity with variety of critical and theoretical approaches to assigned texts.
* and practice literary research skills.
* further develop formal academic writing skills, including drafting and revision, using primary and secondary sources and employing MLA (Modern Language Association) citation methods.

In our pursuit of these goals, we will attentively read two novels and a broad range of poetry, all of which deals in some way with the theme of *foreign encounter.* As we progress through a variety of critical and interpretative frameworks throughout the semester, our class will often come back to this theme, and examine how each framework allows us to differently examine how a foreign encounter generates meaning in a literary work. We will find moments of fear and adventure, conquest and epiphany, and my hope is that this course theme will provide an avenue for lively and engaging reading, discussion and writing.

Our class time will involve your participation as much as mine, as *together*, we delve into the process of writing about literature. Some classes we’ll write, discuss readings or participate in workshop-style groups; others, we might get out of the classroom and visit a museum or hear a speaker on a particular topic.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

**Reading Quizzes** (5%): most *Week*s we’ll have a short reading quiz that draws on both the readings that you’ve done for the *Week* and also on class discussions. These quizzes will require you to do a bit of short timed writing about what you read. Your top ten scores will count towards your quiz grade (no makeup quizzes.)

**Informal Writing** (10%): Throughout the semester, you’ll have a chance to do a variety of both formal and informal writing assignments. Informal writing assignments will give you the chance to grow comfortable with the work of literary analysis without the pressures of polishing your prose. You’ll usually complete one piece of informal writing outside of class per week. I’ll evaluate your informal writing based on its thoroughness, thoughtfulness and originality.

**Formal Writing I** (20%): Your first formal writing assignment will be a close reading paper. In this paper, you’ll choose a theme or symbol in one of the works that we’ve read and analyze a relevant passage of literature related to this theme or symbol, without the use of outside sources. In your second formal writing assignment, you’ll use a short theoretical or critical text as a “lens” to look at one of the pieces of literature that we’ve read.

**Formal Writing II** (20%): In your second formal writing assignment, you’ll use a short theoretical or critical text as a “lens” to look at one of the pieces of literature that we’ve read. Both of these papers will be 3-4 pages in length. I’ll provide more detailed prompts for both papers well ahead of each paper’s due date.

**Research Paper** (40%): For the final writing assignment in the course, you’ll construct an academic argument about one of the texts that we’ve read. This paper will consist of several parts including: a research proposal, an annotated bibliography, a first draft of the paper and a final draft of the paper. The paper will be 6-8 pages in length and will use at least six sources. You will receive more detailed instructions about each of the research paper components in class.

**Participation** (5%):

A large part of this course involves participating in class discussion—that is, considerately pondering the stories we read both in and outside of class. *Listening carefully* is as important as speaking well. You must come to each class prepared to write, discuss, share your work with others, revise what you have written, and turn in assignments.

Policies

**Academic Integrity Policy** (from Provost): Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

**Intellectual Pluralism** (From Provost): The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions concerning the quality of instruction in this class may address concerns to either the Departmental Chair or Divisional leader or Director of the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities <<http://osrr.missouri.edu/#_blank>> (<http://osrr.missouri.edu/>). All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

ADA Statement (from Provost): If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class, or at my office. To request academic accommodations (for example, a note taker), students must also register with the Office of Disability Service <http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu/> S5 Memorial Union, 882-4696. It is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting academic accommodations, and for accommodations planning in cooperation with students and instructors, as needed and consistent with course requirements. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

Class Netiquette (From ET@MO): Your instructor and fellow students wish to foster a safe on-line learning environment. All opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea but you are not to attack an individual. Our differences, some of which are outlined in the University's nondiscrimination statement, will add richness to this learning experience. Please consider that sarcasm and humor can be misconstrued in online interactions and generate unintended disruptions. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course ambience.

**Class Participation**: As this course relies heavily on discussion, it’s important both that you keep up on the reading and also that you attend class regularly. Of course, simply attending class is not enough; your active involvement in discussions and activities is essential to making the most of the course. Each absence over four (excused or unexcused) will reduce your overall course grade by 5%. If you are absent more than six times, you may be dropped from the course. Also, I don’t “round up” grades; instead, if a student is between grades, class participation becomes the deciding factor.

**Cell phones/i-pods, etc.:** This should be obvious, but turn off your phones & other electronic devices (including laptops) before class. Texting in class will count as an automatic absence.

The University of Missouri uses the following grading scale: A 100-94; A- 93-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-84; B- 83-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-74; C- 73-70; D+ 69-67; D 66-64; D- 63-60; F 59 and below.

Schedule: All Readings Due on the Date Listed

*Week* 1

M Introductions & Syllabus

Read poems together: “Middle Passage,” “White Lies,” “The Facts of Art”

W Everything you wanted to know about critical theory” *CTT* 1-10

Hemingway, “Big Two-Hearted River” (copies)

IW: From today’s *CTT* reading, choose a passage that resonates with you, either because it answers a question you’ve long had, or because it coincides with a belief you’ve already developed. Explain your thoughts about the passage using detailed references to one *specific* reading experience (give us the name of the text, and the context in which you read it)

F New Criticism *CTT* 35 – 164

Poems: “The Colonel,” “The Ghost of Heaven,” BISHOP

*Week* 2

M Labor Day (no class)

W Toni Cade Bambara, “The Lesson”

IW: Answer the questions on page 164 regarding “The Lesson.”

F Introduce Close Reading paper

*Week* 3

M Psychoanalytic Criticism: *CTT* 11 – 25 and 34 – 49

W *Jane Eyre* (feel free, of course, to read ahead)

IW: Choose any *page* from the novel pages due today, and do a psychoanalytic reading.

F 9/12 *Jane Eyre*

Bring two hard copies of an outline for your Close Reading Formal Writing

*Week* 4

M 9/15 *Jane Eyre*

Draft of close reading paper due. Bring one hard copy to class. No IW this week.

W 9/17 Conferences

F CLOSE READING FORMAL WRITING DUE

*Week* 5

M 9/22 Feminist Criticism *TCC* 83 – 95 & 105 – 130

IW: Comment on *any* aspect of this chapter that provokes your thinking for 100 – 200 words. For the remainder of your 500 words, consider a text *or* other cultural material from a feminist perspective. As you do so, let your readers know whether you believe this is a reading that is *against the grain* or not.

W 9/24 No reading due – bring first week’s poems to consider from a feminist-criticism perspective

F 9/26 Finish reading *Jane Eyre* and consider the novel from a feminist-criticism perspective

*Week* 6

M 9/29 Structuralism

W 10/1 Apply structuralism to Forche and Bishop poems.

F 10/3 Apply structuralism to *Jane Eyre.*

*Week* 7

M 10/6 Deconstruction *Tcc* 249-

Quiz. How does Tyson suggest that deconstruction can be a tool for feminism?

What is slippage?

W 10/8 applying deconstruction to poetry

F introduce second formal paper, discuss applying a theoretical lens makes writing different

*Week* 8 POSTCOLONIAL CRITICISM and *WSS*

M 10/13

W

F

*Week* 9 postcolonial criticism and Elizabeth Bishop’s poems

M 10/20

W

F read an article on Elizabeth Bishop and postcolonial theory

*Week* 10

*Week* 11

M 11/3 QUEER THEORY

W consider Bishop poems from perspective of queer theory

F consider handout poems from perspective of queer theory / RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE

*Week* 12 Discuss students’ proposals in class, merits of each and how to FIND SOURCES

M 11/10

W ARTICLE applying queer theory to Bishop

F ARTICLE

*Week* 13

M 11/17 WORK ON RESEARCH PROJECTS

W CONFERENCES

F CONFERENCES

11/24 *Week* of THANKSGIVING

*Week* 13 READ CONTEMPORARY SHORT STORIES & REVISE

M 12/1

W PRINCIPLES OF REVISION

F

M 12/8 draft of research paper due - EVALUATIONS

RESEARCH PAPER DUE during exam *Week*