



**University of Cyprus  
Department of English Studies  
Course Syllabus  
ENG 310 – HISTORY OF LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM  
(7.5 ECTS)**

**Instructor:** Tziovanis Georgakis (PhD)  
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**Course Days:** Mondays and Thursdays  
**Course Time:** 16:30 – 18:00  
**Course Venue:** KENTP / A107  
**Office Hours:** Mondays and Thursdays: 11:00 – 13:00  
**Office Hours Venue:** KENTP / M105A

### Course Description

The aim of the seminar is to offer students an introduction to literary theory and criticism through an examination of relevant contemporary concerns. The first part of the course introduces the concepts of 'theory' and 'critique' by discussing the issue of representation in Ancient Greek thinking and the way it is appropriated by Nietzsche. The second part of the course raises the question 'Why do we read?' and investigates the rise and function of English as a cultural institution and as a discipline in the present-day world. The second part of the course poses the question 'What do we read?'. It examines the relation between work and author and explores the issue of the contingency of the literary canon in terms of its contested formation, value, and authority. The final part of the course presents the question 'How do we read?' and considers the ethics of the act of reading and the possibility of a literary community committed in active resistance. All required readings are further discussed in in-class debates sessions.

### Core Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will:

- understand and challenge the multiple and difficult issues that arise within the greater field of contemporary literary theory and criticism.
- gain new insights into the related issues and surveyed questions.
- participate in different debates that take place within various complementary or oppositional philosophical fields.
- be in a position to distinguish, evaluate, and construct arguments.
- produce critical essays of the kind that is assigned in upper level courses within the English major.
- develop an attentive eye to the marginal and the unconsidered.
- foster the necessary critical and analytical skills that each university student needs to utilize in every academic setting.

### Bibliography

**(All readings below are included in the *Course Pack*)**



- Achebe, Chinua. 'An Image of Africa.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 323-33. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. 'From Work to Text.' *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Ed. Richter, David H. 3rd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. 878-82. Print.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 'The Postcolonial and the Postmodern: The Question of Agency.' *Criticism: Major Statements*. Eds. Kaplan, Charles and William Davis Anderson. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 763-81. Print.
- Booth, Wayne C. 'Who Is Responsible in Ethical Criticism, and for What?' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 349-55. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. 'The Rise of English.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 49-59. Print.
- Fetterley, Judith. 'Introduction to *The Resisting Reader*.' *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Ed. Richter, David H. 3rd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. 1035-42. Print.
- Gates, Jr., Henry Louis. 'Canon-Formation, Literary History, and the Afro-American Tradition.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 174-82. Print.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 'From *The Birth of Tragedy*.' *Criticism: Major Statements*. Eds. Kaplan, Charles and William Davis Anderson. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 319-32. Print.
- Ohmann, Richard. 'The Function of English at the Present Time.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 89-95. Print.
- Plato. 'Republic, Book X.' *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Ed. Richter, David H. 3rd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. 30-38. Print.
- Robinson, Lillian S. 'Treason Our Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 153-66. Print.
- Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. 'Contingencies of Value.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 147-52. Print.
- Vendler, Helen. 'What We Have Loved, Others Will Love.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 31-40. Print.

#### Items Reserved in the Library's Short Loan Collection

- Kaplan, Charles, and William Davis Anderson, eds. *Criticism: Major Statements*. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. Print. **[PN81.C85 2000]**
- Richter, David H., ed. *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. Print. **[PN81.F26 2000]**
- Richter, David H., ed. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. 3rd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. Print. **[PN81.C84 2007]**

#### Supplementary Reading Material

- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 2nd ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002. Print. **[PN81.B367 2009]**



- Bennett, Andrew, and Nicholas Royle. *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. 2nd ed. London: Prentice Hall, 1999. Print. **[PN45.B39 1999]**
- Burke, Seán, ed. *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern: A Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995. Print. **[PN145.B875 1995]**
- Davis, Robert Con, and Ronald Schleifer. *Criticism and Culture: The Role of Critique in Modern Literary Theory*. London: Longman, 1991. Print. **[PN81.D375 1991]**
- Gourgouris, Stathis. *Does Literature Think?: Literature as Theory for an Antimythical Era*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003. Print. **[PN56.M94G64 2003]**
- Hawthorn, Jeremy. *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*. 4th ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2000. Print. **[PN44.5.H37 1994]**
- Jefferson, Ann, and David Robey, eds. *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1991. Print. **[PN94.M6 1986]**
- Leitch, Vincent B., ed. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001. Print. **[PN86.N67 2001]**
- Raman, Selden, Widdowson Peter, and Brooker Peter. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 5th ed. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 2005. Print. **[PN94.S45 2005]**
- Waugh, Patricia, ed. *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Print. **[PN86.L574 2006]**

### Class Preparation and Participation

The class will be run seminar-style, by which the class instructor will do some lecturing. At the same time, students are expected to participate actively in class discussions. This format will not work unless all students are well-prepared for the class. It is very important that students engage discussions and readings so that the whole classroom participates in a dialectic exchange of thoughts and ideas. If students are having difficulty understanding parts of the class material, they should inform the instructor. In general, the instructor will not summarize the readings for the students' sake. The readings are for the students to discuss during the discussion portion of the class. The instructor will merely supplement the assigned readings. Part of class preparation also includes taking detailed notes, noting down pressing questions, understanding and evaluating arguments, responding to complex arguments, forming new arguments, and thinking critically about one's own positions. This class will thrive only if all students take responsibility to participate. In addition, the instructor expects that all seminar members will treat each other with the respect necessary for a philosophical discussion. Students should be courteous to the other students in the classroom and avoid disrupting their right to a positive learning environment. To this end, students should not arrive late to class or leave early, engage in side conversations, or pack their belongings before class has concluded. Students should not leave their mobile phones on, use text messaging on their phones, or surf the Internet during class. If students are using a laptop in class, they must sit near the front so as not to distract other students. If students anticipate arriving late to class or need to leave early from class, or are expecting a call (if they need to be reachable for an emergency), they should let the instructor know before class begins.

### Attendance Policy

Attending class is extremely important. Missing any class, coming in late, or leaving early will detract from the final grade. If students miss a class, they are still responsible for finding out what was delivered in class that day and if there were any assignments given by the course instructor. Class success is determined by the students' active presence and by how much work



they are willing to put in. Students are urged to make a commitment to the coursework for themselves and for their colleagues.

### Course Assignments and Assessment

**In-class debate sessions: 10%**

six debates groups will be formed by the course instructor. The Pro or Con Position will also be allocated by the instructor. Students do not have the option to change their group membership or their designated Pro or Con Position. All group members are expected to equally participate in the presentation of their position.

**Midterm examination: 35%**

Each student will respond to specific questions given by the instructor relevant to the assigned readings and in-class discussions. The length of this assignment is 1,000-1,500 words.

**Final examination: 50%**

Each student will write one research essay relevant to the assigned readings and in-class discussions. The length of this assignment is 2,000-2,500 words.

**Class attendance and participation: 5%**

### The Writing Clinic at the Department of English Studies

Students are advised to visit the Writing Clinic before they submit their academic essays and other writing assignments. Please email the clinicians before your visit and book an appointment ahead of time.

### Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, bribes, examination by proxy, grade tampering, and submission of non-original works. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic grade of 0. Information about plagiarism and citation rules will be provided during the semester. If students have any questions or are unsure of what constitutes academic dishonesty, they should ask the course instructor.

### Office Hours and Availability

If students have any questions or wish to discuss course progression, course material, general philosophy or literature questions, or just to talk, the course instructor is available to them on Mondays and Thursdays from 11:00 – 13:00. If deemed necessary, they can schedule an appointment. The instructor strongly encourages all students to stop by and introduce themselves. Before students send an email with a query, they can come to office hours first. If they are unable to attend the designated office hours, they can email the instructor at [georgakis.tziovanis@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:georgakis.tziovanis@ucy.ac.cy). The instructor will do everything possible to respond to any questions, comments, or issues within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on the weekends.

### Course Schedule

#### A. INTRODUCING THEORY AND CRITIQUE

##### Week 1: From Plato's *Republic*



Weekly reading:

Plato. 'Republic, Book X.' *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Ed. Richter, David H. 3rd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. 30-38. Print.

### **Week 2: From Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy***

Weekly reading:

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 'From *The Birth of Tragedy*.' *Criticism: Major Statements*. Eds. Kaplan, Charles and William Davis Anderson. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 319-32. Print.

## **B. RAISING THE QUESTION, 'WHY DO WE READ?'**

### **Week 3: Love for Literature**

Weekly reading:

Vendler, Helen. 'What We Have Loved, Others Will Love.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 31-40. Print.

### **Week 4: The Rise of English**

Weekly reading:

Eagleton, Terry. 'The Rise of English.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 49-59. Print.

### **Week 5: The Function of English**

Weekly reading:

Ohmann, Richard. 'The Function of English at the Present Time.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 89-95. Print.

## **IN-CLASS DEBATE SESSION ONE: THE CRISIS IN THE HUMANITIES AND THE ROLE OF THE LITERATURE SCHOLAR**

## **C. RAISING THE QUESTION, 'WHAT DO WE READ?'**

### **Week 6: The Thing Called Text**

Weekly reading:

Barthes, Roland. 'From *Work to Text*.' *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Ed. Richter, David H. 3rd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. 878-82. Print.

### **Week 7: The Question of the Literary Canon**

Weekly reading:

Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. 'Contingencies of Value.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 147-52. Print.

### **Week 8: Feminist Challenges to the Canon**

Weekly reading:

Robinson, Lillian S. 'Treason Our Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 153-66. Print.



**MIDTERM WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE: 35%**

**Week 9: Race and the Authority of the Canon**

Weekly reading:

Gates, Jr., Henry Louis. 'Canon-Formation, Literary History, and the Afro-American Tradition.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 174-82. Print.

**IN-CLASS DEBATE SESSION TWO: THE VALUE OF THE LITERARY CANON AND IDENTITY POLITICS**

**D. RAISING THE QUESTION, 'HOW DO WE READ?'**

**Week 10: The Ethics of Reading**

Weekly reading:

Booth, Wayne C. 'Who Is Responsible in Ethical Criticism, and for What?' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 349-55. Print.

**Week 11: Literature and the Question of Geography**

Weekly reading:

Achebe, Chinua. 'An Image of Africa.' *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. Richter, David H. 2nd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 323-33. Print.

**Week 12: Literature and the Question of the Colony**

Weekly reading:

Bhabha, Homi K. 'The Postcolonial and the Postmodern: The Question of Agency.' *Criticism: Major Statements*. Eds. Kaplan, Charles and William Davis Anderson. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 763-81. Print.

**Week 13: Literature and Resistance**

Weekly reading:

Fetterley, Judith. 'Introduction to *The Resisting Reader*.' *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Ed. Richter, David H. 3rd ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. 1035-42. Print.

**IN-CLASS DEBATE SESSION THREE: RESISTING COMMUNITIES AND THE ETHICS OF READING**

**Exam Week:**

**FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE: 50%**