

English 2350-005
INTRO TO TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION



Instructor: Dr. Barclay
Course Information: M/W 2:30 p.m. - 3:50 p.m.
Office: 209 Carlisle Hall
Office Hours: M/W 8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. and Fri 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
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Course Description: In this course, students will examine how and why we interpret texts. The course is designed to prepare English majors for upper level courses and to develop the skills to identify characteristics of literary genres, to recognize and understand critical and literary terms, to develop methods and strategies for analyzing and interpreting texts, and to demonstrate a command of these methods and strategies in written work. We will study literary devices and numerous theoretical approaches while reading and comparing canonized and non-canonized texts with similar themes.

Required Readings:

Critical Theory Today (Tyson)
Glossary of Literary Terms (Abrams)
The Sun Also Rises (Hemingway)
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Douglass)
Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five (Lessing)
Wall Around Eden (Slonczewski)

(The last two texts are out of publication, so please purchase used copies via bn.com, amazon.com, alibris.com, or the like.)

Course Objectives:

- To write with clarity to communicate effectively within the academic community
- To identify characteristics of literary genres
- To recognize and understand critical and literary terms
- To develop methods and strategies for analyzing and interpreting texts and to demonstrate a command of these methods and strategies in written work
- To apply different and appropriate critical frameworks to the analysis of texts
- To adapt writing for different styles or forms, including informal reflections, analytical essays, research essays, etc.
- To evaluate and respond to the aesthetics and philosophies of a text

Course Requirements:

Close Reading Essay (10%): This is a two-page essay in which you will choose a small (1-3 paragraph) section of *Narrative in the Life of Frederick Douglass* or *Universal Monsters* to write about. You will use the “New Criticism” chapter of CTT to do the following: a) Define the primary themes, questions, and/or issues you find in the selection; b) Indicate how two or three relevant elements of the selection (e.g., diction, imagery, narrative voice, tone, setting,

description, characterization) contribute to and/or detract from that primary theme, question, or issue you defined.

Critical Approach Essay (15%): In this three-page essay, you will apply one of the critical approaches we have studied (except for New Criticism) prior to the essay's due date to *The Wall Around Eden* or *The Sun Also Rises*. You will do the following in the essay: a) explain why the critical approach you choose is appropriate for the text you selected, and b) demonstrate the effectiveness of using the selected approach (use class discussion and examples from *Critical Theory Today* as guides).

Research Essay Prospectus (5%): The prospectus is a paper proposal that will include the a short paragraph with your thesis and significance, a paragraph on feasibility, a paragraph on method, your tentative organization, and your preliminary bibliography. A format guide is included below.

Final Research Essay (20%): In your five-page research essay, you will select one of the assigned readings that you have not written a paper on and do the following: a) determine a focus/thesis and select one or more of the interpretive methods that will facilitate your analyses; b) discover relevant parts of the texts that define and support your focus/thesis; c) identify articles and chapters that will give your arguments authority and clarify your thoughts on your interpretation (use relevant journals and databases); d) prepare and submit the graded prospectus; e) write and revise drafts before turning in the final draft. You will then prepare and present for ten minutes to the rest of the class during the last class days (we will draw days during the semester).

Exams (50%): Exams will be varied, some matching and some essay and/or short-answer and will be based on the readings up to the exam date. **You should take detailed class notes and keep up with response essays in order to be prepared for this exam.** You will be required to utilize all that has been covered in class, in your readings, and in-group discussions in a deeper, more complex way.

For the essays, you will need to fulfill the specific requirements of each assignment and do so using coherent, well-organized, and engaging writing and writing mechanics (e.g., spelling, grammar) worthy of an English major. If you have had writing problems in the past, please visit the free Writing Center on the fourth floor of the library. For the research paper, I will be concerned with how well you integrate your ideas and arguments with the viewpoints of the critical articles. Please be advised that it is your responsibility to retain all of your assignments until after you have received your final grade. You cannot formally challenge a final grade if you do not have evidence of your work.

Late Work Policy: I will not accept late work under usual circumstances.

Attendance/Late Policy: This is an interactive class in which attendance is vital. While reading the texts on your own will provide insights, the real learning comes through class discussion and lecture. Please be in class on time, ready for active participation. You are allowed three absences. Each absence over three will result in a one-point deduction of your final course percentage. The reasons for the absences do not matter, and you will not be able to make up quizzes, etc. For ANY absence, you (the student) are responsible for acquiring information about the notes and discussion you missed. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be counted absent. Manage your absences responsibly. Also, in some cases the University is unable to have class on campus due to weather or other circumstances. However, we WILL have class electronically. Please check your MyMav email account for instructions on how our class will proceed in the

event of campus closings.

Formatting and Presentation: All assignments should be in MLA format. We will review this format in class, and you can also see a writing handbook for guidelines. In general, this means that assignments must be typed in 12-point font (Times New Roman for this class), double-spaced, with one inch margins all around. The first page should contain a heading and title. MLA parenthetical citations and works cited lists are also required when appropriate.

Dropping the Course: If, during the course of the semester, you choose to drop this class, it is your responsibility to fill out the appropriate documentation and pursue the procedure for dropping a course.

Classroom Etiquette: Students in this class are expected to show respect for their classmates, instructor, and guests. Disrespectful behavior is grounds for dismissal from class. This will mean an absence for the day and a required appointment with me before the next class meeting. Also, please remember to turn off cell phones during class.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism: Academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts" (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22). You can get in trouble for plagiarism—even if you do not intend to cheat—by failing to correctly indicate places where you are making use of the work of another. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the conventions of citation by which you indicate which ideas are not your own and how your reader can find those sources. Because I value originality and honesty, I find plagiarism especially offensive. Do not do it.

Student Success Programs: UTA offers a variety of student programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success, including learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admissions and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

Americans With Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 93112 -- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans With Disabilities Act - (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodation" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty at the beginning of the semester and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels.

Prospectus Format

1. Thesis / Significance (short paragraph): indicate the book or poem(s) selected for examination; define the primary argument(s) claim(s), or question(s); indicate the significance of your thesis (i.e., address the “so what?” question).
2. Feasibility (short paragraph): Is it possible to address this thesis adequately in a five-page research paper and during part of a summer semester? Does our library or do other Metroplex libraries have the resources you will need.
3. Method (short paragraph): identify the critical approach(es) to interpretation that you will use (see the CTT chapters). Indicate why these are appropriate for your book or poem(s) and your thesis.
4. Tentative Organization: In a few sentences justify how you will order the paper.
5. Preliminary Bibliography (list): Remember, the paper requires at least five critical sources in your Works Cited list that will be well integrated into your discussion (i.e., not just tacked on to reach the five minimum).

Tentative Schedule

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| Aug 24 | Introduction to class |
| Aug 26 | Read CTT “Everything You Wanted to Know” (1-10) and "New Criticism" (135-67) and read Glossary entries on the following: allegory, ambiguity, burlesque, canon of literature, character and characterization, criticism, and cultural studies; |
| Aug 31 | Read excerpts from <i>Universal Monsters</i> and Glossary entries on didactic literature, euphemism, figurative language, form and structure, genres, Gothic novel, Harlem Renaissance, humanism, hypertext, imagery, and irony. |
| Sept 2 | <u>Exam 1</u> |
| Sept 7 | Labor Day |

Approaches to Canonical and (Usually) Non-canonical Slave Narrative

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| Sept 9 | Read CTT "New Historical and Cultural Criticism" (281-315) and <i>Narrative in the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> Ch. 1-9 |
| Sept 14 | Read CTT “African American Criticism – Race Theory” (359-415) and "Structuralist Criticism” (209-47) |
| Sept 16 | <u>Close Reading Essay Due</u> and <i>Narrative in the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> Ch. 10-end |

- Sept 21 Read *Wall Around Eden* Ch. 1-8 and CTT "Feminist Criticism" (83-133)
- Sept 23 Read *Wall Around Eden* Ch. 9-21
- Sept 28 Read *Wall Around Eden* Ch. 22-30 and CTT "Postcolonial Criticism," (417-49)
- Sept 30 Read *Wall Around Eden* Ch. 31-39
- Oct 5 Read *Wall Around Eden* Ch. 40-end and read the following Glossary entries: literature, local color, meter, modernism and postmodernism, motif and theme, myth, narrative and narratology, and novel)

Oct 7 Exam 2

Approaches to Canonical and (Usually) Non-canonical Expatriate Fictions

- Oct 12 Read *The Sun Also Rises* Ch. 1-9 and CTT "Reader-Response Criticism" (169-207)
- Oct 14 Read *The Sun Also Rises* Ch. 10-36 and CTT "Lesbian, Gay, and Queer Criticism" (317-57)
- Oct 19 Read *The Sun Also Rises* Ch. 37-end and read the following Glossary entries: pastoral, periods of American Literature, periods of English literature, persona/tone/and voice, and plot.
- Oct 21 No Class; Critical Approach Essay Due
- Oct 26 Exam 3
- Oct 28 Read *Marriages* p. 1-82
- Nov 2 Read *Marriages* 82-119 and CTT "Marxist Criticism" (53-81)
- Nov 4 Read *Marriages* p.120-189 and CTT "Deconstructive Criticism" (249-80)
- Nov 9 Read *Marriages* p.190-end and CTT "Psychoanalytic Criticism" (11-52)
- Nov 11 Optional conferences and Prospectus Due and read following Glossary entries: point of view, prose, realism and naturalism, science fiction and fantasy, sentimentalism, style, symbol, tragedy, tragicomedy, and Transcendentalism in America
- Nov 16 Exam 4
- Nov 18 Research Essay Drafts and Optional Conferencing; Discussion of research sources, MLA format, research essay questions
- Nov 23 Presentations and Final Research Essay Due
- Nov 25 Thanksgiving Holiday
- Nov 30 Presentations
- Dec 2 Presentations