

University of Alaska Fairbanks

ENG 601

Criticism, Theory, Methods

Term: Spring	Professor: Dr. Alla Ivanchikova
Time: MWF 6.00-9.00pm	Office: 810 Gruening
Room: G301	Phone: 907-474-5236
Office hours: MWF 10.30-11.30 am or by appointment	Email: aivanchikova@alaska.edu

Course description and objectives

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to some of the concepts and ideas that are considered to be of crucial importance in the field of literary theory today. During the course of the term we will read and discuss a large variety of texts and methodologies created by some of the most influential theorists of the twentieth century. Students will also become familiarized with the context in which these texts were written and learn how these various methodologies can be applied to the study of literary works. The course is an excellent opportunity to broaden your horizons and learn about new ideas. It is also an opportunity to acquire advanced critical thinking skills through an encounter with very complex and dense texts. You will learn how to analyze theoretical texts and write about critical theory.

There will be six annotated bibliography entries, two seminar presentations, one formal response, and one research essay for this course.

Course syllabus and schedule

The complete course syllabus is available **online** – all students are **REQUIRED** to familiarize themselves with the course policies, evaluation criteria, plagiarism policy, and other requirements as posted on the course website. The website also contains a detailed class schedule and a list of required books. Just type in the following address in your internet browser: <http://lectureguru.net>. Proceed by selecting your course from the green table.

Books (required)

- Richter, David H. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Third Edition. Bedford/ St.Martin, 2007.
- Articles posted on E-Reserve (access password is “theory”)

Books (recommended)

- *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Seventh Edition*. Modern Language Association of America, New York: 2009

Students should have access to an **MLA style writing guide**. Information about MLA formatting is available free online at:

- <http://www.docstyles.com/mlaguide.htm> and
- www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/cite5.html.

Requirements for this course are as follows



- Unfailing attendance and participation in class discussions
- Scrupulous reading of all assigned texts
- Two 15 minute seminar presentations (20% each)
- 6 annotated bibliography entries (20%)
- One final research paper (40%)

Evaluation and Grading

Grade distribution:

Categories	Dates	Value
Seminar presentation 1	Negotiated deadline	20 points
Seminar presentation 2	Negotiated deadline	20 points
6 annotated bibliography entries	Negotiated deadline	20 points (averaged)
Research paper	May 5	40 points
Total		100 points = 100%

Attendance: Your attendance and participation are central to your success of this course. Students are urged to attend classes regularly. You are allowed one week of unexcused absences (1 class), for which you don't need to provide the reason. It is my understanding that sometimes we just have to skip a class to attend to other important aspects of our lives. If you have to miss a class due to illness or an emergency, you will be required to provide appropriate documentation. Additional (undocumented) absences will affect your grade adversely.

Lateness: Please note that frequent lateness will impact your grade. If you arrive late, try to cause as little disturbance as possible. Students who are late to class (more than 5 min) will have a 1/2 of unexcused lateness note in my grade book. The same policy will apply to students that leave the class early. If you have to leave early due to a legitimate reason, please arrange this with me before the class: no 1/2 unexcused lateness note will be added.

Participation: Regular participation in our class discussions can earn you up to 5 extra points. To earn the full 5 points, you should participate every time (or close to that).

To summarize all of the above, coming to class unprepared, arriving late, failing to provide thoughtful responses to the readings will affect your grade. In order to get the highest score, you must regularly participate in class discussions, demonstrate knowledge of the material covered and be proactive in seeking help if such need arises.

Seminar presentations:

Your seminar presentation will have two components: an oral and a written component. The seminar presentation will be delivered orally in class on the day it is scheduled. Once the presentation topic is selected, the date cannot be changed. The presentation should take about 15 minutes. The presentation should stimulate class discussion. You will be marked based on the quality of your oral presentation delivery, your ability to formulate interesting and engaging questions about the text, and your ability to think on the spot during discussion time.

The written account of your class seminar presentation is due 1 week after the presentation delivery (Sunday at 12.00 am). The written version should be revised in light of the class discussion. The written version should be 5-6 pages in length (double spaced).

The seminar presentation (both oral and written) should have the following four components and will be evaluated on the basis of how well you present all these components:

- introduce the author's main argument (or what you believe this argument is)
- discuss this argument and the conceptual framework within which this argument (or a concept) is being introduced
- briefly outline your own position regarding this argument (e.g. you found it useful, problematic, etc)
- present some questions for class discussion.

Annotated bibliography:

You will compose 6 annotated bibliography entries during the course of the semester. You are free to choose the texts you want to write about. Each entry must be submitted before the class discussion of the text in question. Each entry should be 1 page long (about 500 words), double spaced.

The primary purpose of an annotated bibliography entry is to characterize and critically evaluate the text under consideration. You should not quote from the text, but you should summarize the main arguments and /or transitions in the text. You will need to identify the topic, thesis, and method of the selected text. Then you will need to identify its contribution to the field. Identify the text's specific strength and weaknesses.

Research paper:

Your research paper will be 12-18 pages in length, double spaced. It should demonstrate your ability to engage with difficult readings, analyze theoretical arguments, and conduct library research. It should follow MLA format and contain a Works Cited page. Your essay topic will be subject to my approval in advance. You may wish to engage with a specific reading or methodology, to test a theoretical approach in relation to a literary

text, to place the work of two or more theorists in a dialogue with each other, or to investigate a single concept or aspect of a theory/ theorist.

Late Assignment Penalties: Submitting an essay late will result in marks being deducted (normally, half letter grade for each day the paper is late, including weekends). To avoid penalties, you must speak with me in advance if you anticipate handing an assignment in late due to special circumstances, such as illness or a personal/family emergency. Remember that having a lot of work to do for your other courses is not a reasonable excuse for a late assignment in this course. Unless prior arrangements have been made or you present a medical/legal note explaining why your assignment has been handed in late, points will be deducted. No unexplained late assignments will be accepted after they are 7 days late. All requests for extensions should be made in person or, if you are unable to attend class or office hours, by phone. Email requests for extensions will not be acknowledged. No late assignments will be accepted after the last day of classes. Late assignments will receive a grade only (no written comments).

Grade definitions as suggested by the University of Alaska Fairbanks:

NOTE: In order to earn credit for ENGL 601, you must complete all of the above requirements. This course will **not** be graded on a curve.

Grading standards will follow UAF guidelines. Grading will be used within the following ranges:

Grade	%	GPA
A	95-100%	4.0
A-	90-94 %	3.7
B+	87-89 %	3.3
B	83-86 %	3
B-	80-82 %	2.7
C+	77-79 %	2.3
C	73-76 %	2
C-	70-72 %	1.7
D+	67-69 %	1.3
D	63-66 %	1
D-	60-62 %	0.7
F	59 % and below	0

Office hours and emailing

I keep 3 office hours per week, listed at the top of this syllabus and online at our course website. If they do not fit in with your schedule, I would be happy to schedule an appointment with you. Please allow at least 24 hours to respond to all emails.

Internet access

You will need to have continuous Internet access and your UAF e-mail account for this course: I will be providing course readings online through Blackboard. The complete course syllabus and schedule will be available online at <http://lectureguru.net>

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offence and will not be tolerated in this course. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the **UAF standards** and policies concerning plagiarism. Students are advised to consult the **UAF Student Code of Conduct** for the rules regarding Registration, Voluntary Withdrawals, Academic Misconduct including **plagiarism**, and appeals.

Voluntary Withdrawal

Friday, March 26, 2010 is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses that begin in January 2010.

Classroom courtesies

- All students are expected to maintain a courteous atmosphere in the classroom treating each other with respect.
- Cell phones and pagers must be turned off before the class starts.
- Laptops will not be allowed and must be turned off and stored away before the class starts.

Students with special needs

Students with documented disabilities requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams (e.g., private space) or during lectures/laboratories (e.g., access to volunteer note-takers) are encouraged to contact the Coordinator of Disability Services, 208 Whitaker, at 474-5655 or 474-1827 (TTY) to discuss appropriate options. All information about disability is confidential.

Class schedule and readings

Week 1 – Introduction

Week 2 – Psychoanalysis: Freud

Freud, "The Structure of the Unconscious" (*online*)

Freud, "The Dream-work" from *The Interpretation of Dreams (The Critical Tradition*, pp. 500-509)

Freud, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming" (*The Critical Tradition*, pp. 509-514)

Freud, "The Uncanny" (*The Critical Tradition*, pp.514-533)

Week 3 – Psychoanalysis: Freud

Freud, "The Development of the Libido and the Sexual Organization" (*online access*)

Freud, "Femininity" (*online access*)

Freud, "Medusa's Head" (*The Critical Tradition*, p. 533)

Joyce, "Evelyn" (*online access*)

Week 4 – Structuralism I

Ferdinand De Saussure, "Nature of the Linguistic Sign" (*The Critical Tradition*, pages 842-845)

Ferdinand De Saussure, "Binary Oppositions" (*The Critical Tradition*, pages 845-851)

Roman Jakobson, "Two Types of Linguistic Disturbances" (online)
Roman Jakobson, "Linguistic and Poetics" (The Critical Tradition, pages 852-858)

Week 5 – Structuralism II

Vladimir Propp, "Fairy Tale Transformations" (The Critical Tradition, pages 785-798)
Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth" (The Critical Tradition, pages 860-868)
Umberto Eco, "The Myth of Superman" (The Critical Tradition, pages 950-961)

Week 6 – Lacan's Psychoanalytic Theory

Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage" (*The Critical Tradition*, p. 1123-1128)
Jacques Lacan, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious" (*The Critical Tradition*, p. 1129-1148)
Jacques Lacan, "The Meaning of the Phallus" (*The Critical Tradition*, p. 1149-1155)
"Lacan" (*The Critical Tradition*, p. 1111-1116)

Week 7 – Spring Break

Week 8 – Lacan's Psychoanalytic Theory (continued), Roland Barthes

Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" (The Critical Tradition, pages 874-877)

Week 9 – Literature and Revolution

Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" (The Critical Tradition, pages 778-779 and 783-784)
Leon Trotsky, "5. The Formalist School of Poetry and Marxism",
"6. Proletarian Culture and Proletarian Art" from *Literature and Revolution* ([online](#))

Week 10 – Marx

Karl Marx, "Chapter 1: Commodity" from *Capital* ([online](#))

Week 11 – Marxist Criticism

Louis Althusser, from *Ideological State Apparatuses* (The Critical Tradition, pages 1264-1271)
Raymond Williams, from *Marxism and Literature* (The Critical Tradition, pages 1272-1289)
Fredric Jameson, from *The Political Unconscious* (The Critical Tradition, pages 1290-1306)

Week 12 – Space, Subjectivity, Power

Michel Foucault, "Panopticism" (click here to access the text online)
Michel Foucault, from *The History of Sexuality* (The Critical Tradition, pages 1627-1636)
Michel De Certeau, "Walking in the City" (The Critical Tradition, pages 1343-1356)

Week 13 – Feminism

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship" (The Critical Tradition, pages 1532-1544)
Teresa De Lauretis, "Desire in Narrative" pages 109-122, 131-134 ([online version](#))
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" ([online version](#))
Virginia Woolf, "Chapter 27: Professions for Women" ([online version](#))

Week 14 – Theories of Popular Culture

Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (The Critical Tradition, pages 1172-1179)
Slavoj Žižek, "Courtly Love, or, Woman as Thing" (The Critical Tradition, pages 1181-1197)

Week 15 – Queer theory

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Between Men" (The Critical Tradition, pages 1684-1686)

Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" (The Critical Tradition, pages 1707-1718)

Michael Warner and Lauren Berlant, "Sex in Public" (The Critical Tradition, pages 1722-1734)

Week 16 – Postcolonial theory

Chinua Achebe, "The Image of Africa" (The Critical Tradition, pages 1783-1790)

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "Europhonism, Universities, and the Magic Fountain" (The Critical Tradition, pages 1821-1828)

Dialogue between Frederic Jameson and Aijaz Ahmad (The Critical Tradition, pages 1829-1836)