

theoretical texts. This course should prepare you for continued study of critical theory, and for more advanced work in literature and the humanities.

Because reading is an interactive, interpretive endeavor, responding to the material with regular comments and questions through an online forum will be a basic requirement of the course. The online medium of this course is built to be flexible. Virtually all work is completed online. You are never required to attend any session in person, with the exception of the Midterm and Final Exams, which must be taken in person at an approved Testing Center. To succeed you will need to actively participate and submit all work in accord with assigned deadlines set for a Monday/Wednesday schedule.

To do well in this course, you'll need to be self-motivated, well-organized, and focused. The work required of you will be challenging, but the diversity of texts that we will encounter together—plus the skills you will acquire in reading and responding to critical theory—should make this course highly rewarding and (I hope) enjoyable.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students should demonstrate a solid understanding of a wide range of ideas, questions, and concepts involved in critical theory.
- Students should demonstrate their abilities to think critically using written academic argument, analysis, critique, and evaluation.
- Students should be able to analyze and interpret the texts by applying the concepts, questions, and paradigms contained in class discussions and readings.
- Students should be able to formulate illuminating and persuasive claims in their essays, discussion postings, and exam responses. These ideas should reflect a solid internalization of the course material.
- Students should be able to use textual evidence (via quotation, analysis, and documentation of pertinent passages) to ground their arguments and back up their claims.
- Students should be able to express their ideas in clear, logical, organized, concise, and persuasive ways, in both written and oral forms.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Please be sure to get the **EXACT** editions of the texts indicated below—really. We need to be “on the same page”—literally—for discussions and writing assignments! Check ISBN numbers to make sure you have the right edition.

Books

- *Literary Theory: An Anthology* by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. (Note: **SECOND EDITION!**) ISBN: 1-4051-0696-4
- *Beginning Theory* by Peter Barry (Note: **THIRD EDITION!**). ISBN: 978-0-7190-7927-6
- *Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* by David Macey. ISBN: 0-140-51369-8

A Note on Books

- Please prepare to dedicate a lot of time to reading for this class. To keep from falling behind, plan to **read every day**. It will be worth it—I promise! Whenever possible, use the time between Wednesday and Monday sessions to read ahead for the upcoming week—otherwise you will have A LOT to read on Tuesdays between sessions!

- Because this is a course centered on the attentive reading of theoretical **texts**, we will be paying close attention to actual **words**, and not just to concepts. Keep your texts in front of you when you're at the computer taking this class. In my lessons I will refer to them regularly.

Films

- Ashutosh Gowariker (dir.), *Lagaan*
- *Star Trek: Next Generation*, Season 5 Episode 2: “Darmok”
- Tarsem Singh (dir.), *The Fall*
- The Wachowskis and Tom Tykwer (dirs.), *Cloud Atlas*

A Note on Films

- **All of these films are available to view streaming for free through the Marriott Library** (with one important exception*). **I will post each film's link on Canvas.** Use a campus computer if your own connection is slow. Be sure to watch entire films on your own before class on the days we plan to discuss them. Take good notes.
- Please note that some of these films are rated R. See my note on “Potentially Offensive Course Material” below if this concerns you. We will also watch several short films and video-clips, including (time permitting) at least one episode from Charlie Brooker's television series *Black Mirror*. We will watch selections from other films as well. Please note that some of these films (including selections from the theorist Slavoj Zizek's wonderfully deranged film *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*) contain mature content.
- *The one exception to “free streaming” this semester is the *Star Trek: Next Generation* episode “Darmok,” for which the library was not able to secure streaming rights. You will need to stream it through Netflix or Amazon (free through Amazon Prime, approximately \$2.00 rental fee otherwise), or via some other service.

Electronic Resources

- Some assigned readings will only be available electronically. **These readings are just as important as the textbooks. I recommend that you print out electronic selections, read them well in advance of class, and mark them up just like you would a regular text.**
- Electronic selections are free and accessible online on Canvas through <http://go.utah.edu>. To make sure we are “on the same page,” be sure to use these exact versions of these texts, not others you might find elsewhere!
- I will post assignment updates and handouts on Canvas as we go along. **Always be sure to check Canvas regularly for updates, minimally each Monday and Wednesday by 1 p.m., which is the time by which that day's lesson will be posted.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Diagnostic Essay.** To help you prepare for graded writing in this course, for your first assignment I will ask you to write one short (~3-4 page) essay so I can provide feedback on your writing. This essay will be evaluated but will not be graded for content. To receive credit, however, you must respond to the actual question asked and use proper grammar, spelling, documentation, and reasoned argumentation. Treat this short paper as practice for the longer one—this way I can give you pertinent feedback that will increase your chances at success in later writing for the course.
- **Full-Length Critical Analysis.** One full-length critical analysis will be required (5-7 pages). This paper will be graded for both content and form on the basis of your demonstrated understanding of the material, quality of the analysis and argument, clarity of expression, organization, and appropriate use of textual support for your claims.
- **Midterm and Final Exam.** The Midterm and Final Exam will be short answer, essay, and passage identification/analysis on terms, concepts, and texts read or discussed in class throughout the

semester. The Midterm will be held Week 11 of the semester (week of 11/4). The Final Exam will be held during Finals Week (week of 12/16). **Both exams will be proctored and will require your physical presence at an approved Testing Center. Testing centers include Marriott Library and other approved proctoring locations, including locations off campus – [see more details here at Uonline](#).** There will be a multi-day window for taking each exam. I will post more details on Canvas as these dates approach.

- **Regular postings to our online discussion forum.** Because this class does not meet in a traditional classroom, it instead **requires** your active and regular participation through online discussions. **Participation in online discussion IS attendance in this class.** For each session you will post a comment/insight/question about the assigned texts which you will share online with your classmates to help spark further discussion. You will also post responses to prompts I give in the assigned lesson for that session. In addition, you will be required to respond to other students' observations and tackle other students' questions. **Please take this participation requirement seriously. There is a one-point penalty for each posting that you fail to submit (!).** If regular, active participation with the rest of the class on the online forum poses a problem for you, then this is probably not the right class for you.
- **Due dates.** Assignments are due at 1:00 p.m. on the dates indicated (assignments are automatically time-stamped). If this is not a convenient time for you to submit work, please submit it early. (No specifically assigned time will be ideal for everyone. 1:00 p.m. is merely the official cutoff time, not the time you actually need to submit your work.) **Important: I offer a 12-hour grace period on all assignments, with no penalty whatsoever in that window. That means that you have till 1 a.m. of the following day to turn in required material.** However, beyond that, no late work will be evaluated unless you clear this with me for very good reasons such as documentable medical emergencies. If you miss an assignment, please always email me to explain why.
- **Formatting.** College-level writing and presentation are expected throughout. All class assignments must be typed and spell-checked. (Check spelling using both the computer and your own brain: meditate on the slogan “The spell checker is hear to stay” as a reminder of your own crucial role!) Proofread carefully before submitting—I suggest reading your work out loud to detect rough spots. Use an appropriately-sized font (12 point font in Times New Roman works well). Use 1” margins on all sides, double-space, and always include a title and page numbers. Be sure to always include your name with your work! For all essays I require that you use proper MLA guidelines to format your work and document your sources (I will post some helpful guides on Canvas). Improperly formatted work will be downgraded, so please take formatting seriously!
- **File Formats.** I use MS Word’s “comment” feature to mark up your papers with my responses. As a result, I can only grade work that is submitted in the proper file format. All papers **must** be saved in MS Word format—.doc or .docx. MS Word is available on all campus computers. If you do not have MS Word on your own personal computer, [the U of U Office of Software Licensing offers Microsoft Office for FREE](#), or you can download free OpenOffice software that lets you save in MS Word format: see <http://www.openoffice.org/>
- **One Final Reminder on General Participation.** Again, this online course is discussion-based and highly interactive, so **your active, regular participation in online discussions is required in order for you to succeed. Please read that sentence again. Each semester I get a few students who, no matter how much I remind them, somehow still consider discussion “optional” and their final grade suffers greatly for it. I don’t want that to happen to you!** Although this course is conducted online, it is still required that you be “fully present” (albeit virtually) and genuinely involved on a regular basis. Please treat the class as a critically-grounded dialog between you, me, and other students. I always enjoy reading the engaged responses of students!

Course Assignment Values**Class Participation: -1 point for each missing posting to Discussions (!)****Diagnostic Essay:** 15 points**Full-length Critical Analysis:** 30 points**Midterm Exam:** 25 points**Final Exam:** 30 points**Total points possible: 100****Letter Grade Values**

94-100	A	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	00-59	E
90-93	A-	84-86	B	74-76	C	64-66	D		
		80-83	B-	70-73	C-	60-63	D-		

A Critical Class Resource—the University Writing Center at the Marriott Library

The University Writing Center helps students improve their writing. You can make an appointment to meet with a tutor for one-on-one sessions to help you work through the writing process and polish your drafts. **Sessions are free of charge and you can meet as often as you need.** To make an appointment, visit their website at <http://www.writingcenter.utah.edu> or call 801-587-9122. The Writing Center is located on the second floor of the Marriott Library just above the café. **Please make regular use of the Writing Center this semester!**

Purdue OWL writing resources

Improve your writing—and your grade! Read over the writing and punctuation guidelines posted at the **Purdue OWL website:** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

COURSE POLICIES**Mutual Respect**

Because this class centers on your responses to literary texts, spirited discussion (and even outright disagreement!) is encouraged. However, disruption and disrespect are a different story entirely—please keep discussions on-topic and be courteous to your instructor and to your fellow classmates.

Potentially Offensive Course Material

Critical engagement with literary, theoretical, and other cultural texts often entails encountering material from outside an individual's philosophical, religious, political, or personal comfort zones. **Please be advised that this course may contain such material.** (Such material may include—but is not limited to—obscenity, profanity, representations of sexuality, violence, religion, anti-religion, politics, encounters with controversial issues in the media, etc.) Students who feel that this may be a matter of concern should consult with the instructor *immediately after the first class session.*

Accommodations and the Americans with Disabilities Act

The *Americans with Disabilities Act* requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact the instructor or teaching assistant of this course **at the beginning of the semester** to discuss any such accommodations for this course.

Incompletes

The English Program offers Incompletes only under extraordinary circumstances.

Course Withdrawals

See this semester's *Class Schedule* for deadlines and procedures.

Plagiarism Policy (read very, very, very carefully – then re-read it)

- Rarely a semester goes by where I don't have a student plagiarism case, and it depresses me beyond belief. Plagiarism consists of using the work of someone else and passing it off as your own. As you might guess, plagiarism has become a big problem at the university due to the Internet. **You can avoid this problem by using ONLY the assigned texts and class notes as the basis for your responses. I expect you to draw from (and cite!) the sources ASSIGNED FOR OUR CLASS. DO NOT just Google or Wiki for answers—I want you to engage closely with the *assigned* texts.**
- **Even if you plagiarize by accident you will still be held accountable, and the penalty is not pretty! Standard academic sanctions for plagiarism are (minimally) a failing grade (E) for the course in question (!).** See sections II and V of the Student Code for details.
- **In the age of the Internet it is easy to cheat—and just as easy to get caught cheating.** Be sure to document all your sources properly when you write for this class! Whenever you use the ideas or words of a source, provide an in-text citation by indicating the page number in parentheses after you use that source. Also include the author's last name unless the context already makes it clear.
- **Quotation.** Here are two examples of a properly documented **quotation** of our assigned textbooks using MLA in-text citation:

According to Michel Foucault, “panopticism constituted the technique, universally widespread, of coercion” (565).

Peter Barry points out that Foucault influenced New Historicism because he “sees ‘discursive practices’ as frequently a reinforcement of dominant ideology” (180).

- **Paraphrase.** When **paraphrasing** someone else's words and ideas, **you must still always cite the source** in parentheses and **use your own words and your own sentence structure**—not the source's. Failure to follow these requirements is plagiarism. Here is an example of proper paraphrasing:

Foucault was a major influence on New Historicism because he understood discourse as expressing and reinforcing dominant ideologies (Barry 180).

- **Works Cited.** At the end of your paper you would list these sources in your Works Cited page, alphabetically by author, using the “hanging indent” feature (find it under options for “Paragraph”):

Works Cited

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: an Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.

Foucault, Michel. “Discipline and Punish.” *Literary Theory: an Anthology*. Ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004. Print.

- If you are having trouble with this course, please speak with me! I'm sure we can work something out. Cheating is not the answer.

A final note for students

Successful students in courses like this one typically demonstrate a high degree of intellectual curiosity and literary/critical/philosophical interest, as well as an ability to respond to feedback from their instructor. Please consider our online classroom as a community space in which we all share an intellectual adventure. I hope you already have or will develop a sense of responsibility to and respect for other students by sharing your thoughts, insights, and confusions. **Most important: I want you to do well in this course!** I'm here for you. Please let me know how I can help.

Thanks! I look forward to working with you this semester!

Alf

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Here is a basic overview of some of the major landmarks for the course—it is subject to change. **This is only a rough guide; it is NOT a list of assignments.** Because each course moves at a somewhat different pace, I will need to adjust the schedule somewhat as we go along. **Detailed reading and writing assignments will be provided online on Canvas well in advance of all due dates.**

WEEK ONE

- **INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS**
- **WHAT IS THEORY? WHAT IS LITERATURE?**

WEEK TWO

- **ART and LITERATURE as IMITATIVE REPRESENTATION: *MIMESIS* vs. *POIESIS***

WEEK TWO - THREE

- **LITERATURE as VALUE-CONTENT: LIBERAL HUMANISM**

WEEK THREE - FOUR

- **LITERATURE as DEVICE: FORMALISMS**

WEEK FIVE

- **LITERATURE and the READER: PHENOMENOLOGY and READER RESPONSE**
- **FILM: *The Fall***

WEEK SIX

- **LITERATURE and LINGUISTIC SIGNIFICATION: STRUCTURALISM**
- **FILM: *Star Trek: The Next Generation*: “Darmok”**

WEEK SEVEN

- **LITERATURE AND THE FREE PLAY OF SIGNIFICATION: DECONSTRUCTION AND POSTSTRUCTURALISM**
- **DIAGNOSTIC MINI-ESSAY DUE**

WEEK EIGHT

- **FALL BREAK – no class sessions**

WEEK NINE

- **LITERATURE and POSTMODERNISM**

WEEK TEN

- **LITERATURE and the UNCONSCIOUS: PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY**

WEEK ELEVEN

- **LITERATURE and GENDER: FEMINISMS**
- **MIDTERM EXAM (taken in person at an approved testing center)**

WEEK TWELVE

- **LITERATURE, IDENTITY, and PERFORMANCE: LESBIAN/GAY CRITICISM and QUEER THEORY**
- **FILM: *Cloud Atlas***

WEEK THIRTEEN

- **LITERATURE, IDEOLOGY and MATERIAL CONDITIONS: MARXISM and CULTURAL MATERIALISM**

WEEK FOURTEEN

- **LITERATURE, SOCIETY and POWER: NEW HISTORICISM**

WEEK FIFTEEN

- **LITERATURE, EMPIRE, and the “OTHER”: POSTCOLONIAL THEORY**
- **FILM: *Lagaan***

WEEK SIXTEEN – FINAL WEEK OF THE SEMESTER

- **LITERATURE and THE MORE-THAN-HUMAN WORLD: ECOCRITICISM**
- **FULL-LENGTH CRITICAL ESSAY DUE**

WEEK SEVENTEEN

- **COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM (taken in person at an approved testing center)**