

SYLLABUS

Literary Analysis and Interpretation

In this course you will explore the various schools of modern literary criticism. In other words: you will become acquainted with the various ways in which scholars have tried to interpret literature, and will learn how to read texts using the tools they have developed. Readings include literary texts from all over the globe, read both comparatively and in the context of a textbook that will introduce you to various types of literary thought. Through this process, you will learn new ways of reading – and writing – about literature.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Chekhov, Anton. *Anton Chekhov's Short Stories*. W. W. Norton, 1979.
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. Penguin Books, 2007.
- Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis and Other Stories*. Dover, 1996.
- Ousmane, Sembene. *Xala*. Lawrence Hill & Co., 1997.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today – A User-Friendly Guide*. Garland Publishing, 1999.
- Custom Courseware, entitled WL200: Literary Analysis and Interpretation, available at the Surrey Campus Bookstore.

The Tyson is a textbook that provides a general overview of the “schools” of modern criticism/literary analysis; we will read most of it. We will apply some of our new skills to the Chekhov, Fitzgerald, Ousmane and Kafka, as well as to the other texts found in the custom reader for the class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

You are required to have done your reading for each class meeting, in full. This ensures that, as a class, we can have a lively and informed discussion on the works assigned. While I will take up some of class time with lecture, discussion is a major component of this course. Class **participation** is therefore a must. You are responsible for participating *actively*. Your class participation grade is based largely on your *actual verbal participation* in the classroom (i.e. what you say out loud, which should be both pertinent to the discussion and stated at the appropriate time). Speak up, and respect others’ rights to do so as well! It not only affects your grade, but makes the class much more productive and enjoyable. I am confident that we, as a group, can create an environment where everyone will feel comfortable contributing. **Note:** you will also be contributing ideas through **WebCT** prior to most class meetings – this also factors into your participation grade.

Here are a few pointers on how to participate successfully in class discussion, whether oral or written. The student who *consistently* makes the effort to contribute according to these guidelines will receive a grade in the A to B range. A C grade, FYI, is fairly consistent participation that shows a basic understanding of the readings and other assignments.

- If you are usually comfortable with speaking in class, then choose the moments you wish to speak carefully; more is not necessarily better. On the flipside, if you tend to be a bit quiet, don’t necessarily wait until the opportunity to speak is handed to you.

Be proactive. Are you shy? Prepare some comments ahead of class and read them out loud instead. Come talk to me if you'd like some help.

- Sometimes I will give you reading questions ahead of time. Sometimes I'll leave you to your own devices. In either case, as you read, TAKE NOTES. Don't just breeze through. You'll be surprised at how many ideas you'll have when you look back over what you wrote down. Use these notes to prepare some comments for class.
- When you speak, state your point concisely and stay on the point under discussion. If tangential perspectives emerge, as they invariably will, write them down so you can return to the issue later. Of course, if the discussion seems ready to move in a different direction, then please proceed. I will do my best to keep us on track, but part of that responsibility is yours, too.
- Support your points on the basis of the readings. That means citing exact page numbers, reading short passages aloud, identifying key terms/issues, and/or accurately summarizing in addition to stating your idea/asking your question. This last bullet point is *especially* important for this class!

There will be a **midterm**, which will test you extensively on terminology, as well as your overall grasp of the literary and theoretical material we've covered up to that point. You can expect ID, short answer and essay questions. There will also be a **final** in a similar format, which will test you on what we have covered since the midterm.

You will also write **four short papers**, or case analyses, on assigned topics – each three pages long. I will offer a total of *five* opportunities (i.e. topics) throughout the semester – you may choose which *four* you write on.

Don't forget **attendance, at both lecture and tutorial**: needless to say, your punctual arrival and regular presence in class is key to your success in this course. If you aren't here, you can't participate; chronic absenteeism will have a significant negative impact on your final grade.

Lastly, classroom etiquette: you are welcome to bring drinks, but please do not eat in class. Also, turn off your cell phones. Finally, leave your laptop and other devices at home or in your bag; bring a notebook and pen instead (AND the texts we are discussing that day). We need to see your face!

GRADING:

Participation	20%
Paper 1	7.5%
Paper 2	7.5%
Paper 3	7.5%
Paper 4	7.5%
Midterm	25%
Final	25%

SCHEDULE (subject to change):

<i>Week 1</i>	<i>Beginnings</i>
September 4	Lecture: What is literary analysis, anyway? Tutorial: How do <i>you</i> read?
<i>Week 2</i>	<i>The Death of the Author: New Criticism</i>
September 11	Lecture: The New Critics and Close Reading Tutorial: <i>The Great Gatsby</i> as Grecian Urn Post to WebCT: On Tyson's treatment of <i>The Great Gatsby</i> Reading: Tyson, Chapters 1 and 5; <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
<i>Week 3</i>	<i>The Death of the Author, cont'd: Reader Response</i>
September 18	Lecture: Empowering the Reader Tutorial: Interpretive Communities Post to WebCT: Response to <i>The Great Gatsby</i> Reading: Tyson, Chapter 6, pp. 153-195; Fish, "Is There A Text in This Class?" (in reader) Topic 1
<i>Week 4</i>	<i>Psychoanalytic Criticism</i>
September 25	Lecture: Literature and Human Feeling Tutorial: Gregor's Family Post to WebCT: Response to Tyson Chapter 2 Reading: Tyson, Chapter 2, Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"
<i>Week 5</i>	<i>Marxist Criticism</i>
October 2	Lecture: Art Within the Economic System Tutorial: Devi's workers reinterpret Marx Post to WebCT: Gregor Samsa and Marx Reading: Tyson, Chapter 3, pp. 49-79; Devi, "The Funeral Wailer" (in reader) Topic 2

<i>Week 6</i>	<i>Feminist Criticism</i>
October 9	Lecture: Women Reading, Women Writing Tutorial: Feminist <i>ikebana</i> ? Post to WebCT: Is Devi a feminist? Reading: Tyson, Chapter 4, pp. 81-116; Okamoto, "A Floral Pageant"; Gilbert & Gubar, excerpt from <i>The Madwoman in the Attic</i> (these two are in reader)
<i>Week 7</i>	
October 16	Lecture: Review Post to WebCT: Questions about Midterm Tutorial: Midterm
<i>Week 8</i>	<i>Structuralist Criticism</i>
October 23	Lecture: Grouping texts, finding patterns Tutorial: Restructuring the folktale Post to WebCT: Impressions of various Bluebeards Reading: Tyson, Chapter 7, pp. 197-240; Atwood, "Bluebeard's Egg"; Tatar, "Bluebeard" versions (in reader)
<i>Week 9</i>	<i>Structuralist Criticism, cont'd</i>
October 30	Lecture: Genre and narrative form Tutorial: Narrative structure and reliability Post to WebCT: How does Chekhov address genre? Reading: Chekhov, "The man in a case"; "Gooseberries"; "About love" Topic 3
<i>Week 10</i>	<i>Poststructuralist/Deconstructive Criticism</i>
November 6	Lecture: Deconstruction and Postmodernity Tutorial: Deconstructing Narrative Post to WebCT: Where ARE those missing heels? Reading: Tyson, Chapter 8, pp. 241-276; Tawada, "Missing Heels" (on reserve at library) Topic 4
<i>Week 11</i>	<i>Postcolonial Criticism and beyond...?</i>
November 13	Lecture: Postcolonialism and New Historicism Tutorial: Bhabha close reading Post to WebCT: Bhabha questions/response Reading: Tyson, Chapter 12, pp. 417-449; Bhabha, "The Commitment to Theory" (in reader)
<i>Week 12</i>	

November 20	Lecture: Hybridity or Double Consciousness? Tutorial: Postcolonial Identities in <i>Xala</i> Post to WebCT: Response to <i>Xala</i> Reading: Sembene, <i>Xala</i> Topic 5
<i>Week 13</i>	
November 27	Lecture: Review Tutorial: What use is literary analysis? Post to WebCT: Questions about Final Reading: Tyson, Chapter 12, pp. 423-429
December ??	Final Exam (not comprehensive)