

WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY
Plainview Campus

School of Languages and Literature **Note: This is a draft. The final syllabus will probably contain changes.**

Wayland Baptist University Mission Statement: Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

Course Name: ENGL 5307 VC01 -- Literary Theory

Term and Year: Spring 2014 (11-week term)

Instructor:

Dr. Steve Michael

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I can best be reached via email.

Office Hours during regular Plainview Campus 14-week semesters:

Monday: 7:30-8:00 • 10:00-1:00	Also by appointment
Tuesday: 8:55-9:25 • 12:15-1:15	Hours subject to change
Wednesday: 7:30-8:00 • 10:00-1:00	
Thursday: 8:55-9:25 • 12:15-1:15	
Friday: 7:30-8:00	

Class Meeting Time and Location: online, through Blackboard

Catalog Description: A study of literary theory and criticism. Required of all MA in English students.

Prerequisite: graduate standing or final-term senior meeting requirements of non-degree seeking post-baccalaureate student

Required Textbook and Resources:

Required Textbooks:

Bressler, Charles E. *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. 5th ed. Boston: Longman, 2011.

Richter, David H. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford-St. Martin's, 2007.

e-editions acceptable if available

Required Resources:

You will need a reliable and secure computer connection, as well as access to software capable of producing and saving documents in Microsoft Word .doc or .docx formats; software capable of reading documents produced in .html and .pdf formats; backup media such as USB flash drive, recordable CDs, or some other external destination.

The course will take place entirely online. You must have a functional Blackboard account and be able to access the WBU library website, as well as articles and other material provided through proprietary databases available via the WBU library website. You also must have an active WBU email address. Your WBU email address is the only way that I will contact you. You are strongly encouraged to visit the Blackboard login page and [test your browser](#) for Blackboard compatibility, as well as take the [Blackboard Tutorial](#) if you are not familiar with how the service works. If you have problems with Blackboard or your WBU email, please use the WBU Support Contacts available on the Blackboard login page.

Course Outcome Competencies: Upon the conclusion of this course, students actively engaged in learning will be able to (1) discuss the characteristics of at least four general schools of literary theory; (2) differentiate among the

various approaches to reading a literary text, including both old and new historicism, formalism, structuralism, semiotics, feminist theory, reader-response theory, and cultural materialism; (3) apply at least three reading strategies to a given literary text; (4) demonstrate comprehension of graduate-level scholarship with at least one theory in relation to a literary text; and (5) articulate this comprehension both orally (or in reasonably comparable online format) and in a research essay. The more the student puts into the course, the higher his or her outcome competencies will be.

Attendance Requirements / Decorum and Makeup Policies: Students are expected to participate in the class and demonstrate regular attendance. This applies without exception. Participation and attendance will be determined through message board discussions and other activities. When a student shows a lack of participation considered by the instructor to be excessive, the instructor will so advise the student. Any student who misses 25 percent or more of the class assignments will receive a grade of F in the course. Students are required to have computer and Internet access for the course. Additional participation policies for each course, as defined by the instructor in the course syllabus, are considered a part of the University's attendance policy. Makeup work will be offered at the instructor's discretion and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any authorized makeups must be completed within the time limit set by the instructor; otherwise, the makeup grade will be zero.

Disability Statement: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291-3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING CRITERIA:

Outcome competencies will be assessed in the following ways: exercises, Blackboard participation, short position papers, preparatory work for a research paper, a research paper, and a final examination. **All written assignments must be submitted in electronic form through Blackboard on their due dates. Late work will be penalized 10 points per 24-hour period and will not be accepted after the third 24-hour period.**

Short Position Papers

Every time we discuss a new theory or reading strategy, we will consider the theory/strategy in relation to a primary literary text (usually a poem or short story). The Web addresses for these literary texts will be provided in your Schedule. For example, when we take up Formalism and New Criticism, you will need to read not only the assigned material in your textbooks but also John Keats's poem "Ode to a Nightingale."

When we come to a new theory or reading strategy, you will have an opportunity to write a brief (2 to 4 double-spaced typed pages) position paper in which you analyze the assigned primary text as if you were a member of the given theoretical school. For example, if we were using Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* as a primary text during our exploration of Formalism, you could locate certain terms or passages in an excerpt from the novel to show how Sterne practices "de-familiarization." If we were using John Donne's "The Canonization," you could (as Cleanth Brooks does) interpret the poem by examining its paradoxes and "tensions." Pretend to be from the school of theory. Avoid dwelling on the theory's limitations. Instead, show how it is the "right" way to read a text.

You must write three position papers, and each paper must use a different theory/strategy. However, it is up to you which three theories/strategies you use. For example, if you would rather not write a position paper about Formalism, you can wait until we get to Structuralism and write about that. Beware, though: You cannot wait until we get to Deconstruction and write about something we did earlier, such as Formalism. Once we have only three theories remaining to study, you must write about those remaining theories because you have only three paper opportunities left. **The position papers are due on the dates when we begin the next theory/strategy.**

Here is some good news. Even though you must read the primary literary texts I provide (because we will talk about them when we come to the various theories/strategies), you don't necessarily have to use them in your position papers. You may decide that a poem or story or excerpt from a novel that you've read elsewhere would work better for you. That's fine. You also have considerable latitude in the way you use the primary literary texts. You may wish to use a different text for each theory, or you may prefer to use the same text for all three papers. You also have the option to use only part of a primary text instead of the whole thing. It's up to you. Once again, however, you are still responsible for reading the assigned texts. You may use outside sources if you wish, but none are required for the position paper assignments.

There's even more good news. You can revise one of the position papers for an updated grade. This is optional. You don't have to do this if you're happy with the original grade. The revision, however, should be a real revision

with 1 to 2 pages of new content. Merely inserting missing commas or performing other cosmetic editing will not be sufficient for a higher grade (and it's possible to write a worse paper than the original, so keep that in mind).

Preparatory Work for Research Paper

(See Research Paper assignment below.) During Week 7, you will need to submit a document containing two things: (1) a prospectus of about 500-750 words explaining what you plan to do in your research paper; (2) an annotated bibliography consisting of brief (about five sentences each) summaries of at least five secondary sources you intend to use in your research paper. The summaries should be written as complete paragraphs that present, objectively and in your own words, the thesis and supporting points of each of your secondary sources. Each summary should be headed by an MLA-formatted Works Cited entry. The entries/summaries should be arranged in alphabetical order by the source authors' last names. I will evaluate the clarity and focus of your prospectus, the appropriateness of your plan, the quality and balance of your source material, and how well you understand and present the theses and main points of your sources.

Research Paper

From among the primary literary texts assigned in the Schedule, pick one that you haven't used before. Or pick a favorite text of your own you haven't written about. Use at least five secondary sources (quality books and journal articles), but also use at least one reading from Richter. In your essay, discuss what kinds of reading strategies the secondary source authors are using in their discussions about the primary text; then use the Richter reading as a base for arguing that your strategy is superior or at least as good as the others. If a secondary author is using the same or a similar strategy, enlist him/her on your side. The Research Paper must meet the following requirements:

- **Length** -- 6 to 8 double-spaced typed pages (about 2400 to 3200 words)
- **Secondary Source Requirements** -- You must use at least 5 secondary sources. "Secondary" means sources that somehow comment on or clarify the issue you are discussing. These sources must come from somewhere other than your textbooks. The work you are writing about does not count as one of the secondary sources. **You must have at least two articles from academic journals. Do not use reviews or study aids as sources.**
- **Richter Assigned Reading** -- You must use one of the assigned readings from the Richter textbook as an anchoring influence for your application of a theory or reading strategy.
- **Presentation of Evidence** -- You must cite and analyze evidence from your sources. The object of citation is not to "throw in" evidence but to use it and comment on it when you need to support one of your own points. Be sure to analyze quoted evidence from the primary text and the Richter assigned reading, not just your secondary sources.
- **Documentation** -- You must use MLA documentation style. See the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed., or one of the following websites, for assistance:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/mla>

How I Will Grade -- The essay will be evaluated in light of the following criteria: (1) control and responsible development of discussion; (2) presentation of evidence from the primary text and Richter reading as well as from secondary sources (let me know that you understand how to use summary, paraphrase, and quotation properly); (3) analysis of, and ability to draw conclusions from, this evidence; (4) clarity and polish of writing; (5) proper use of MLA documentation style.

The Research Paper must be submitted during the week stipulated in the schedule and will not be accepted after that week. Students are at all times responsible for their materials and are required to keep copies of their work in progress. Please see me if you need assistance or clarification.

Exercises

Each week, you will be required to complete exercises that have a bearing on various topics. These are hands-on activities intended to strengthen your understanding of the material discussed in the course. The requirements of each exercise will be gone over in class and/or on Blackboard.

Blackboard Participation

Each week, I will present at least one topic for discussion on the Blackboard forum for this course. You are expected to participate helpfully and meaningfully in each discussion. You may be asked to read outside articles in preparation for these discussions. Please be sure that you can access the proprietary databases, such as JSTOR, in the "Articles & Databases" area of the WBU library website in order to view these articles.

Final Exam

The final exam will be in essay-question (and perhaps short-answer) form and will be evaluated according to the following criteria: (1) how well you know the content of the reading assignments, lectures, discussions, and any pertinent supplementary material; and (2) how well you organize, develop, and express your thoughts. The exam will be comprehensive, and there will be no makeup for it. Students are expected to arrange well in advance to take the final exam at the officially scheduled time (see the schedule for this class).

Grading / Help: (See Grade Distribution table below.) My grading scale is as follows: 90-92/A-, 93-97/A, 98-100/A+; 80-82/B-, 83-87/B, 88-89/B+, and so forth. Anything below 60 is an F. Weighted grades are averaged according to a 100-point scale and are totaled at the end of the semester. If your total is 79.44, your course grade is a C. If your total is 79.45, your course grade is a B. I am always pleased to talk with you about your progress in the course, any difficulties or victories, or any thoughts you may have about literature and life in general.

Grade Distribution (how much grades count):

Assignment	% of Course Grade	Assignment	% of Course Grade
Blackboard Participation	5%	Preparatory Work for Research Paper	5%
Exercise Average	10%	Research Paper	25%
Position Papers	30% (10% each)	Final Exam	25%

Academic Honesty: College students—especially Wayland students—are expected to exercise scrupulous honesty in their work. No form of cheating will be tolerated. Plagiarism—intentionally or unintentionally representing another writer's words or ideas as your own—is a serious violation of academic conduct and may result in an F on a written assignment. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves immediately with university policy on academic honesty in their copies of the *Wayland Baptist University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog* and the *Student Handbook*.

Course Outline: This offering of ENGL 5307 will begin with an overview of literary criticism, commencing with Plato's ideas about poetry and extending through Matthew Arnold's prescriptive and moral notions about canonicity. Thereafter, we will explore the ideas and influences of various splinter schools of literary theory, beginning with Russian Formalism and ending with the recent phenomenon known as "post-theory." Our objectives will be to (1) understand what literary criticism and theory are and how they differ, (2) track the chronological progression of critical and theoretical thought, (3) understand the reasoning behind important modes and paradigms related to the production and reading of imaginative literature, and (4) practice using these modes and paradigms in our own discussions. Through close reading, purposeful writing, and participation in online meetings, students will acquire a functional grounding in important milestones of literary theory. See "Schedule for ENGL 5307" in this syllabus for details and a calendar of daily topics / readings / assignments. *(NB: examples, ideas, opinions, and theories presented during class meetings do not necessarily reflect the views of the instructor. Furthermore, this syllabus is a plan. Although no significant changes are anticipated, the instructor may modify the plan during the course. The requirements of the course may be altered from those appearing in the syllabus. Finally, the plan contains criteria by which the student's progress and performance in the course will be measured. These criteria may also be changed.)*

The following is a working schedule and may be altered at the instructor's discretion, although significant departures are unlikely. Students will be notified of any changes.

SCHEDULE FOR ENGLISH 5307

Week 1 - Feb. 24 - Mar. 2: Intro to Course • Criticism vs. Theory

- Assignment:
- Log in to Blackboard; test your browser; say hello on the Discussion Forum
 - Send me an email (a simple "hello") using your WBU email account
 - Complete Exercise 1
 - Required in Bressler, read pp. 1-47
 - Optional in Richter, browse Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Sidney, Shelley, Taine, Arnold, Bakhtin
 - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion

Week 2 - Mar. 3 - Mar. 9: Overview of Criticism • Spring Break starts Mar. 10 - Course resumes on Mar. 17

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 2
 - In Bressler, read chapter 3
 - In Richter, read Shklovsky (pp. 774-84), Brooks (pp. 797-99), and Wimsatt and Beardsley (pp. 810-18)
 - On Web, read John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale"
 - <http://www.bartleby.com/101/624.html>
 - <http://englishhistory.net/keats/poetry/odetoanightingale.html>
 - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion

Week 3 - Mar. 17 - Mar. 23: Formalism and New Criticism

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 3
 - In Bressler, read chapter 4
 - In Richter, read Iser (pp. 1001-15), Fish (pp. 1022-30) and Phelan (pp. 1031-34)
 - On Web, read Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery"
 - <http://www.americanliterature.com/Jackson/SS/TheLottery.html>
 - http://www.d.umn.edu/~csigler/PDF%20files/jackson_lottery.pdf
 - Consider Writing Formalist or New Criticism Position Paper on Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale"
 - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion

Week 4 - Mar. 24 - Mar. 30: Reader-Response • Due: Formalist or New Criticism Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 4
 - In Bressler, read pp. 85-105
 - In Richter, read Saussure (pp. 841-51), Lévi-Strauss (pp. 859-68), and Barthes (pp. 871-74)
 - On Web, read Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epistle 1
 - <http://oldpoetry.com/opoem/4613-Alexander-Pope-An-Essay-on-Man--Epistle-1>
 - <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2428/2428-h/2428-h.htm>
 - Consider Writing Reader-Response Position Paper on Jackson's "The Lottery"
 - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion

Week 5 - Mar. 31 - Apr. 6: Structuralism • Due: Reader-Response Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 5
 - In Bressler, read pp. 105-22
 - In Richter, read Foucault (pp. 904-14) and Derrida (required: pp. 914-26; optional: pp. 932-49)
 - On Web, read Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal"
 - <http://grammar.about.com/od/60essays/a/modpropoessay.htm>
 - <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1080/1080-h/1080-h.htm>
 - Consider Writing Structuralist Position Paper on Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epistle 1
 - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
 - Work on Research Paper

Week 6 - Apr. 7 - Apr. 13: Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction • Due: Structuralist Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 6
 - In Bressler, read chapter 7
 - In Richter, read Fetterly (pp. 1035-42) and Gilbert and Gubar (pp. 1531-44)
 - On Web, read Amy Lowell's "Patterns"
 - http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/amy_lowell/poems/19955
 - http://womenshistory.about.com/library/etext/poem1/blp_lowell_amy_patterns.htm
 - Consider Writing Deconstructionist Position Paper on Swift's "A Modest Proposal"
 - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
 - Work on Research Paper

Week 7 - Apr. 14 - 20: Feminism • Due: Deconstructionist Position Paper • Preparatory Work for Research Paper Due

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 7
 - In Bressler, read chapter 8
 - In Richter, read Williams (pp. 1272-90) and Eagleton (pp. 1307-19)
 - On Web, read James Joyce's "Araby"
 - <http://fiction.eserver.org/short/araby.html>
 - <http://www.mendeley.com/WWD/WWDaraby.txt>
 - Consider Writing Feminist Position Paper on Lowell's "Patterns"
 - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
 - Work on Research Paper

Week 8 - Apr. 21 - Apr. 27: Marxism • Due: Feminist Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 8
 - In Bressler, read chapter 9
 - In Richter, read White (pp. 1383-97) and Greenblatt (pp. 1442-47)
 - On Web, read John Donne's "The Dissolution"
 - <http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/queene2.html#Cant.%20XII>
 - <http://www.online-literature.com/edmund-spenser/faerie-queene/32/>
 - Consider Writing Marxist Position Paper on Joyce's "Araby"
 - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
 - Work on Research Paper
 - Prepare for Final Exam

Week 9- Apr. 28 - May 4: New Historicism • Due: Marxist Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Consider Writing New Historicist Position Paper on Donne's "The Dissolution"
 - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
 - Work on Research Paper
 - Prepare for Final Exam

Week 10 - May 5 - May 11: Outlying Theories • "Post-Theory" • Research Paper Due • Due: New Historicist Position Paper • Due: Optional Revised Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
 - Prepare for Final Exam

Week 11 - May 12 - May 17: Final Exam

SUGGESTED READING

- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary Cultural Theory*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002. Print
- Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon*. London: Macmillan, 1995. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2nd ed.. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. Print.
- Knellwolf, Christa, and Christopher Norris, eds. *Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical, and Psychological Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. Print. Vol. 9 of *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*. H.B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson, gen. eds. 9 vols. 1993-2009.
- Lodge, David, and Nigel Wood, eds. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. 2nd ed. Harlow: Pearson-Longman, 1999. Print.
- Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 5th ed. Harlow: Pearson-Longman, 2005. Print.

SUGGESTED RESEARCH TOOLS

- *MLA International Bibliography* (available on-line through the LRC website; a fast way to find worthwhile scholarly studies; supplement with *ABELL*)
- *ABELL* (available on-line through the LRC website; a fast way to find worthwhile scholarly studies; supplement with *MLA International Bibliography*)
- *The Year's Work in English Studies* (a valuable annual review of criticism; summarizes important scholarly studies on an author and/or work and helps you to see context of recent debates and topics of interest; in volume form in Mabee LRC reference room and online through the LRC website)
- *Essay and General Literature Index* (excellent source for studies included in edited collections; useful for supplementing all of the above; in volume form in Mabee LRC reference room and online at the LRC website)
- The Mabee LRC reference room has an excellent collection of checklists and annotated bibliographies on individual authors and literary topics; can also find bibliographies upstairs with other books by and about the authors
- The best Web site for literature on the Internet is *Literary Resources on the Net*, located at the following URL:
<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Lit/>
- See also Lynch's metapage on theory:
<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Lit/theory.html>