

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, THEATRE, & MEDIA STUDIES

ENGL 431: LITERARY CRITICISM 2008 (1/3 & 2/3)

Convenor:

James Meffan (james.meffan@vuw.ac.nz) VZ 903, 463-6807

Administrator:

Helen O'Sullivan (helen.osullivan@vuw.ac.nz@vuw.ac.nz) VZ 809, 463-6800

Where and when:

Thursdays from 9 - 11am in VZ 808. Seminars will be held weekly in trimester 1 and trimester 2.

Course aims and objectives

To introduce students of literature to some of the theoretical writing that has informed, challenged and reshaped the discipline of literary studies in the course of the last century. The course is focussed around the theme of narrative and aims to give students a survey of a number of critical approaches while directing the scope of this examination. The main emphasis of the course is on understanding, articulating and comparing different conceptions of narrative as well as examining the nature and purpose of critical reading and writing. The course will cover various aspects of narrative form and process, before moving to a consideration of postmodern narrative in the second trimester. Students passing the course should be able to develop cogent, detailed and critical reflections on some of the issues the course raises, according to their own particular interests, and to demonstrate a basic comprehension of all the topics studied.

Set texts

H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2002); Mark Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory* (New York: Palgrave, 1998).

Other preliminary and supplementary reading

Tony Thwaites, Lloyd Davis, and Warwick Mules, *Tools for Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1994); Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (eds.) *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edition, 1995); Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Knopf, 1984); David Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1990); Suzanne Keen, *Narrative Form* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Martin McQuillan (ed.), *The Narrative Reader*, (London: Routledge, 2000)

Seminars

Seminar discussions are based on the readings detailed in the seminar programme below.

There are two sessions on each seminar topic. The first, or primary, session will be led by the course convenor, while the following, or secondary, session will be introduced and led by class members. Students are asked to give a short (15-20 min) presentation to introduce one of the "secondary" seminars. These presentations may be informal or scripted; you will be expected to identify for further discussion one or two particular issues raised by the assigned readings, and to comment briefly on them. Neither the presentations nor the discussions will be formally assessed, but they may be taken into account when the final Honours grade is being considered.

You should examine the seminar schedule and nominate a topic which you will be prepared to introduce as soon as possible.

The supplementary texts assigned for each seminar – other than the chapters from *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* and *Postmodern Narrative Theory* – are available on Blackboard. Students are expected to be well-prepared for classes, particularly in their reading, and to be ready to lead discussion.

ENGL 431 SEMINAR PROGRAMME 2008

It is expected that you will attend all seminars. If you are unable to attend a seminar, please contact the convenor as soon as you can in order to find out what you will need to do before the next meeting of the class.

Please give some thought to which of the following topics you would like to introduce.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	28 February	What is Narrative (1)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbott, Ch. 1 "Narrative and Life" Abbott, Ch. 2 "Defining Narrative" Rimmon-Kenan, Ch. 1 "Introduction"
2	6 March	What is Narrative (1)?	
3	13 March	What is Narrative (2)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ryan, "Toward a Definition of Narrative" [tbs] Abbott, Ch. 3 "The Borders of Narrative"
4	20 March	What is Narrative (2)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave" [tbs] Aristotle, "Plot" [tbs]
5	27 March	Mimesis and Diegesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbott, Ch. 4 "The Rhetoric of Narrative" Abbott, Ch. 6 "Narration"
6	3 April	Mimesis and Diegesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rimmon-Kenan, Ch 7 "Narration: Levels and Voices" Rimmon-Kenan, Ch 8 "Narration: Speech Representation" Lodge, "Mimesis and Diegesis in Modern Fiction" [tbs]
7	10 April	Story and Discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rimmon-Kenan, Ch. 2, "Story: Events"
8	1 May	Story and Discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rimmon-Kenan, Ch. 3, "Story: Characters" Culler, "Story and Discourse in the Analysis of Narrative" [tbs]
9	8 May	Time and narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rimmon-Kenan, <i>Narrative Fiction</i>, Ch. 4 "Text: Time"
10	15 May	Time and narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keen, "Timing: How Long and How Often?" [tbs]
11	22 May	Narrative versions and adaptations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbott: Ch 9 "Adaptation Across Media" Mittell, "Film and Television Narrative" [tbs]
12	29 May	Narrative versions and adaptations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smith, "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories" [tbs]
MID-YEAR EXAM PERIOD AND BREAK			
13	10 July	Interpretation and meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbott, Ch 7, "Interpreting Narrative" Abbott, Ch 8 "Three Ways to Interpret Narrative"
14	17 July	Interpretation and meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbott, Ch 12 "Narrative Negotiation"
15	24 July	Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbott, Ch. 5 "Closure"
16	31 July	Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graff, "Determinacy/Indeterminacy" [tbs] Brooks, "An Unreadable Report" [tbs]
17	7 August	The Reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Booth, from <i>The Rhetoric of Fiction (on Emma)</i> [extract; tbs]
18	14 August	The Reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rimmon-Kenan, Ch 9 "The Text and its Reading" Rimmon-Kenan, Ch 11 "Towards..." Currie, Ch 1 "The Manufacture of Identities" Lentricchia "In Place of an Afterword—Someone Reading" [tbs]
19	4 September	Sign and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tools for Cultural Studies</i> Ch. 2 "Signs and Systems" [tbs]
20	11 September	Sign and structure	
21	18 September	The linguistic model and the question of reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currie, Ch 2 "Terminologisation" Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" [extract; tbs]
22	25 September	The linguistic model and the question of reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barthes, "Textual Analysis of Poe's 'Valdemar'." [tbs] Culler, <i>Deconstruction</i>, Chapter 2.1 "Writing and Logocentrism" [tbs]
23	2 October	Narrative, Politics and History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currie, Ch 4 "Narrative, Politics and History" Currie, Ch 7 "The Dark Clouds of Enlightenment"
24	9 October	Narrative, Politics and History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenblatt and Gallagher, from <i>Introducing New Historicism</i> [extract; tbs]

Additional Information

Any further information will be circulated in seminars and made available on the ENGL 431 Blackboard site (<http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>).

Assessment

The assessment for this course is designed to give students practice in handling abstract concepts and arguments, and to encourage continual engagement with critical readings, as well as integrate theoretical reflection with close reading of particular texts.

Note: Essays must be presented in accordance with the conventions outlined in the *SEFT Style Guide* and *A Handbook for Students of English Literature* (available online on the SEFT website: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/seft/english/about/resources.aspx>).

1. Reading reports (6 reports worth 5% each i.e. altogether, 30% of your final grade)

You will be required to produce six short (no more than 500 words each) reading reports over the duration of the course. Reading reports are due on the Friday following the second seminar on each seminar topic. The first reading report is due on **Thursday 20 March**, the topic is “What is narrative”, and there is a 500 word limit. You should follow standard referencing and bibliographic conventions. See below for an update on referencing standards in English.

You will be required to produce a reading report every two weeks during term time, until all six are completed.

Reading reports should if possible be submitted in electronic form as an MS Word attachment (.doc format). Detailed requirements for each reading report will be circulated ahead of time in class and posted on the ENGL 431 Blackboard site. When submitting reports electronically please include your surname and report number in the file name (e.g. Smith1.doc).

2. An essay, due on or before **Friday September 19**, of approximately 2,500 words. 20% of final result. Your essay should be submitted in electronic form as an MS Word attachment (.doc format). When submitting essays electronically please include your surname and the word “essay” in the file name (e.g. SmithEssay.doc).

This essay is your major piece of in-term writing for the course, and will require you to explore a particular critical topic or issue. Suggested topics will be distributed after the mid-year break, but you may also devise your own topic in consultation with one of the course coordinators. You should expect to begin thinking about this essay during the mid year break, although it is not formally due until September 19.

N.B. Due dates and extensions

Extensions can be negotiated in advance to fit in with your overall timetable. However assessment is staged in a way that is designed to help you keep up with the workload and to identify and address areas of difficulty in good time.

Late work submitted without an extension will be counted, as long as it is received by **10 October 2008**. You will, however, be penalised by a lowering of the grade (e.g., A to A-, C+ to C), and comments will be minimal. Work submitted with an extension will be graded in the normal way. Make sure you plan your work in advance to deal with competing deadlines.

Extensions will not be granted beyond the final day of lectures (10 October) without the permission of the Head of School (Peter Whiteford). The Head of School may in exceptional circumstances grant extensions up until 7 November. The University does not permit us to accept work after this date.

3. Final examination. (3 hours) 50% of final result.

You'll be asked to write on TWO essay topics in the exam. There will be a wide range of topics to choose from. All topics will be related to or drawn from the readings assigned for the seminars. All questions will be of equal value. The examination will be open book, allowing you to bring any books or papers set for or provided during the course into the examination room.

Note: grades gained in individual Honours papers are always subordinate to the overall assessment made by the full group of examiners for the Honours programme as a whole.

Workload

The university advises that you should be able to devote at least 12 hours per week to a full year paper in a 4-paper graduate programme. (This estimate includes seminar attendance and preparation for seminars and essays.) Individual students will of course need to make their own judgements about the amount of time they must give to the course in order to maintain satisfactory progress.

You are not required to read any texts for this course other than those assigned for each seminar and prescribed for the course. Nevertheless, you may wish to extend your reading in an aspect of the course which particularly interests you, especially when you come to write your second essay. We'll be happy to discuss this with you, should you need specific suggestions for extra reading. Some of the set and recommended texts listed above also contain bibliographies and/or suggestions for further reading on particular topics which you may find helpful.

Mandatory Course Requirements

In addition to sitting the exam, and maintaining a satisfactory attendance at and participation in the seminars, you must complete and hand in all assignments by Friday October 10, unless an extension has been granted by the Head of School.

Please note: "A student who has obtained an overall mark of 50% or more, but failed to satisfy a mandatory requirement for a course, will receive a K grade for that course, while a course mark less than 50% will result in the appropriate fail grade (D, E, or F)" (2007 Calendar, Assessment Statute, s.4.3(b), p. 83).

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy.

For information on the following topics, see the corresponding Blackboard files:

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Referencing Update for Students of English

It has recently been decided that students of English should use one standard referencing system for all work produced for English courses: the MLA style.

Previously the document *Guidelines for SEFT Students* offered two alternative systems. Following the recent decision, English students are expected to use only the first of the two alternatives outlined. This is labelled in the *Guidelines* as “Notes included in the text (System A)”. The alternative system – “Footnotes or endnotes (System B)” – should no longer be used for written work in English.

MLA Style – the new standard for English

The system students are now required to use is generally known as the MLA style. This system is in wide use in the Humanities, and has been thoroughly documented. Full details of the MLA style are provided in *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (6th edition) and the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (2nd edition), both of which are available in the library.

Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) offers an excellent Internet resource on MLA style. It can be accessed at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>.

What follows is a basic outline of MLA conventions.

MLA Style

This type of system is sometimes referred to as a “parenthetical style”. By this system, full bibliographical details of the text you have used are given only in the Works Cited list at the end of the document.

In the body of your essay, follow each quotation or reference with a note in parentheses giving just the author’s name and page number, like this: (Lanham 104) Note that there is no punctuation, and no use of p. or pp. for page(s). If it is perfectly clear from the context who is being quoted, you can just give the page number: “Lanham argues that...(104).”

If you have several works by a single author in your bibliography, avoid ambiguity by adding a short title (Lanham, “Astrophil” 104).

If you are discussing a poem or poems, give line numbers (11-12) rather than page numbers. In referring to a Shakespearean play, or any other play in acts and scenes, give act, scene, and line numbers, like this: (3.2.28-35). [This means Act Three, scene two, lines 28-35.]

In referring to a classic work or a novel which exists in several editions, it is helpful to the reader to give chapter as well as page references: “Nelly says that ‘from the very beginning, [Heathcliff] bred bad feeling in the house’” (Bronte 89; ch.6) (or (Bronte 89; 1.6) for an edition in volumes and chapters).

In referring to a film, the reference should provide director and year: “In *Way Down East* (D.W. Griffith, 1920) . . .”

Works Cited

Whereas a bibliography may contain works that were useful in the development of an essay, the Works Cited list required in MLA style identifies only those texts which have directly contributed to the production of your work, either in the form of direct quotation or paraphrase.

Works Cited entries follow very specific conventions. Be sure you use punctuation, italicisation and quotation marks exactly in line with the following examples.

Note that some guidelines specify the use of underlining instead of *italicisation*. For the purposes of bibliographic detail the two should be treated as equivalent. You can *either* underline book titles *or* italicise them. Whichever you choose you should use consistently.

(a) *For a book by a single author:*

Author's surname, first name. *Title of Book*. Place of publication: publisher's name, year of publication.

E.g. Coetzee, J. M. *Foe*. London: Penguin, 1987.

(b) *For a book with an editor rather than an author:*

E.g. McLeod, Marion, and Bill Manhire, eds. *Some Other Country: New Zealand's Best Short Stories*. Wellington: Unwin, 1984.

(c) *For an edition of a "classic" author's work:*

E.g. Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. 1667. Ed. Alastair Fowler. London: Longman, 1968.

(d) *For an article in a journal:*

Author's surname, first name. "Title of article." *Title of journal*, volume number (year): page numbers.

E.g. Hutcheon, Linda. "Colonialism and the Postcolonial Condition: Complexities Abounding." *PMLA* 110.1 (1995): 7-16.

(e) *For an article in an anthology:*

E.g. Attridge, Derek. "Literary Form and the Demands of Politics: Otherness in J. M. Coetzee's *Age of Iron*." *Aesthetics and Ideology*. Ed. George Levine. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1994. 198-213.

(f) *For ENGL Course Notes:*

E.g. *ENGL 113 Course Notes*. Victoria University of Wellington, 2007.

Note that specific articles in a book of Course Notes follow as for (e) above.

E.g. Wordsworth, William. "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*." 1802. *ENGL 113 Course Notes*. Victoria University of Wellington, 2007. 24-5.

(g) *For a web page:*

"Name of Page." *Name of Site*. Date of posting/revision. Date you accessed the site <URL [electronic address]>.

E.g. "Postcolonialism." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. 24 January 2008. 15 February 2008 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postcolonialism>>.