

## ENGL 431 Literary Criticism

**Trimesters 1 + 2 2010**

**1 March –13 November 2010**

**30 Points**

### TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates: 1 March 2010 to 15 October 2010

Mid-year break: 7 June to 11 July 2010

Study week: 18 October to 22 October 2010

Examination/Assessment period: 22 October to 13 November 2010

**Note:** Students who enrol in courses with examinations are expected to be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the formal examination period.

### WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

### NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Staff	Email	Phone	Room
Linda Hardy	<a href="mailto:linda.hardy@vuw.ac.nz">linda.hardy@vuw.ac.nz</a>	463 6806	VZ 812 (Course co-ordinator)
James Meffan	<a href="mailto:james.meffan@vuw.ac.nz">james.meffan@vuw.ac.nz</a>	463 6807	VZ 903 (Course co-ordinator)

### CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

#### Seminars

Fridays 9-11 am, VZ 802 (Note that seminars are held on *alternate* weeks; see programme below for dates)

### COURSE DELIVERY

The course will be delivered through a bi-weekly two hour seminar. Seminar discussions are based on the readings detailed in the seminar programme below.

Seminars will be led by the course convenors but with time set aside for class members to introduce the readings. Each student will be required to prepare one of these introductions. A schedule will be drawn up in one of the early seminars. Presentations will not 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.

### COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All changes or additional information will be conveyed to students via Blackboard.

### COURSE CONTENT

Narrative – telling stories – is fundamental to our interactions in and with the world. Yet narrative, like language, is no neutral medium, nor are its rules and methods fixed. This course introduces some influential accounts of what narrative is and how it works. What kinds of logic do we use to shape and to understand stories? How do narratives order, disrupt and transform our understanding of the world?

### LEARNING 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.

### EXPECTED 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.

## READINGS

For the first two weeks of trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two all undergraduate textbooks will be sold from vicbooks and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building. You can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Books can be couriered to you or they can be picked up from the shop. You will be contacted when they are available.

### Essential texts:

H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Routledge, 2002); Mark Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory* (New York: Palgrave, 1998).

### Recommended 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).

## ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

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.

**Reading reports** (5 x 500 word reports worth 6% each i.e. altogether, 30% of your final grade)

You will be required to produce five short (no more than 500 words each) reading reports over the duration of the course. Reading report due dates are included in the course programme below.

**An essay** (approximately 2,500 words; 20% of your final grade)

The essay is due on or before **Friday September 17**. 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 17.

**Submission of written work:** the essay and reading reports should be submitted electronically direct to james.meffan@vuw.ac.nz as an email attachment in MS Word format (.doc). Please name the file as in the following examples:

- For a reading report: smith1.doc
- For an essay: smithessay.doc

(i.e last name followed by report number or “essay”, with no spaces).

**Examination** (3 hours; 50% of your final grade)

The three-hour final examination is **an open book exam** allowing you to bring any books or papers set for or provided during the course into the examination room and will be scheduled some time during the official end of year exam period (Friday 22 October - Saturday 13 November). When finalised, the exam timetable will be posted at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/exam-timetable.aspx>.

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 2010 exam format will closely follow the format of ENGL 431 exams of recent years. Previous exams can be accessed through the university library website (see Quick Links on the Library home page).

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.

### ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Instead of an assignment coversheet, you will be required to paste a brief “declaration” at the top of each assignment. This declaration (covering details such as assurances about originality and so on) will be available to copy from the ENGL 431 Blackboard site. You must also ensure that your name appears on each page of the assignment itself.

### PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS

If work is handed in late, then one grade is subtracted and no comments are offered.

## Extensions

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate.

## MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To gain a pass in this course you must:

- Submit the written work specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Attend at least 8 of the 12 seminars.

## CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class (via Blackboard). The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

## STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Work submitted in the final examination will obviously be handwritten. You are expected to write clearly. Where work is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

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

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

### GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

You should familiarise yourself 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 the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC (Academic) website also provides information in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcademic/Publications.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcademic/Publications.aspx)

**COURSE PROGRAMME**

Week 1	5 Mar	Preliminary meeting
Week 2	12 Mar	<p>Topic 1: What is narrative?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abbott, Ch. 1 “Narrative and Life”</li> <li>• Abbott, Ch. 2 “Defining Narrative”</li> <li>• Rimmon-Kenan, Ch. 1 “Introduction”</li> <li>• Ryan, “Toward a Definition of Narrative” [tbs]</li> <li>• Abbott, Ch. 3 “The Borders of Narrative”</li> <li>• Plato, “The Allegory of the Cave” [tbs]</li> <li>• Aristotle, “Plot” [tbs]</li> </ul>
Week 3	19 Mar	<p>No seminar</p> <p><b>Reading Report 1 due 19/03/10 by 5 pm</b></p>
Week 4	26 Mar	<p>Topic: Mimesis and Diegesis</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abbott, Ch. 4 “The Rhetoric of Narrative”</li> <li>• Abbott, Ch. 6 “Narration”</li> <li>• Rimmon-Kenan, Ch 7 “Narration: Levels and Voices”</li> <li>• Rimmon-Kenan, Ch 8 “Narration: Speech Representation”</li> <li>• Lodge, “Mimesis and Diegesis in Modern Fiction” [tbs]</li> </ul>
Week 5	2 Apr	<p>Good Friday this week; no seminar</p> <p><b>Reading Report 2 due 01/04/10 by 5 pm</b></p>
<p><b>Mid Trimester Break:</b> Friday 2 April - Sunday 18 April 2010</p>		
Week 6	23 Apr	<p>Topic: Time and Narrative</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rimmon-Kenan, Ch. 4 “Text: Time”</li> <li>• Keen, “Timing: How Long and How Often?” [tbs]</li> </ul>
Week 7	30 Apr	<p>No Seminar</p> <p><b>Reading Report 3 due 30/04/10 by 5 pm</b></p>
Week 8	7 May	<p>Topic: Story and Discourse</p> <p>Readings:</p>

- Rimmon-Kenan, Ch. 2, "Story: Events"
- Culler, "Story and Discourse in the Analysis of Narrative" [tbs]

Week 9 14 May No Seminar

Week 10 21 May Topic: Narrative Versions and Adaptations

Readings:

- Abbott: Ch 9 "Adaptation Across Media"
- Mittell, "Film and Television Narrative" [tbs]
- Smith, "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories" [tbs]

Week 11 28 May No seminar

**Reading Report 4 due 28/05/10 by 5 pm**

Week 12 4 June Topic: Interpretation and Meaning

Readings:

- Abbott, Ch 7, "Interpreting Narrative"
- Abbott, Ch 8 "Three Ways to Interpret Narrative"
- Abbott, Ch 14 "Narrative Negotiation"

**Mid-Year Break:** Monday 7 June - Sunday 11 July 2010

Week 13 16 Jul Topic: Closure

Readings:

- Abbott, Ch. 5 "Closure"
- Graff, "Determinacy/Indeterminacy" [tbs]
- Brooks, "An Unreadable Report" [tbs]

Week 14 23 Jul No seminar

**Reading Report 5 due 23/06/10 by 5 pm**

Week 15 30 Jul Topic: Sign and Structure

Reading:

- Mules et al, *Tools for Cultural Studies* Ch. 2 "Signs and Systems" [tbs]

Week 16 6 Aug No seminar



Week 17	13 Aug	Topic: The linguistic model and the question of reference (1) Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abbott, Ch. 11 "Narrative and Truth"</li> <li>• Abbott, Ch. 12 "Narrative Worlds"</li> <li>• Rimmon-Kenan, Ch 11 "Towards..."</li> <li>• Currie, Ch 2 "Terminologisation"</li> <li>• Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" [extract; tbs]</li> </ul>
Week 18	20 Aug	No seminar
<b>Mid Trimester Break:</b> Monday 23 August - Sunday 5 September 2010		
Week 19	10 Sep	Topic: The linguistic model and the question of reference (2) Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barthes, "Textual Analysis of Poe's 'Valdemar'." [tbs]</li> <li>• Culler, <i>Deconstruction</i>, Chapter 2.1 "Writing and Logocentrism" [tbs]</li> </ul>
Week 20	17 Sep	No seminar <b>Essay due 17/09/10 by 5 pm</b>
Week 21	24 Sep	Topic: The Reader Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rimmon-Kenan, Ch 9 "The Text and its Reading"</li> <li>• Booth, from <i>The Rhetoric of Fiction (on Emma)</i> [extract; tbs]]</li> <li>• Currie, Ch 1 "The Manufacture of Identities"</li> </ul>
Week 22	1 Oct	No seminar
Week 23	8 Oct	Topic: Narrative, Politics and History Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currie, Ch 4 "Narrative, Politics and History"</li> <li>• Currie, Ch 7 "The Dark Clouds of Enlightenment"</li> <li>• Greenblatt and Gallagher, from <i>Introducing New Historicism</i> [extract; tbs]</li> </ul>
Week 24	15 Oct	No seminar
<b>Examination Period:</b> Friday 22 October - Saturday 13 November		