

# ENGL 431 Literary Criticism

## Trimester 2 2013

15 July to 17 November 2013

**30 Points**

### TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	15 July to 18 October 2013
Mid-Trimester break:	26 August to 8 September 2013
Study week:	21 to 25 October 2013
Examination/Assessment period:	25 October to 16 November 2013

**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

Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds)

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination (aegrotats), refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat)

### CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

#### Seminar

Tue                    10.00am – 12.50pm    Von Zedlitz 808

### NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Staff	Email	Phone	Room	Office Hours
James Meffan	<a href="mailto:James.Meffan@vuw.ac.nz">James.Meffan@vuw.ac.nz</a>	463 6807	vZ 903	tba

### COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

## PRESCRIPTION

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? Students intending to enrol on this course are encouraged to read through the first set text (Abbott) before seminars begin.

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

This course aims 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.

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. Develop cogent, detailed critical reflections on some of the issues the course raises;
2. Demonstrate a basic comprehension of all topics studied.

## TEACHING FORMAT

The course is delivered through a weekly three 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 is required to introduce a seminar, and to circulate to the class, one week in advance of the seminar, an outline of questions for discussion.** A schedule will be drawn up in one of the early seminars. Presentations are not 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* and from *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 participate in discussion.

## MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Submit the essays and assignments, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Sit the examination
- Attend at least 10 of the 12 seminars

## WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 30 point course is 300 hours over the trimester or 20 hours per teaching week. 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.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	500 word reading report	7.5%	1, 2	26/07/13
2	500 word reading report	7.5%	1, 2	09/08/13
3	500 word reading report	7.5%	1, 2	23/08/13
4	500 word reading report	7.5%	1, 2	13/09/13
5	2,500 word essay	20%	1, 2	11/10/13
6	3 hour exam	50%	1, 2	tba

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** (4 x 500 word reports worth 7.5% each i.e. altogether, 30% of your final grade)

You will be required to produce four 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 11 October**. 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 before the mid-trimester break, but you may also devise your own topic in consultation with

the course coordinator. You should expect to begin thinking about this essay during the mid-year break, although it is not formally due until 11 October.

**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 25 October - Saturday 16 November). When finalised, the exam timetable will be posted at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/exam-timetable.aspx>.

More detailed information about the exam will be circulated later in the course, and posted on Blackboard.

**Please note:** Marks for Honours level assignments and final course grades are not finalised until feedback from the external examiner has been considered. Note also that Honours grades gained in individual courses remain provisional until the overall final classification made by the Honours programme examination committee.

## SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Electronic assignments are submitted as a MS Word file through Blackboard. How to name your file and step-by-step instructions can be found on Blackboard in the "Assignments and Turnitin" section.

Your marked assignment will be found on Blackboard in the same section.

## PENALTIES

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. 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.

## SET TEXTS

H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (2nd revised edition, Cambridge University Press).

Mark Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory* ((2nd revised edition, St. Martin's Press).

Other required reading will be posted on Blackboard. You are required to read these essays in advance of the seminar for which they are set.

You can order textbooks 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).

## CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

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. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

You may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

**Class Rep name and email address for this course:**

## STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

[www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/grades)
- Resolving academic issues:  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#grievances](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#grievances)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#specialpass](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#specialpass)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute:  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-service](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-service)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-charter)
- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/studentcontract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/studentcontract)

**School of English, Film, Theatre, & Media Studies**  
**ENGLISH PROGRAMME COURSE OUTLINE ENGL 431**

- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)
- School website: [www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms)

## COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	16 Jul	Introduction: What is narrative? Readings: Abbott, Ch. 1-3: "Narrative and Life", "Defining Narrative", "The Borders of Narrative" Ryan, "Toward a Definition of Narrative" [tbs] Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave" [tbs] Aristotle, "Plot" [tbs]
Week 2	23 Jul	Mimesis and diegesis Readings: Abbott, Ch. 4 "The Rhetoric of Narrative" Abbott, Ch. 6 "Narration" Rimmon-Kenan, "Narration: Levels and Voices" [tbs] Lodge, "Mimesis and Diegesis in Modern Fiction" [tbs] <b>First reading report due Friday 26 July</b>
Week 3	30 Jul	Time and narrative Readings: Rimmon-Kenan, "Text: Time" [tbs] Keen, "Timing: How Long and How Often?" [tbs]
Week 4	6 Aug	Story and discourse Reading: Culler, "Story and Discourse in the Analysis of Narrative" [tbs] <b>Second reading report due Friday 9 August</b>
Week 5	13 Aug	Narrative versions and adaptations Readings: Abbott, Ch. 9 "Adaptation Across Media" Mittell, "Film and Television Narrative" [tbs] Smith, "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories" [tbs]
Week 6	20 Aug	Interpretation and meaning Readings: Abbott, Ch 7, "Interpreting Narrative" Abbott, Ch 8 "Three Ways to Interpret Narrative" Abbott, Ch 14 "Narrative Negotiation" <b>Third reading report due Friday 23 August</b>

**Mid Trimester Break:** Monday 26 August to Sunday 8 September 2013

Week 7 10 Sep Closure  
Abbott, Ch. 5 "Closure"  
Graff, "Determinacy/Indeterminacy" [tbs]  
Brooks, "An Unreadable Report" [tbs]  
**Fourth reading report due Friday 13 September**

Week 8 17 Sep Sign and structure  
Reading:  
Mules et al, Tools for Cultural Studies Ch. 2 "Signs and Systems" [tbs]  
Currie, Ch. 1 "The Manufacture of Identities"

Week 9 24 Sep The linguistic model and the question of reference  
Readings:  
Abbott, Ch. 11 "Narrative and Truth"  
Abbott, Ch. 12 "Narrative Worlds"  
Currie, Ch. 2 "Terminologisation"  
Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" [extract; tbs]

Week 10 1 Oct Deconstruction  
Readings:  
Barthes, "Textual Analysis of Poe's 'Valdemar'." [tbs]  
Culler, Deconstruction, Chapter 2.1 "Writing and Logocentrism" [tbs]

Week 11 8 Oct The reader  
Readings:  
Rimmon-Kenan, "The Text and its Reading" [tbs]  
Booth, from The Rhetoric of Fiction (on Emma) [extract; tbs]]  
Currie, Ch. 3 "Theoretical Fiction"  
**Essay due Friday 11 October**

Week 12 15 Oct Narrative, politics and history  
Readings:  
Currie, Ch 4 "Narrative, Politics and History"  
Currie, Ch 7 "The Dark Clouds of Enlightenment"  
Greenblatt and Gallagher, from Introducing New Historicism [extract; tbs]

**Study Week:** Monday 21 October to Friday 25 October 2013

**Examination Period:** Friday 25 October to Saturday 16 November 2013