

Dr. Dejan Kuzmanovic dkuzmano@uwsp.edu CCC 427 346-4719	English 380: Literary Theory Mon 5:30-8:00 p.m. CCC 226	Office Hours: Mon 2:00-3:30, Wed 3:30-5:00, and by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Theory is a “systematic reflection on our guiding assumptions.” – Terry Eagleton

Literary theory raises fundamental questions about what literature is and what it does, whether emphasizing linguistic, aesthetic, psychological, or social aspects of its existence and function. Whenever we interpret a work of literature, our interpretation – whether we realize it or not – arises from one or more theoretical frameworks, which guide our approach and understanding. The purpose of this course is to heighten your awareness of several key theoretical frameworks that inform most specific acts of literary analysis produced today, including your own.

We will survey the most prominent twentieth-century approaches to studying literature and take a quick look at some emerging developments. Our goal is to explore how each approach arose from a specific theoretical tradition (with its own set of ideas and concepts), but also to observe how profoundly they have interrelated and impacted each other. Finally, we will study how these theoretical approaches are utilized in specific examples of literary analysis of two famous novels: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*.

Upon the completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Explain key insights and concepts emerging from prominent literary theories.
- Analyze how these theories relate to each other through influence, similarity or contrast.
- Identify how such theoretical approaches inform specific examples of literary criticism.
- Apply several of these approaches in your own analysis of literary works.

REQUIRED READINGS

- Rental:** Robert Dale Parker, *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies*, 3rd edition.
Rivkin and Ryan, *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd edition
- Purchase:** Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Bedford/St. Martin’s (editor: Johanna M. Smith)
Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Bedford/St. Martin’s (editor: Ross. C. Muffin)
(Important: You need to buy these editions available in the campus bookstore because each contains multiple required readings in addition to the novel itself.)

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

	% of the course grade
Tests 1 & 3	40% (20% each)
Test 2	30%
Two Papers	20% (10% each)
Daily Work Grade	10%

TESTS (February 24, April 6, May 14)

All three tests will be **in-class, closed-book**, and consisting of two parts. **Part one** will ask you to explain briefly several specific concepts or ideas from a list you will be given in advance, which will be based on the information in Parker, *How to Interpret Literature* and class lectures. **Part two** will ask you to write an essay in response to a prompt, which will be based on one of the novels and the critical essays about it. There will be detailed instructions and a study guide.

PAPERS

Summary Paper will present the main ideas and key supporting evidence in a critical essay about *Heart of Darkness* which we will not discuss in class. **Due in class on May 4.**

Exploratory Paper will discuss how a specific theoretical approach of your choice might inform your understanding of a literary work you are studying in another class. **No specific deadline.**

Each paper should be 4 double-spaced pages in length (approx. 1,000 words). There will be detailed guidelines and examples, as well as a grading rubric, for each of these assignments.

DAILY WORK GRADE:

This grade is a way to reward consistent preparation and participation. There will be a variety of **simple in-class assignments** (reading quizzes, discussion questions, group work, end-of-class summaries, drafts, etc.) for which you can earn up to 4 points. Only the best 10 will count.

A = 37-40 pts	A- = 34-36 pts	B+ = 31-33 pts	B = 28-30 pts	B- = 25-27 pts
C+ = 22-24 pts	C = 19-21 pts	C- = 16-18 pts	D+ = 13-15 pts	D = 10-12 pts

I will award **up to 5 extra points** to those students who consistently contribute to discussions.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

I can excuse only documented absences caused by serious illness or official university business. **There is no penalty for one unexcused absence.** Save it for real needs, whether planned (travel, doctor's appointment, etc.) or unplanned (emergencies, personal issues, not feeling well, etc.).

Additional absences will have an impact on your grades:

- For 2nd unexcused absence, your Daily Work Grade will be lowered one full letter grade.
- For 3rd such absence, your Daily Work Grade will be lowered another full letter grade.
- For 4th such absence, your Course Grade will be lowered one full letter grade.
- For 5th such absence, your Course Grade will be lowered another full letter grade.

No student will pass the course with more than five absences. Students who accumulate three or more absences by mid-semester will be strongly encouraged to drop the course.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT:

The classroom must be a safe space for all students, requiring appropriate classroom conduct. Showing respect for every individual – regardless of their age, sex, race, ethnicity, religious or political opinions, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other forms of difference – is essential for everyone’s success and wellbeing. The Golden Rule: treat others as you expect to be treated.

Please come to class prepared. Read all assigned texts before class and bring the readings to class so we can discuss specific passages. Prepare some responses to my discussion questions or come up with discussion questions of your own. Do not be shy; all contributions are welcome. This long evening class will be much more fun if we are all attentive, engaged, and involved.

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS:

Being a Pointer entails a number of responsibilities and rights of which you should be aware. You should be familiar with the UWSP Dean of Students’ web page about student conduct: <https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx>.

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct are serious violations. Read about academic integrity: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>. When unsure whether certain action is appropriate or not, please feel free to talk to me about it.

Freedom from physical or verbal harassment: Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at UWSP, and it is your right and duty to report it. You should be aware of UWSP policies for such incidents (<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/sexualassault/Pages/victims-bill-of-rights.aspx>) and our Bias/Hate Incident Reporting (<http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Bias-Hate-Incident.aspx>). You can report (anonymously, if preferred) any incidents of interpersonal violence, such as sexual assault, as well as bias/hate incidents, such as blatantly racist or homophobic behavior.

UWSP is committed to providing appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities and temporary impairments. Please do not hesitate to talk to me if you need special arrangements of any kind. If you have a disability or a condition requiring assistance, please contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center on the 6th floor of Albertson Hall (library) as soon as possible. DATC can be reached at 715-346-3365 or DATC@uwsp.edu. For more information, see <http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/toQualifyForDisabilityServices.aspx>.

UWSP Emergency Procedures: We all hope we’ll never need them, but it is wise to be aware of what to do in an emergency: <https://www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Documents/em/procedures/UWSP%20Emergency%20Guidebook.pdf>.

Please turn off all electronic devices unless you use them for the sole purpose of taking notes. Texting, emailing, or Web browsing in class is not allowed because it will distract both you and those around you from class activities. You can be sure that I will notice if you engage in these activities in class, and that will adversely affect your Daily Work Grade.

The English Department policy is that **students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities** without written permission from the instructor.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Please always read all assigned pages *before* the session for which they are assigned.

- 1/27 Introduction. What is theory? What is it for?
- 2/3 **New Criticism:** Parker 11-37 (recommended: Rivkin & Ryan 28-39)
Frankenstein 19-70
- 2/10 **Structuralism:** Parker 43-57 & 65-74 (recommended: Rivkin & Ryan 56-64)
Frankenstein 70-131
- 2/17 **Deconstruction:** Parker 85-108 (recommended: Rivkin & Ryan 278-86 & 303-10)
Frankenstein 132-89
- 2/24 **Test 1**
- 3/2 **Psychoanalysis:** Parker 111-22 & 137-44 (recommended: Rivkin & Ryan 447-61)
A Psychoanalytic Perspective on *Frankenstein* 323-39 (recommended: 300-12)
- 3/9 **Feminism:** Parker 148-65 & 178-83 (recommended: Rivkin & Ryan 812-25)
A Feminist Perspective on *Frankenstein* 360-78 (recommended: 340-49)

SPRING BREAK

- 3/23 **Queer Theory:** Parker 185-93, 195-200 & 205-13 (recomm.: Rivkin & Ryan 900-11)
A Gender/Queer Perspective on *Frankenstein* 400-43 (recommended: 381-93)
- 3/30 **Marxism:** Parker 220-25 & 230-39 (recommended: Rivkin & Ryan 693-702)
A Marxist Perspective on *Frankenstein* 469-80 (recommended: 446-58)
- 4/6 **Test 2**
- 4/13 *Heart of Darkness* 17-94 (recommended: 3-16 & 97-118)
- 4/20 **New Historicism:** Parker 259-64, 270-83 (recommended: Rivkin & Ryan 1242-46)
A New Historicist Perspective on *Heart of Darkness* 266-83 (recommended: 245-57)
- 4/27 **Postcolonial and Race Studies:** Parker 285-308 & 317-23
A Postcolonial Perspective on *Heart of Darkness* 303-22 (recommended: 285-94)
- 5/4 **Summary paper due in class and in Canvas**
Recent Developments: Parker 354-79

Final exam (Test 3) will take place on Thursday, May 14th, 5:00-7:00 p.m.