

Dr. Dejan Kuzmanovic dkuzmano@uwsp.edu CCC 427	<b>English 380: Literary Theory</b> Tuesday, 5:00-7:50 p.m. CCC 226	Office Hours: Tue 2:00-3:00, Thu 11:00-12:00, 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 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 analysis of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

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*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

**Purchase:** Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Bedford/St. Martin’s (editor: Johanna M. Smith)  
**(Important:** You need to buy this edition available in the campus store because it contains required readings in addition to the novel itself.)

## REQUIREMENTS

	% of the course grade
Three Tests	60% (20% each)
Two Essays	20% (10% each)
Daily Work Grade	20%

**To pass the course, you must:**

- Earn at least 610 course points, including at least 120 daily work points.
- Pass at least two test and submit at least one essay.
- Miss no more than 3 class meetings, except for prolonged, documented illness.

## COURSE GRADE

A = 940-1000 points	C = 740-769 points
A- = 900-939 points	C- = 700-739 points
B+ = 870-899 points	D+ = 670-699 points
B = 840-869 points	D = 640-669 points
B- = 800-839 points	D- = 610-639
C+ = 770-799 points	F = 0-609 points

**Important:** This course uses the Canvas default grading system. You must earn at least 61% of the points for a passing grade, for both the course and individual assignments. Avoid missing assignments. If you get an F on an assignment, you will still receive some points for it, but if you simply fail to turn it in, you will receive no points, which could lead to a low grade or failure.

## TESTS (February 28, April 11, May 18)

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. The questions will be based on the information in *How to Interpret Literature* and in class lectures. **Part two** will ask you to write an essay in response to a prompt related to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and/or the critical essays about the novel included in the edition we will be using.

## ESSAYS (deadlines to be determined)

Each essay will focus on a specific theoretical approach (not the same in both essays).

- For one essay, you will be asked to discuss how and why the chosen theoretical approach is valuable for the study of literature in general.
- For the other essay, you will explain how the chosen theoretical approach informs your understanding of a specific literary text of your choosing.

**Each essay should be 4 double-spaced pages in length** (1,000-1,200 words). There will be detailed guidelines and examples, as well as a grading rubric, for each of these assignments.

## DAILY WORK GRADE (attendance, group work, class discussions, and reading quizzes)

A = 188-200 points	B = 168-173 points	C = 148-153 points	D = 128-133 points
A- = 180-187 points	B- = 160-167 points	C- = 140-147 points	D- = 120-127 points
B+ = 174-179 points	C+ = 154-159 points	D+ = 134-139 points	F = 0-119 points

## All students automatically receive 10 welcome points!

**Attendance:** You can earn 6 points every week by being present in class – in body *and* in mind! Students who doze off, repeatedly check their phones, or appear inattentive in other ways will receive fewer, if any, points for that day. **Please turn off all electronic devices** unless you use them only for taking notes. Texting, emailing, or Web browsing in class is not allowed because it will distract you and others from class activities. This is an easy way to earn **up to 90 points**.

**In-class & Canvas Assignments:** Most weeks there will be minor assignments (reading quizzes, discussion questions, end-of-class summaries, writing prompts, etc.) worth 5-10 points. You can earn **up to 100 points** this way, and there will be leeway to disregard 1-2 missed assignments.

**If you miss more than 3 class meetings, you will fail the course. The only absences I will excuse are those caused by documented medical reasons or official university business.**

**Extra points for in-class participation:** At my discretion, I will award **up to 15 extra points** to students who make a strong effort to participate. Keep in mind: you don't need brilliant ideas; any relevant thought or question is valuable. Step outside of your comfort zone and speak up!

## **ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS**

**Being a Pointer** entails rights and responsibilities. You should be familiar with the UWSP policies regarding 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: <https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>  
If unsure whether certain actions are appropriate or not, please feel free to talk to me about it.

**You have the right to be free from physical or verbal harassment:** Bullying is unacceptable. Be aware of the policies regarding sexual assault and incidents of bias or hate, and how to report them (<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Bias-Hate-Incident.aspx>). You can report (anonymously if you prefer) any incident of interpersonal violence or bias-based hateful behavior.

**Copyright Note:** All lecture materials and recordings are protected intellectual property. You may use them only for personal use related to class participation. Copying or sharing lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting them online or selling them to commercial entities constitutes illegal copyright infringement and violates university policies.

**Names and Pronouns:** Let me know if you would like to be addressed by a different name from the one in official records or if you identify with pronouns other than “he” and “she” (ex.: “ze” or “they”). Please join me in doing our best to respect other people’s self-identification choices. If you want to learn more about why pronouns matter, visit <https://www.mypronouns.org/>.

UWSP provides **accommodations for students with a documented disability**. For the procedure and paperwork, please contact UWSP Disability Resource Center: [drc@uwsp.edu](mailto:drc@uwsp.edu); <https://www.uwsp.edu/disability-resource-center/>.

**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 others from class activities. Being inattentive will adversely impact 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.

Short additional readings may be assigned (as handouts or in Canvas) after week 4.

- 1/24 Introduction. What is theory? What is it for?
- 1/31 **New Criticism:** Parker 11-37  
*Frankenstein* 19-70
- 2/7 **Structuralism:** Parker 43-58  
*Frankenstein* 70-131
- 2/14 **Structuralism continued:** Parker 67-85  
*Frankenstein* 132-189
- 2/21 **Deconstruction:** Parker 87-109
- 2/28 Test 1**
- 3/7 **Psychoanalysis:** Parker 114-125 & 140-147  
A Psychoanalytic Perspective on *Frankenstein* 323-39 (recommended: 300-312)
- 3/14 **Feminism:** Parker 151-169 & 183-188  
A Feminist Perspective on *Frankenstein* 360-378 (recommended: 340-349)

## SPRING BREAK

- 3/28 **Queer Theory:** Parker 191-200, 203-208 & 212-223  
A Gender/Queer Perspective on *Frankenstein* 400-443 (recommended: 381-393)
- 4/4 **Marxism:** Parker 229-234 & 239-251  
A Marxist Perspective on *Frankenstein* 469-480 (recommended: 446-458)
- 4/11 Test 2**
- 4/18 **New Historicism & Cultural Criticism:** Parker 268-289  
A Cultural Criticism Perspective on *Frankenstein* 502-524 (recommended: 481-496)
- 4/25 **Postcolonial and Race Studies:** Parker 297-322 & 325-342  
A Postcolonial Perspective on *Frankenstein* 547-565 (recommended: 530-539)
- 5/2 Catch-up & review
- 5/9 Recent Developments: Parker 379-408

**Final exam (Test 3) will take place on Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 5:00-7:00 p.m.**