

ENGL 2112-100: INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY THEORY

M - F | 11.00 - 12.35 | ENVD 122

GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructor	Dr. Benjamin J Robertson
Office	134 Hellems
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Office Hours	MTR 9.45 - 10.45 appointment

OVERVIEW OF ENGL 2112

Literary theory has a reputation for being difficult, unfairly or not. Whatever the case, everyone approaches literature (or any sort of cultural production – film, painting, sculpture, website, fashion) with some preconception or assumption about how to read it, listen to it, see it, watch it, or otherwise interact with it. What we call “literary theory” (or “critical theory” or just “theory”) formalizes our assumptions on one hand and challenges them on the other. Literary theory pushes us to think harder about what it is we are studying, including literary theory itself. What is literature? Is there something special about literature as opposed to other forms of writing? To what other cultural forms and ideas is literature related? What theory is best suited for my analysis? How does adopting one theory over another limit my analysis? And so on.

This class will cover several strands of theory as they developed in Europe and the United States after 1980, at which point theory had taken up permanent residence in modern language departments in the US. As such, this class focuses not on the origins of theory (in Derrida, Lacan, and Foucault, for example), but rather developments of that theory, responses to and rejections of it, and the manner in which it has been institutionalized and become a primary requirement for students such as you. We will pay particular attention to the ways these texts interact with multiple schools of thought and multiple topics and themes. In the end, we will understand that no theory is perfect and that no theory (or antitheory for that matter) is isolated from larger conversations about the proper way of reading and understanding literature and culture or from social and political concerns.

SCHEDULE

In addition to this syllabus, please familiarize yourself with the schedule of readings and assignments (available on D2L)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Daily worksheets (23%)

Each day you will answer a series of brief questions designed to help you think about the reading for that day. See Daily Worksheet Assignment for details.

Weekly short essays (65%)

Each week you will write a short (3 - 4 pp) paper either explicating a single reading or comparing two of our readings.

General participation (12%)

Please come prepared to discuss the reading. Please raise your hand, make comments, ask questions, and be a part of the conversation. Talking in class is not everyone's idea of a

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good time, but part of your grade depends on it. A rule of thumb: if you have never heard me say your name in class, you are not participating enough. Please, raise your hand. Don't make me call on you. I will assign you two participation grades, one at midterm and one at the end of the term, each worth up to 6% of your final mark.

Attendance

Attendance is not a formal component of the grade, but not showing up will adversely affect your mark in this course.

The rules:

- I make no distinction **at all** between excused and unexcused absences, except as discussed below.
- You may miss, without penalty, up to 3 meetings.
- If you miss more than 3 meetings you will be penalized 10% of your final mark for each additional absence.
- If you miss 7 meetings you will fail the course without exception.
- If you can document **all** of your absences (**EVERY SINGLE ONE**) for medical reasons **AND** you contact me as soon as you are able to about those absences, you may, after discussion and signing a contract that describes how you plan to complete the course, miss up to 6 total classes without penalty.
- Under no circumstances will you be allowed to miss a 7th class.
- If you are more than 5 minutes late to class, you will be charged an absence.
- An attendance form will be passed around at the start of each session. **You** are responsible for making sure that you sign it.
- I will not respond to email asking about your attendance. I keep track for me, not for you. If you come to my office hours I will confirm or deny the number of absences you believe you have accrued, but again: **I am not your secretary and do not keep track of your absences to be able to remind you.**

DO NOT TEST ME ON THIS POLICY.

Note: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please inform me of any conflicts with religious observances and we will work out a solution that is mutually satisfactory. http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

GRADING POLICIES

Late Work

I do not accept work after it's due without prior approval. "Prior approval" means one week before the due date and will not be granted because of work due in other classes. Non-authorized late work will receive an 'F'. Note: if you fail a

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project because of lateness, you must still complete it. Failure to do so will result in an 'F' for the course.

Incompletes

Only granted for non-academic reasons, when 30% of the class is outstanding, and after signing an incomplete contract.

Grade calculation

On daily worksheets:

check (✓) = 1% final mark; check-minus (✓-) = 0% of final mark

Daily worksheets are all-or-nothing. In total, they are worth up to 23% of your final mark. See Daily Worksheet Assignment for further details.

On short essays:

A+ = 13/13; A = 12.35/13; A- = 11.96/13; B+ = 11.44/13; B = 11.05/13; B- = 10.66/13; C+ = 10.14/13; C = 9.75/13; C- = 9.36/13; D = 8.45/13; F = 0/13

Your letter grade converts to a score out of thirteen.

Each point is worth 1% of your final mark. See Short Essay Instructions for further details.

For final mark:

95 - 100 = A; 90 - 94 = A-; 87 - 89 = B+ ; 84 - 86 = B; 80 - 83 = B-; 77 - 79 = C+; 74 - 76 = C; 70 - 73 = C-; 65 - 69 = D; 0 - 64 = F

Points from your daily worksheets and short essays will be added to your participation mark. If you exceed the allotted number of absences, your score will be adjusted according to the method described above. The number that results from this operation is your final mark.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

+No cell phone use. That means no calls and no texting. If I catch you doing either, I will ask you to leave the class and you will be counted absent for the day. Each time.

+No laptop or tablet use in class unless you discuss it with me during my office hours. If you use a laptop in class, I will ask you to leave and you will be marked absent for the day. Each time.

+You should bring *The Norton Anthology* to class everyday. If you do not have it, you may stay but you will be marked absent for the day. Each time.

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STATEMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>.

STATEMENT REGARDING CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

STATEMENT REGARDING DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

STATEMENT FROM THE BOULDER PROVOST'S DISABILITY TASK FORCE

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.

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This statement must be completed, signed, and returned to the instructor by Friday 6 June 2014. Failure to do so will result in a loss of 5% of the overall grade.

I _____ have read all course materials (including this syllabus and the course schedule). Furthermore, I assert that I understand all course policies.

STATEMENT OF
UNDERSTANDING

Sign

Date