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ENLT 301.02: Applied Literary Criticism

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E 301 Applied Literary Criticism

Anatomizing
The Composite Body of Literary Theory
Menace or Model?

ENLT #301 03
T/R: 9:40-11:00
LA 233
Instructor: Kathleen Kane

Fall 2000
Office: LA 111
Phone #: 243-5284
Office Hours:
M/W 1:00-3:00 p.m.
& By Appointment

Course Description

In this introductory course in literary and cultural theory, we will attempt to explore representative schools and issues of contemporary criticism on their own terms and, further, to remain grounded during that analytic work in the material of specific literary and cultural texts. We will be working, therefore, to build an analytic and critical vocabulary for the activity of reading texts of various kinds. However, in addition to this "first-principles" objective, we will also attempt to engage with such complexities of current theoretical debate as "the question of the author," the reconciliation of form and context, the agon of canon formation and canon-busting, and the late-twentieth century literary insurgencies of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Throughout the course we will be moving toward the present moment in which the range and the scope of the labor of the literary critic seems—in light of the rise of a whole host of non-traditional representational and narrative forms—to be expanding.

The course will culminate in an 8 week practicum involving consideration of the multiply incarnated cultural text of *Frankenstein*: Mary Shelley's novel, James Whale's films, Robert DeNiro's monster, and other contemporary avatars.

Policy Statement

Texts:

Richter, David. *Falling Into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*.
Murfin and Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Literary Terms*.
Wollstonecroft-Shelley. *Frankenstein*. (Smith ed.)

NB: Your texts are currently available in the Bookstore. You must bring the requisite text with you to class.

Coursework: Final grades will be determined by your performance in five separate categories of coursework:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| 1. Quizzes | 10% |
| 3. Critiques | 30% |
| 4. Midterm Examination | 30% |
| 5. 1 final research essay | <u>30%</u> |
| | 100% |

I will be happy to discuss grades with you during my office hours. However, please give yourself twenty-four hours after receiving your grade before coming to see me.

Quizzes: Over the course of the semester you will take a number of reading quizzes designed to ensure that you have read and thought about the readings for the day. I will administer these short quizzes at the beginning of the class. There will be no chance for make up quizzes for those who are absent or late on the day they were administered.

Critiques: Four times during the semester (Sept. 14 and 28, Oct. 12, and Nov. 16) you will submit written responses to assigned readings. These two-page (500-600 word) responses will involve engaging thoughtfully with a variety of theoretical arguments. Critical Responses are not short essays but are meant to fulfill three different interpretive tasks in about a couple of paragraphs apiece:

- 1) Summarize either one important or interesting problem that the text explores or a purpose that it serves in a way that explains what precisely it is that you find important or interesting about the problem or purpose.
- 2) Define one significant comparison, contrast or relationship between the text you're writing about and an earlier work on our syllabus.
- 3) Copy down a specific passage of the text (from a phrase to a paragraph in length) that especially piqued, delighted, irritated, challenged, troubled or changed you and explain in an engaged fashion what it is about the paragraph that affected you in such a way.

Midterm: You will take your midterm on October 19, during regular course hours. The exam will consist of questions from the following categories:

1. short essay questions
2. long essay questions

Final Essay (includes Abstract and Rough Draft.): This 8-10 page analytic and scholarly essay with attached bibliography represents the principal exercise of the semester. The essay will argue for the relevance of a distinctive, personal analysis of a text/set of texts and/or issues circulating in the textual constellation of *Frankenstein*. In addition, you will be responsible for accessing and harnessing the larger debates surrounding the literary artifact, historical phenomenon, or theoretical issue. To that end you will use library resources to familiarize yourself with the reading histories of the text(s) you have chosen and you will incorporate those materials in the argument of your essay. Here you must use at least two outside sources. (Consider purchasing a handbook like *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.)

Production Schedule:

1. On Tuesday, November 21, you will turn in an abstract (precis, plan, blueprint, conceptual map) of your final paper to me during conference in LA 111. You will need to include a working annotated bibliography of the sources and texts you will be engaged with.
2. On Tuesday, December 5, your Rough Draft will be due. As was the case with the abstract, you will meet with me in consultation over the rough draft in LA 111.
3. The Final Draft of the essay is due on the last day of class, Tuesday, December 19.

Attendance and Participation: Because this course depends upon the active and vocal support of all its members, attendance is required and will be recorded: four or more unexcused absences are grounds for failure of the course itself. Late arrivals and early departures will, if they occur frequently, count as absences. If you do arrive late you will be responsible for letting me know after class that you were present for the day. Absences due to medical and family emergencies will be excused, provided you come and discuss the situation (ASAP) with me.

Scholastic Dishonesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty—in as much as they keep the individual student as well as the collective community from learning—will result in an automatic F.

Course Calendar

September

Week One: Beginnings & What is Literature?

- T 5: Introduction to the course
- R 7: **Handout:** Eagleton, "What is Literature?" **Handout:** 4 "poems."
Richter, "Introduction" FiT, 1-13.

Week Two: Questions of Readers and Reading

- T 12 "Why We Read," FiT, 15-30; Vendler, "What We Have Loved, Others Will Love," FiT, 31-40.
- R 14 Graff, "Disliking Books at an Early Age," FiT, 40-48; Eagleton, "The Rise of English," 49-59. Critique #1 Due

Week Three: English Literature in the World

- T 19: Visvanathan, "Introduction to *Masks of Conquest*," 60-68; Friere, "The Banking Concept of Education," 68-78.
- R 21: During, "Teaching Culture," FiT, 96-102; Scholes, "A Fortunate Fall?" FiT, 111-119.

Week Four: What We Read: Texts, Value, and the Canon

- T 26: Richter, "What We Read: The Literary Canon and the Curriculum After the Culture Wars," FiT 121-136; Tompkins, "Masterpiece Theater," FiT, 137-146.
- R 28: Sedgwick, "from *Epistemology of the Closet*," FiT, 183-188; Gates, "Canon-Formation, Literary History, and the Afro-American Tradition," FiT, 174-182. Critique #2 Due.

October**Week Five: Texts, Value, and the Canon**

- T 3: Said, "The Politics of Knowledge," FiT, 188-198; Radaway, "A Feeling for Books," FiT, 199-210.
- R 5: Herrnstein-Smith, "from Contingencies of Value," FiT, 147-152; Bloom, "Elegiac Conclusion, FiT224-233.

Week Six: Author, Reader and Text

- T 10: Barthes, "The Death of the Author," FiT, 253-257; Rabinowitz, Actual Reader and Authorial Reader," FiT, 257-267.
- R 12: Fish, "How to Recognize a Poem When You See One," FiT, 267-278, Dasenbrock, "Do We Write the Text WeRead?" FiT, 278-289. Critique #3 Due

Week Seven: & Midterm

- T 17: Booth, "Who is Responsible in Ethical Criticism, and for What?" FiT, 349-355
- R 19: Midterm Examination

Week Eight: Frankenstein

- T 24: Library Orientation Day. Details TBA
- R 26: Smith, "Introduction: Biographical and Historical Contexts," *Frank*, 3-17; Shelly, "Introduction to *Frankenstein*," *Frank*, 19-27; *Frankenstein*, 28-79.

Week Nine: Frankenstein

- T 31: *Frankenstein*, 79-144.

November

- R 2: *Frankenstein*, 144-189.

Week Ten: Filming Frank

- T 7: Election Day: No Class
- R 9: Films: Whale, Karloff, et al., *Frankenstein*, 1931; Brooks, Wilder, et al., *Young Frankenstein*, 1974. Screenings TBA.

Week Eleven: Frankenstein on the Couch

- T 14: Murfin, "Psychoanalytic Criticism and *Frankenstein*," 262-274; Collings, "The Monster and the Maternal Thing: Mary Shelley's Critique of Ideology," 280-295.

Week Eleven: Frankenstein on the Couch

- R 16: Smith, "Feminist Criticism and *Frankenstein*," 296-305; Smith, "'Cooped Up' with 'Sad Trash': Domesticity and the Sciences in *Frankenstein*," 313-331.
Critique #4 Due

Week Twelve: Abstracts of Essay & Conferences

- T 21: No Class: Conferences with Kane in LA 111. Abstract of Essay Due in Conference.
- R 23: Holiday: No Class

Week Thirteen: Lesbian Panic, Marx, and Frankenstein

- T 28: Murfin, "Gender Criticism and *Frankenstein*," 334-345; Michel, "Lesbian Panic and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," 349-367.
- R 30: Murfin, "Marxist Criticism and *Frankenstein*," 368-380; Montag, "The 'Workshop of Filthy Creation': A Marxist Reading of *Frankenstein*," 384-395

December**Week Fourteen: Rough Draft, Conferences**

- T 5: No Class: Conferences with Kane in LA 111. Rough Draft Due in Conference
- R 7: Murfin, "Cultural Criticism and *Frankenstein*," 396-409; Zakhrieva, "Frankenstein of the Nineties: The Composite Body," 416-430.

Week Fifteen:

- T 12: Film: Branagh, DeNiro, et al., *Frankenstein*. Screening TBA.
- R 15: Film: Condon, McKellan, Redgrave, et al., *Gods and Monsters*; Last Class Day:

Week Sixteen: Finals Week

No Final in this class

- T 19: Final Draft of Essay Due