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ENLT 301.03: Applied Literary Criticism - Anatomizing The Composite Body of Literary Theory

Kathleen Kane

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E 301 Applied Literary Criticism

Anatomizing The Composite Body of Literary Theory

"In our era, criticism is not merely a library of secondary aids to the understanding and appreciation of literary texts, but also a rapidly expanding body of knowledge in its own right."-David Lodge

The Unexamined Text is Not Worth Reading

ENLT #301 03
M/W/F -10:10-11:00
LA 233
Instructor: Kathleen Kane

Fall 2001
Office: LA 111
Phone #: 243-5284
Office Hours:
T/R: 11-12:30 p.m.
& By Appointment

Course Description

In this introductory course in literary and cultural theory, we will attempt to explore representative schools of and issues in contemporary criticism. We will be working, therefore, to build an analytic and critical vocabulary for the activity of reading a variety of texts from the contemporary canons of literary criticism. 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 content, the agon of canon formation and canon busting, and, finally, with the crucial issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Throughout the course we will be moving toward our current early twenty-first century moment in which the range and scope of the labor of the literary critic seems—in light of the rise of a host of non-traditional representational and narrative forms—seems to be expanding.

The course will culminate in an 8 week practicum involving consideration of the variously incarnated cultural text of *Frankenstein*: Mary Shelley's novel, James Whale's films, *Rocky Horror Picture Show's* monsters, and other contemporary avatars.

Texts:

Richter, David. *Falling Into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*.
Wollstonecroft-Shelley. *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition*, (Hunter ed.)

N.B. Your texts are currently available in the Bookstore. You **MUST** bring the requisite text with you to class. In addition to your books, some of the critical articles we will read will be housed in the electronic reserve system at the Mansfeild Library. **PASSWORD** = Frankenstein

Policy Statement

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

1. Quizzes/Participation/Abstracts/Drafts	15%
2. Critiques	25%
4. Midterm Exam	30%
5. 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.

Participation: The success of the course will depend largely on the participation of all of the members of the class in dialogue over issues and texts. To facilitate and ensure the passionate and engaged participation of all the members of our course community, each individual will be asked to participate in the discussion of daily readings. Participation means that you must come to class with a reading of the texts/songs/films assigned for that day. These readings can take many forms – assertions of interpretation or taste, close readings of specific passages, contextual explication, even questions and confusions, etc.

Abstracts and Drafts: You will turn in an abstract and draft of your essay before submitting the final version. Each of these assignments will count for a grade. We will discuss the exact characteristics of these assignments at the appropriate time.

Critiques: Three times during the semester (September 17 and 24, and October 5) you will submit written responses to the assigned readings. These two page (500-600 word) responses will involve engaging thoughtfully with a variety of theoretical positions. These short essays are meant to fulfill three different interpretive tasks:

- 1) Summarize either one important or interesting issue or problem that the text

explores or a purpose that it serves in a way that explains what precisely what it is that you find important or interesting about the issue, problem, or purpose.

- 2) Define one significant comparison, contrast, or relationship between the text you are analyzing 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, or troubled you and explain in an engaged fashion what it is about the paragraph that effected you in this way.

You may accomplish these three tasks in the shape of an essay or in answering each interpretive task in its turn.

Midterm: You will take your midterm over two days in October: Wednesday, the 17 & Friday the 19. The exam will consist of questions from the following categories:

1. short answer
2. explication of text/essay questions

Prior to the exam, we will spend class time discussing the precise nature of these categories.

Final Research 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 surrounding the textual constellation of Frankenstein. In addition, you will be responsible for accessing and harnessing the larger debates surrounding the literary artifact, historical phenomenon, and/or interpretive 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. (If you do not have the *MLA Handbook*, fifth edition, now is the time to consider making the investment.)

Production Schedule:

1. On, Friday November 9, 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 working with. **THE ABSTRACT WILL RECEIVE A GRADE.**
2. On Thursday November 29 and on Friday, November 30 (depending upon when you schedule your conference) 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. **THE ROUGH DRAFT WILL RECEIVE A GRADE**
3. The Final Draft of the essay is due on the last day of class, Friday December 14, by 5:00 in my office. .

Attendance: 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 and Definitions: What is Literature?

W 5: Introduction to the Course

F 7: **Handout:** Eagleton: "What is Literature?"

Week Two: Questions of Readers and Reading

M 10 Richter, "Introduction," FiT, 1-13.

W 12 Richter, "Why We Read," FiT, 15-30.

F 14: Vendler, "What We Have Loved, Others Will Love," FiT, 31-40.

Week Three: English Literature in the World

M 17: Graff, "Disliking Books at an Early Age," FiT, 40-48. **Critique #1 Due.**

W 19: Eagleton, "The Rise of English," FiT, 49-59.

F 21: Visvanathan, "Introduction to the Masks of Conquest," FiT, 60-68.

Week Four: What We Read: The Culture Wars and the Canon.

M 24: Friere, "The Banking Concept of Education," FiT, 68-78. **Critique #2 Due.**

W 26: Richter, "What We Read: The Literary Canon and the Curriculum After the Culture Wars," FiT, 121-136.

F 28: Tompkins, "Masterpiece Theatre," FiT, 137-146.

October

Week Five: Texts, Value and the Canon

- M 1: Sedgwick, "from *Epistemology of the Closet*," FiT, 183-188.
- W 3: Gates, "Canon-Formation, Literary History, and the Afro-American Tradition," FiT, 174-182.
- F 5: Said, "The Politics of Knowledge," FiT, 188-198. **Critique #3 Due.**

Week Six: Author, Reader, and Text

- M 8: Radaway, "A Feeling for Books," FiT, 199-210.

Week Six (continued):

- W 10: Barthes, "The Death of the Author," FiT, 253-257.
- F 12: Irvine, "Reclaiming the Aesthetic," FiT, 378-389.

Week Seven: Midterm

- M 15: Berubé, "Aesthetics and the Literal Imagination," FiT, 391-398.
- W 17: Midterm Part One.
- F 19: Midterm Part Two.

Week Eight: Reading Frankenstein

- M 22: Smith, "Introduction: Biographical and Historical Contexts," *Frank*, 3-17; Shelley, "Introduction to *Frankenstein*," *Frank*, 19-27.
- W 24: *Frankenstein*, Preface, vii- xii 5-44.
- F 26: *Frankenstein*, 44-73.

Week Nine: Reading Frankenstein

- M 29: *Frankenstein*, 73-114.
- W 31: *Frankenstein*, 114-156.

November

- F 2: Library Orientation Day. Details to be announced.

Week Ten: Filming Frank and Abstract of Final Essay Due in Conference.

- M 5: Whale, Karloff, et al., *Frankenstein* (1937), **RESERVE**.
- W 7: Brooks, Wilder, et al., *Young Frankenstein* (1974), **RESERVE**.
- F 9: Class Cancelled: Conferences with Kane in LA 111 over abstract.

Week Eleven:

- M 12: **No Class: Veterans' Day**
- W 14: Murfin, "What is Feminist Criticism?" **RESERVE**.
- F 16: Moers, "Female Gothic: the Monster's Mother," Norton Critical Edition of *Frankenstein*, [NC], 214-224.

Week Twelve: Females and *Frankenstein* & Holiday

- M 19: Johnson, "My Monster/My Self," NC, 241-251.
- W 21: **No Class: Holiday**
- F 23: **No Class: Holiday**

Week Thirteen: Theorizing *Frankenstein*. Rough Draft of Essay Due/Conferences

- M 26: Spivak, "*Frankenstein* and a Critique of Imperialism," NC, 262-270.
- W 28: Lipking, "*Frankenstein*, the True Story; or Rousseau Judges Jean-Jaques," NC, 313-331.
- F 30: No Class: Conferences with Kane in LA 111. Rough Draft of Essay Due in Conference

December

Week Fourteen: *Frankenstein* Nation: Culture and Criticism

- M 3: Murfin, "What is Cultural Criticism?" **RESERVE**.
- W 5: Branaugh, et al, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, **RESERVE**.
- F 7: Zakhariyeva, "*Frankenstein* of the Nineties: the Composite Body," **RESERVE**.

Week Fifteen: Queering Frankenstein.

M 10: Condon, McKellen, Redgrave, et al., *Gods and Monsters*, **RESERVE**.

W 12: Adler, White, Curry, Sarandon, et al. , *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, **RESERVE**.

F 14: Final Essay Due in LA 111 by 5:00 pm

Week Sixteen: Finals Week

NO FINAL IN THIS CLASS.