

Wendy Moffat
EC 408
Hours: M , W 3-5
and by appointment
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T-Th 9
EC 406
Spring 2009

English 220: Critical Approaches and Literary Methods

Required Texts:

Baker and Huling, Research Guide for Undergraduate Students (MLA)
Booth, Shakespeare's Sonnets (Yale U P)
Culler, Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford)
Fish, Is There a Text in This Class? (Harvard)
Forster, Howards End (Norton)
Kaufman, The Unbearable Lightness of Being (Waidner-Spahr Library DVD)
Kundera, The Unbearable Lightness of Being (HarperCollins)
Macey, ed., Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory (Penguin)
Richter, Falling Into Theory (Bedford St. Martin's)
and selected texts on Blackboard

Course Objectives:

In this course, we will examine what one actually *does* when interpreting a literary text, and identify and analyze the debates over the validity and variety of interpretive strategies. Students will write papers using different critical methods, applied to texts in several genres. We'll ask: who makes textual meaning? Where does it reside? Does a work of literature change over time, or is it timeless? How does the audience of a literary work shape its reception? How much does an author control a text? What are the boundaries of a literary text? What can we learn from adaptation from one genre to another? What is the purpose of studying literature? Which literature?

Student participation is a key element in this course. I plan to run the class by discussion. In the past, students have found the readings difficult, or different in kind from other literature classes. To be prepared for class may mean that you will have to read the assignment repeatedly. I recommend bringing an outline with questions to class. Use Macey, Culler, and other reference works to shape your understanding. We'll use Blackboard course discussion threads to supplement class time. Come to class actively prepared. Students who miss class, or sit silent, may receive a failing participation grade.

Writing:

The class focuses on the development of critical writing skills. There will be three interpretive papers, using different a different critical method, and a take-home final to apply concepts we learn over the semester. Each student **MUST** take a draft of **EACH** paper in some conceptual

stage to the Writing Center in Waidner-Spahr Library. Assigned tutors (who have taken this class) are: Kenzie Bryant, Megan Liberty, and Rachel Warzala.

Failure to use the Writing Center in the mandated way will result in a grade of F for the paper in question. Papers are due in class, along with your alert mind, on the date specified; late papers will receive a grade of F.

You must complete all written assignments, including those on Blackboard, to pass the class. The College has clear-cut rules regarding plagiarism. I will enforce these rules, and also require that you read the chapter on plagiarism in the MLA Handbook, which will be available on Blackboard.

In compliance with the Dickinson College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be recommended for students with disabilities. Such requests are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester. Students are required to register with Academic Resource Services, located on the first floor of Biddle House (contact x 1080 or waybranj@dickinson.edu) to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

Reading Schedule:

What is English, Anyway?

- 20 Jan. Close Reading the Syllabus.
- 22 Jan. Eagleton, Guillory in Richter; "New Criticism" and "Eagleton" in PDCT
- 27 Jan. Culler, ch. 2

New Criticism, or The World of the Word

- 29 Jan. Booth, Shakespeare's Sonnets (assigned sonnets) [paper assignment posted]
Sonnet architecture: the meaning of form
- 3 Feb. Booth, Shakespeare's Sonnets
- 5 Feb. Wimsatt & Beardsley "The Intentional Fallacy" (BB); Barry, "Theory Before Theory" (BB)
- 10 Feb. Booth's commentary
- 12 Feb. NO CLASS—Moffat Lecture at Tulane paper due
- 13 Feb. (Fri) **Paper due to due Ms. Winters-Fazio in EC 400 by 3pm**
Post thesis paragraphs on BB

Opening the Debate: Textuality and Reception

- 17 Feb. deGrazia and Stallybrass: essays on the history of the sonnet (BB)
- 19 Feb. Fish v. Booth: "What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?" in Fish

24 Feb. Sedgwick in Richter; Sonnets and Sex
26 Feb. Howards End (**post prospectus on paper #2 on BB** -- on literary and textual history, the canon, reader response, reception.)

3 Mar. Howards End

5 Mar. Howards End

Spring Break

17 Mar. Howards End; **paper # 2 due**

Author, Adaptation, Performance

19 Mar. Howards End (Norton Contextual materials)

24 Mar. Kaufman, Unbearable Lightness of Being

26 Mar. **Planning the research paper : authority, adaptation, performance**

31 Mar. Kaufman, Unbearable Lightness of Being

2 Apr. Kundera, essays on the novel, and kitsch (BB)

7 Apr. Context: Prague 1968

9 Apr. Kaufman, Unbearable Lightness of Being

14 Apr. Kundera, Unbearable Lightness of Being

16 Apr. Kundera, Unbearable Lightness of Being

21 Apr. Kundera, Biographical conundrums

23 Apr. Problems in context and authority: **Paper # 3 due**

28 Apr. Stump the Professor: Exam Preparation

30 Apr. Evaluations

5 pm, Monday 4 May: Take Home Final Exam due to me in EC 408

Final grades will be assigned on the following proportions:

Participation (including Blackboard): 10%

Close reading paper: 20%

Second paper: 20%

Third paper: 20%

Final exam: 30%

