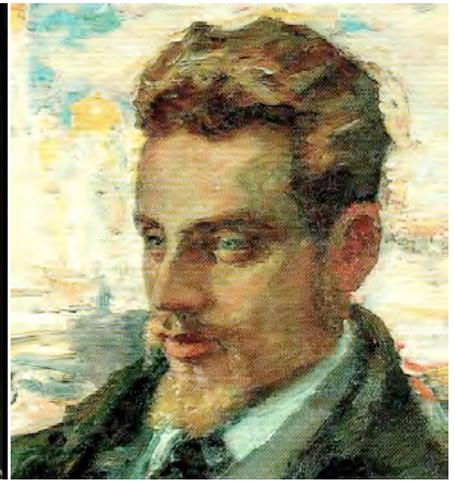


NARRATIVE THEORY AND POETICS



The reader should enrich what he is reading. He should misunderstand the text; he should change it into something else.
—Jorge Luis Borges

CRW 5321 — 12482 Narrative Theory and Poetics

HUDS 213 — Wednesday 3:00–5:50 PM — Fall 2016 — August 22–December 1, 2016

José de Piérola, Ph.D.

jdepierola@utep.edu — OFFICE: Education Building 906 — HOURS: TUESDAY 3:00–5:00 PM

Introduction

Poetics, understood as the study of narrative, both to describe and prescribe its rules and principles, has been a concern of critics and writers alike for more than two thousand years. In this seminar we will explore the meaning of poetics, and read some of the most influential texts in the field.

Our discussions will cover foundational texts, such as Aristotle’s *Poetics*, as well as statements made by writers and poets, but they will focus mostly on selected texts from the twentieth century. The final goal of this seminar is to provide a foundation that will allow students to explore other narrative theoretical frameworks, understand the *poetics* that in-

forms the works of fiction and poetry they read, and, whenever necessary, retool their own *poetics* to better suit their work.

Students registered in this course should have a basic understanding of the elements of fiction and a basic vocabulary to discuss poetry, should be able to write at the graduate level, and should be able to read analytically theory, fiction and poetry. This class will require students to read an average of twenty pages per week and participate in each week’s discussions. In addition, as a hybrid class, students are expected to interact with Blackboard for monthly discussions.

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Course Goals

- Grasp narrative theory within a historical context
- Understand the major theories on narrative developed in the 20TH century
- Have an overview of the poetics of major poets of the 20TH century
- Discover, develop and retool a personal *poetics*

Required Texts

The following texts are required to complete the class assignments. When electronic texts are available (marked as ebook below), a PDF of the full text will be posted on Blackboard under the corresponding week. Make sure that you have access to the required texts, or make arrangements to buy them in advance. A reading packet with short excerpts of all the theoretical texts will be available at Paper Chase (3233 N. Mesa Ste. 202 — 915-541-7072). This reading packet includes the sections that we will discuss in class; nevertheless, access to the full text is a must.

Nonfiction

- Aristotle: *Poetics* (ebook)
- Horace: *Ars Poetica* (ebook)
- R.M. Rilke: *Letters to a Young Poet* (ebook)
- Henry James: *The Art of Fiction* (ebook)
- Vladimir Propp: *Morphology of the Folktale*
- Mieke Bal: *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (3rd edition)
- Gérard Genette: *Narrative Discourse Revisited*
- N.J. Lowe: *The Classical Plot and the Invention of the Western Narrative*
- Jorge Luis Borges: *Selected Non-Fictions*
- Mario Vargas Llosa: *The Perpetual Orgy*

Fiction & Poetry

- Shakespeare: *Hamlet* (play)
- Hans Christian Andersen: *Three Tales* (ebook)
- Gustave Flaubert: *Madame Bovary* (ebook)
- Joseph Conrad: *The Secret Agent* (ebook)
- Michael Curtiz: *Casablanca* (film)
- W.G. Sebald: *Austerlitz* (The Modern Library ISBN 0-375-75656-6)
- *Selected Poems* (ebook)
- Other downloadable readings in PDF format will be posted as required.

Communication Channels

Most of the interaction in this class will happen in class. Nevertheless, if you need help outside the classroom, consider the following options:

- OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays from 3:00 to 5:00 PM @ Education Building 906. I encourage you to make an appointment. If the posted hours conflict with other classes, contact me.
- BY EMAIL: jdepierola@utep.edu. I reply to emails once a day, starting at 8:00PM, in the order in which they were received. Emails received after 8:00PM will be answered the next day.
- If all else fails, call the Creative Writing Department during business hours at (915) 747-5713.



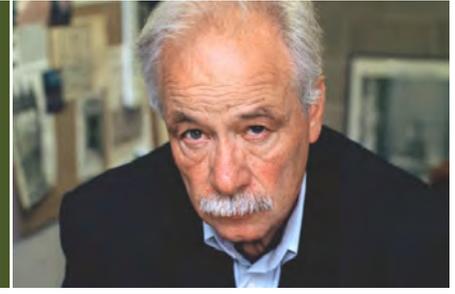
“In constructing the plot and working it out with the proper diction, the poet should place the scene, as far as possible, before his eyes.”
—Aristotle: *Poetics*





“You adulterate the truth as you write. There isn’t any pretense that you try to arrive at the literal truth. And the only consolation when you confess to this flaw is that you are seeking to arrive at poetic truth, which can be reached only through fabrication, imagination, stylization.”

— W.G. Sebald



Guidelines

- **GENERAL:** As a graduate seminar, there are no lectures in this class; your learning will depend on reading the assigned texts, responding critically to them, and engaging with other students’ ideas in the classroom and Blackboard.
 - **BLACKBOARD:** You will participate on a discussion board once a month. Make sure you complete the Blackboard tutorial as soon as possible.
 - **ATTENDANCE:** Students are expected to attend every class. Given that this is a once a week seminar, students cannot miss more than 2 classes, unless there are provable impediments.
 - **PARTICIPATION:** You are expected to participate in class either commenting on the text under discussion or posing relevant questions. Unrelated comments do not count.
 - **READINGS:** Students are expected to read each week’s selection in advance—including Week 1—and submit a concise Weekly Response.
 - **ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignments should be in a letter-size page, with 1.5” margins, 1.5 line spacing, and a 12 point Roman font (Garamond, Georgia, Palatino). The first page should bear on the upper right corner: name, date, assignment’s name, and word count, as follows.
- Henry James
September 7, 2016
The Binary World of *Madame Bovary*
600 words
- The following pages should bear on the upper right corner your last name and page number: James/9
 - Your writer’s statement should be formatted using the guidelines above, with the exception of the right margin, which should be: 2.5”. You may print your writer’s statement double sided.
 - **SUBMISSIONS:** Assignments will be turned in PDF format via email to jdepierola@utep.edu by 3:00PM the day they are due. You may submit your work until 10:00PM of the same day, but it will be considered late, and your grade reduced.
 - **WORKSHOP:** For the workshop section of our class, you will need to make copies of your work for all of your classmates. If possible, use double-sided printing on renewable-sourced paper.
 - **IMPORTANT:** We will be reading and producing texts in PDF format, as it is the most widely available standard for distributing formatted text. Make sure the computer you use has a PDF reader and that you know how to create a PDF.

Assignments

- **WEEKLY RESPONSE:** Due each week from Week 1 to Week 13. This is a two page (≈600 words) critical assessment of ONE of the texts we are reading each week. It should show that you have carefully read and thought about this particular text.
- **DISCUSSION BOARD:** Once a month, three Discussion Questions will be posted on Blackboard. You should POST a concise response to ONE of these by 4:00PM on Wednesday, and write a REPOST engaging with at least two other posts by 6:00PM. This will be your attendance and participation for that particular day (see Program).
- **PRESENTATION:** Due from Week 2 to Week 13. This is a 15 to 20 minute presentation on one of the texts of theory, fiction or poetry in our Program. This is a professional-grade presentation, which uses additional materials and visual aids as needed.
- **WRITER’S STATEMENT:** Due Week 13. This is a statement of your *poetics* as a working writer or poet. It can draw on ideas from the readings, or other sources, but it should present your “original” take, while acknowledging its sources. It should be at least 5 pages (≈1,500 words).
- **RESEARCH PROJECT:** Due Week 15. This is an essay about 15 pages long (≈4,500 words). You may write about any one of the works of fiction or poetry we have read, analyzing it with the theories we have discussed in class. It should show that you have a good command of the theory and how it applies to fiction and poetry. You are expected to submit a PROJECT PROPOSAL by Week 12.

Program

Week 1—AUG 24

- Syllabus — Discussion
- Aristotle: *Poetics*

Week 2—AUG 31

- Horace: *Ars Poetica*
- Todorov: “Definition of Poetics”

Week 3—SEP 7

- James: *The Art of Fiction*
- Flaubert: *Madame Bovary*

Week 4—SEP 14

- Propp: *Morphology of the Folktale*
- Andersen: “The Red Shoes,” “The Emperor’s New Clothes” & “The Snow Queen”
- BLACKBOARD—DISCUSSION BOARD

Week 5—SEP 21

- Bakhtin: “Discourse in the Novel”
- Conrad: *The Secret Agent*

Week 6—SEP 28

- Bal: “Narratology”
- Calvino: *Italian Folktales*

Week 7—OCT 5

- Genette: *Narrative Discourse Revisited*
- Cortázar: “Letter to a Young Lady in Paris,” “The Night Face Up” & “The Pursuer”

Week 8—OCT 12

- Lowe: “The Classical Plot”
- Shakespeare: *Hamlet*
- BLACKBOARD—DISCUSSION BOARD

Week 9—OCT 19

- Chatman: “Story: Events & Existents”
- Curtiz: *Casablanca*

Week 10—OCT 26

- Hutcheon: “Narcissistic Narrative”
- Vargas Llosa: “The Added Element”
- Sebald: *Austerlitz*

Week 11—NOV 2

- Rilke: *Letters to a Young Poet*
- “The Art of Poetry”:
Moore, Neruda, & McLeish
- *Selected Poems*:
Moore, Neruda & MacLeish

Week 12—NOV 9

- Rilke: *Letters to a Young Poet*
- “The Art of Poetry”:
Paz, Milosz & Szymborska
- *Selected Poems*:
Paz, Milosz & Szymborska
- NOV 12, 2014: RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE
- BLACKBOARD—DISCUSSION BOARD

Week 13—NOV 16

- Borges: *Selected Non-Fictions*
- Barthes: “The Death of the Author”
- Foucault: “What Is an Author?”
- NOV 19, 2014: WRITER’S STATEMENT DUE

Week 14—NOV 23

- Workshop: “Writer’s Statement”

Week 15—NOV 30

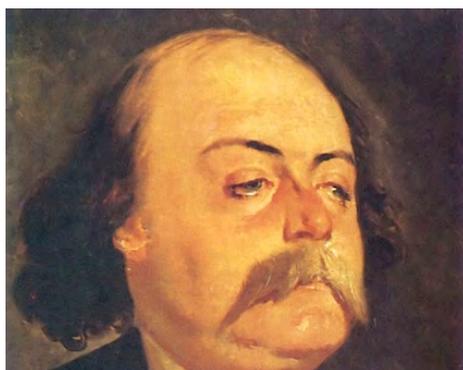
- Workshop — Final Review
- DEC 3, 2014: RESEARCH PROJECT DUE



“Nothing can ever happen twice. In consequence, the sorry fact is that we arrive here improvised and leave without the chance to practice.”
—Szymborska

Grading Policy

- Weekly Response 20%
- Attendance & Participation 20%
- Presentation 10%
- Writer’s Statement 20%
- Research Project 30%



“Madame Bovary c’est moi.”
—Gustave Flaubert

University Policy Statements

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC DISHONESTY STATEMENT: Cheating is unethical and not acceptable. Plagiarism is using information or original wording in a paper without giving credit to the source of that information or wording, and it is also not acceptable. Do not submit work under your name that you did not do yourself. You may not submit work for this class that you did for another class. If you are found to be cheating or plagiarizing, you will be subject to disciplinary action, per UTEP catalog policy. Refer to <http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm> for further information.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT: I will make any reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please, email me during the first two weeks or make an appointment to discuss any special needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services in the East Union Building, Room 106 within the first two weeks of classes. The Center for Accommodations and Support Services can also be reached in the following ways:

WEB: <http://sa.utep.edu>
PHONE: (915)747-5148 VOICE or TTY
FAX: (915)747-8712
EMAIL: cass@utep.edu