

# English 4314 • Literary Criticism • Fall 2020

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## Course Overview

This course examines the theory and application of several major critical approaches to the study of literature. You will critically read, analyze, and apply various forms of literary theory to selected works of literature. While we will explore major schools of theory and engage current trends in literary studies, we will focus more closely on the value of Critical Race Studies (CRS) to our understanding of literature. The aim of this class is to provide you with the critical tools to write about literature. Although the theoretical designs are often complex, I am confident that you will find the application of the theory to literary works both stimulating and rewarding.

## Required Texts

- *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Robert Dale Parker (Oxford University Press)
- *Hamlet*, William Shakespeare (Folger Shakespeare Library)
- *Othello*, William Shakespeare (Folger Shakespeare Library)

## Course Requirements

- 25% Quizzes
- 25% Journals
- 25% Essay 1
- 25% Essay 2

## Class Structure and COVID-19 Statement

This is an upper-level course, and its success depends on your preparedness to discuss and write about the assigned readings. You will have access to weekly folders that will contain all assignments for that week, which will include assigned readings, quizzes, and journal entries (with prompts). **We will meet via Zoom every Wednesday during our assigned class time (12:00 – 1:20 PM).**

I realize that as much as we want to return to a normal situation, this will not be a normal semester for any of us. The COVID-19 pandemic presents challenges that we likely never imagined, and as a result we ALL need to be understanding of the difficulties we will undoubtedly encounter as we move through this. I urge you to keep communication open with me during this time, and I will do my best to work with you. I also ask for your understanding. We are in this together, and my sincere hope is that you enjoy this class and that you succeed this semester.

## Quizzes

You will have weekly quizzes this semester, and they will be made available to you via Blackboard at the start of the week. You will have until Friday to complete the quiz, but please note that they are set up so that you have to finish the quiz in one sitting. Please prepare accordingly. Also, please be sure you are using a reliable device and stable internet access when starting these quizzes.

## Journals

Every week, I will give you a prompt and you will submit a journal entry that addresses that prompt. Entries should be 200-250 words in length. The idea of these journals is for you to engage with a

specific topic from the assigned reading, and to demonstrate that you have read and thought about the piece. I will be grading you based on your success of addressing the topic and quality of writing.

### Essay 1 & 2

You will write two essays this semester—one on *Hamlet* and one on *Othello*. For each essay, I will ask you to offer a close reading of the play through a specific critical/theoretical lens (i.e., postcolonial studies, critical race studies, gender studies, etc.). I will be grading your paper based on the clarity of your thesis, strength of your argument, adequate critical support, and quality of your writing. **Each essay should be roughly 1,000 words in length (4 double-spaced, typed pages)**. Please follow MLA style and format with standard 12-point font.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's ideas, words, or writing, and attempting to disguise them as your own. Plagiarism includes failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas, failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words. Copying another student's paper or searching the Internet for papers is also plagiarism. Penalties include a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, and suspension from the university.

## **SCHEDULE OF READING AND ASSIGNMENTS**

(Schedule of Reading and Assignments Subject to Change)

**[Secondary Readings (scholarly articles) will be provided to you on Blackboard]**

### Week 1 (August 24 - 28)

Reading: Parker, Ch. 1, Introduction & Ch. 2, New Criticism

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 8/28 by 10:00 PM

Journal: Due Friday, 8/28 by 10:00 PM

### Week 2 (August 31 – September 4)

Reading: Parker, Ch. 6, Feminism & Ch. 7, Queer Studies

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 9/4 by 10:00 PM

Journal: Due Friday, 9/4 by 10:00 PM

### Week 3 (September 7-11)

Reading: Parker, Ch. 8, Marxism

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 9/11 by 10:00 PM

Journal: Due Friday, 9/11 by 10:00 PM

### Week 4 (September 14 – 18)

Reading: Parker, Ch. 9, Historicism and Cultural Studies

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:00 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 9/18 by 10:00 PM

Journal: Due Friday, 9/18 by 10:00 PM

Week 5 (September 21 – 25)

Reading: Parker, Ch. 10, Postcolonial and Race Studies

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 9/25 by 10:00 PM

Journal: Due Friday, 9/25 by 10:00 PM

Week 6 (September 28 – October 2)

Reading: *Hamlet*

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 10/2 by 10:00 PM

Journal: Due Friday, 10/2 by 10:00 PM

Week 7 (October 5 – 9)

Reading: Secondary Reading on Blackboard

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 10/9 by 10:00 PM

Journal: Due Friday, 10/9 by 10:00 PM

Week 8 (October 12 – 16)

Reading: Secondary Reading on Blackboard

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 10/16 by 10:00 PM

Journal: Due Friday, 10/16 by 10:00 PM

Week 9 (October 19 – 23)

Reading: Secondary Reading on Blackboard

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 10/23 by 10:00 PM

**Essay 1: Due Friday, 10/23 by 11:45 PM**

Week 10 (October 26 – 30)

Reading: *Othello*

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 10/30 by 10:00 PM

Journal: Due Friday, 10/30 by 10:00 PM

Week 11 (November 2 – 6)

Reading: Secondary Reading on Blackboard

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM

Quiz: Due Friday, 11/6 by 10:00 PM

Journal: Due Friday, 11/6 by 10:00 PM

Week 12 (November 9 – 13)

Reading: Secondary Reading on Blackboard

Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM  
Quiz: Due Friday, 11/13 by 10:00 PM  
Journal: Due Friday, 11/13 by 10:00 PM

Week 13 (November 16 – 20)

Reading: Secondary Reading on Blackboard  
Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM  
Quiz: Due Friday, 11/20 by 10:00 PM  
Journal: Due Friday, 11/20 by 10:00 PM

Week 14 (November 23 – 25)

Reading: Secondary Reading on Blackboard  
Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM  
Quiz: Due Wednesday, 11/25 by 10:00 PM  
Journal: Due Wednesday, 11/25 by 10:00 PM

Week 15 (November 30 – December 3)

Reading: Secondary Reading on Blackboard  
Zoom Class Discussion: Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:20 PM  
Quiz: Due Thursday, 12/3 by 10:00 PM  
**Essay 2: Due Thursday, 12/3 by 11:45 PM**