



## **ENGLISH 4450: STUDIES IN LITERARY THEORY**

**Professor** David H. Wilson  
**Office** 248 Dwyer  
**Phone** 419.586.0317  
**Office Hours** MT 11-1 and by appointment  
**Email** david.wilson@wright.edu  
**Website** dharlanwilson.com  
**Pilot** pilot.wright.edu

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

English 4450 is a study of literary theory in which students will develop an understanding of critical questions and approaches. Students will be exposed to a broad range of texts from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries and enabled to critically perceive and engage with productions of meanings, significations and negotiations. The course introduces current methods and assumptions that are used to guide the analysis and interpretation of literary texts. Theoretical frameworks under scrutiny include formalism, structuralism, poststructuralism and deconstruction, psychoanalytic theory, Marxism, feminism and gender analyses, and historical contexts of interpretation. These frameworks offer eclectic ways of reading the terms and relations among desire, power, history, representation, textuality and identities.

### **TEXTBOOK**

Cain, William et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Second Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010.

### **COURSE EVALUATION**

Course grades will be based on the following percentages:

Assignments and Participation	20%
Unit #1 Review	20%
Unit #2 Review	20%
Final Essay	40%

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND PARTICIPATION**

Throughout the semester, you will be given a number of assignments (e.g., abstracts, précisés, group projects, etc.) to be completed both in and out of the classroom. In-class assignments will

generally not be given ahead of time; they will be issued during class and are to be completed during that class session.

Participation includes in-class speaking, activities, and responsive listening. Simply showing up for class does not constitute participation. You are expected to present your informed ideas and show respect for others in the classroom. Participation is mental and verbal attendance. You will be graded on how much you contribute to the learning environment of each class session.

## **UNIT REVIEWS**

In these 4-5 page reviews, you must select one theoretical essay that we have studied thus far in the course and write a detailed scholarly description and evaluation of that essay. Each review must exhibit the following: [1] an overview of the essay that underscores its thesis and explains how the author defends that thesis; and [2] an evaluation of the success or failure of the essay in which you identify and problematize its theoretical ideas.

You are not required to use secondary sources for this writing assignment. In fact, use of secondary sources is discouraged. I am interested in how you read and interpret the essay.

## **FINAL ESSAY**

This 6-8 page essay asks you to select a theme that we have discussed this quarter (e.g., power, gender, class, race, identity, etc.) and analyze how that theme manifests in THREE different theorists' writings. Each essay should be reinforced by secondary sources and make an effort to synthesize different interpretations of the theme in thoughtful and discerning ways.

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism occurs when a writer: [1] copies verbatim from an author without quotation or attempts to disguise the act by selective omissions or alterations; [2] paraphrases from an author without naming the source in the text of the paper or providing a list of references at the end; [3] turns in a paper written by somebody else. As a point of academic integrity, you are required to submit original material of your own creation. Plagiarism of any material is a serious offense and, if established with sufficient evidence, can result in failure of the course or dismissal from the university.

## **STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER (SSC)**



The Student Success Center offers FREE services to help students meet their full potential. Students can find tutoring in any subject, study buddies, one-on-one technology workshops, feedback on writing assignments, and general academic skills coaching. Web: [lake.wright.edu/ssc](http://lake.wright.edu/ssc). Phone: **419.586.0333**. Location: **182 Andrews**.

## **OFFICE OF DISABILITIES SERVICES (ODS)**

If a student has a disability that requires special accommodations, it is essential that he or she discuss it with the instructor and the Office of Disability Services before or during the first week

of the semester. ODS will work with these students on an individual basis to determine what services, equipment and accommodations would be appropriate regarding their documented needs. Students who qualify for these types of service should initiate contact with the instructor and/or ODS as soon as possible to enable the university to meet their needs. Please call Deanna Springer at **419.586.0366** or email her at **deanna.springer@wright.edu**. For more information, visit the ODS in **182 Andrews**.

### **LIBRARY AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER (LTC)**

The Library and Technology Center provides free access to scholarly resources in all formats. Students can also visit the LTC for assistance with creating or editing multimedia projects (i.e., PowerPoint, Voiceovers, Website development, etc.). Phone: **419.586.8400**. Location: **197A Andrews Hall**.

### **CLASS CALENDAR**

Below is a weekly breakdown of readings, film screenings and assignments.

#### UNIT 1 – HERMENEUTICS OF SUSPICION

- 1** Introduction to Theory and Criticism  
Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” and *The Birth of Tragedy*
- 2** Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* and *Capital*
- 3** Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, “The Uncanny” and “Fetishism”
- 4** FILM: *Army of Darkness*  
SUPPLEMENT: D. Harlan Wilson, “Schizosophy of the Medieval Dead”
- 5** **Due:** Unit #1 Review

#### UNIT 2 – LANGUAGE, POWER, IDENTITY

- 6** Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage” and “The Signification of the Phallus”
- 7** Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*
- 8** Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*
- 9** FILM: *Transformers*  
SUPPLEMENT: D. Harlan Wilson, “Technomasculine Bodies and Vehicles of Desire”
- 10** **Due:** Unit #2 Review

#### UNIT 3 – THEORIES OF MEDIA/TECHNOLOGY

- 11** Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

**12** Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

**13** Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra"  
Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs"

**14** FILM: *The Matrix*  
SUPPLEMENT: D. Harlan Wilson, "Terminal Choice in the Matrix Trilogy"

**15** Office Hours

**E** **Due:** Final Essay