

**San José State University**  
**Department of English & Comparative Literature**  
**English 204, Modern Approaches to Literature, Section 1**  
**Spring 2014**

**Instructor:** Revathi Krishnaswamy  
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**Office Hours:** M 12.00-1.00, W 3:00-4:00 & by appointment  
**Class Days/Time:** W 4.00-6.45  
**Classroom:** Health 405

**MYSJSU Messaging**

You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU (or other communication system as indicated by the instructor).

**Course Description**

This course deals with the multidisciplinary field of Critical Theory, which not only includes literary criticism but also cuts across other disciplines like psychology, philosophy, economics, political science, history, biology and others. Focusing mainly on theories and methodologies employed by literary scholars and critics of the 20th century, we will engage with fundamental questions about language, literature, and reading/writing: What is literature? How do we interpret it? How should we evaluate it? What is its relation to culture and to society? What are the rights and duties of artists? Of critics and scholars? We will try to understand major intellectual schools such as New Criticism, Structuralism, Marxism, Feminism, Deconstruction, New Historicism, Postcolonialism etc. and discover how the ideas may be applied to literature. While this course will challenge you to read a considerable amount of complex material, it should also be exhilarating because you will have an opportunity to form clearer perspectives on language/literature and to acquire tools you can use for interpreting language/literature.

## Required Texts

*The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* Ed. Vincent Leitch (N)  
Shakespeare. *The Tempest: A Case Study*. Ed. Gerald Graff. St. Martins. (T)  
Conrad. *Heart of Darkness: A Case Study*. Ed Ross C. Murfin. St Martins. (H)

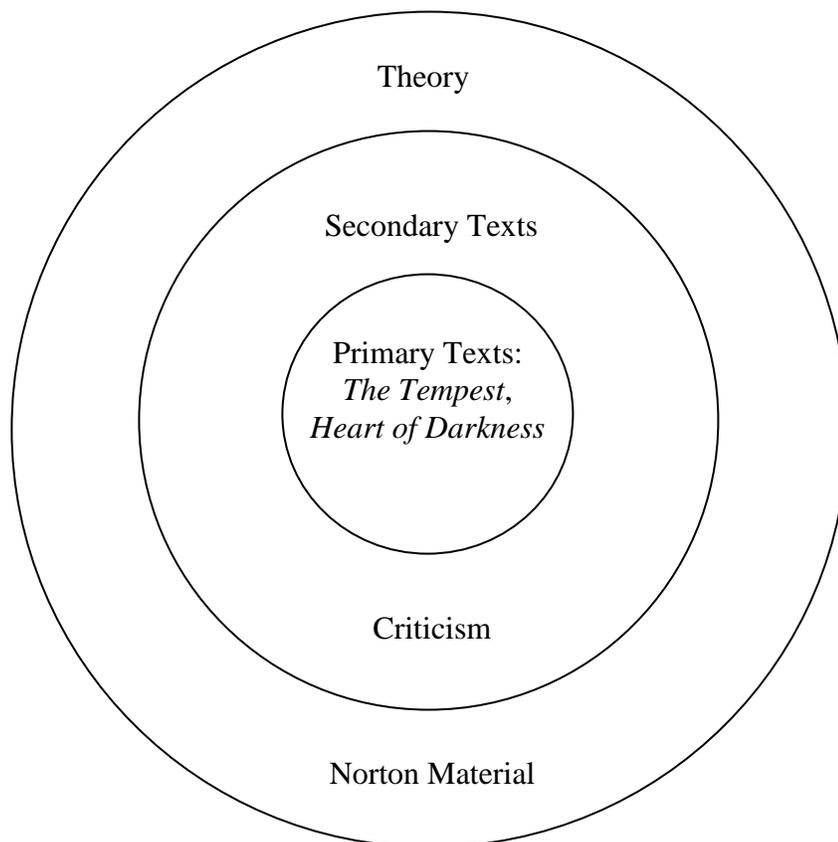
Course Reader (available at Maple Press, 481 E. San Carlos; between 10th & 11th next to Subway; ph: 297-1000) (CP)

## Recommended Texts:

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today*. New York & London: Garland.  
(a simple user-friendly intro to theory)

Murfin and Ray: *The Bedford Glossary of Literary Terms*

The course materials are organized into three categories that may be visualized in the form of three concentric circles.



The innermost circle consists of two major primary texts: Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. I have chosen these two texts both because they have attracted a significant amount of criticism from a variety of perspectives and because they are widely taught/studied. The next circle is made up of critical essays or secondary texts that analyze and interpret the primary texts from a variety of theoretical approaches. The last or outermost circle consists of original essays/statements by major theorists. You will be reading the two primary texts (innermost circle) mostly on your own. Generally speaking, the first half of every class will focus on a particular theory and will consist of a lecture that deals with materials from the outermost circle (Norton readings). In the second half of the class, which focuses on criticism (middle circle), you will be asked to bring one-page summaries to discuss the readings.

### **Graduate Program Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.
3. Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline and d) write under time constraints.
5. Students will demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.
6. Students preparing for teaching careers will receive the appropriate instruction.
7. Students will be prepared for further graduate study.

### **Course Student Learning Objectives**

- a. Demonstrate familiarity with different modern schools of literary/cultural theory
- b. Demonstrate familiarity with major theorists/critics/texts associated with each school
- c. Understand and use the key concepts and terms associated with each major school of literary criticism.
- d. Apply different critical theories to analyze various literary texts and cultural/artistic products.
- e. Communicate their ideas/analysis in cogent, critical language, both orally and in writing.

### **Assignments and Grading Policy**

1. You will write four 500 word/2-page essays or "applications" using only the primary texts provided in the "Application Materials" section of the course pack. *You may not write applications on either *The Tempest* or *Heart of Darkness*.* When a theory is too complex to be applied within the specified limit, a clear summary of the kind of argument you would develop in a longer essay is acceptable. You are encouraged work with the same primary text for all four essays. Apply only those theoretical approaches we have finished discussing in class. Applications will be collected on

the dates indicated in the schedule; you will be asked to share these applications in class from time to time. Grading criteria: Demonstrated ability to apply a particular theory or approach to an artistic work; insightfulness of analysis; clarity of expression. (SLO 1, 3, d, c, e)

2. For each essay in criticism we read you will prepare a typed one-page response consisting of (i) bullet-pointed summary of three key ideas (ii) a brief example from the essay to show how a particular theory is being applied (iii) an explicit link to one or more theoretical readings in the form of a quote or reference. You will bring these responses to class to share during discussions. You may be asked to use your written response to lead class discussion. You may make hand-written notes/revisions on these during or after class. You will maintain these in the form of a portfolio that will be collected on the date indicated in the schedule.

Grading criteria: Demonstrated engagement with material; accuracy of summary; aptness of example and link to theory. (SLO 1, 4, a, b, e)

3. You will take two short quizzes on the dates indicated in the schedule. These will involve providing definitions of key terms/concepts as well as commenting on excerpted passages of literary criticism. The questions are meant to assess both your understanding of the course material and your ability to integrate and apply the concepts and methods we study. (SLO 1, c, e)

4. You will write a seminar paper (2000 words) comparing/contrasting three different critical essays on either *The Tempest* or *Heart of Darkness*. Focusing on specific characteristic of the theory behind each critic's interpretation of the literary text, your essay will assess the relative merits of the three approaches/interpretations. Creative Writing Option: You can recreate/rewrite a key scene from either *The Tempest* or *Heart of Darkness* from three different theoretical perspectives. Each rewrite must be accompanied by a 250-word analysis or commentary explaining how the theory in question is being applied. (SLO 2, 4, b, c)

Grading criteria: demonstrated understanding of the material; insightfulness of analysis; originality and creativity of rewrites; clarity of presentation.

### **Grading:**

Applications	40%
Portfolio	10 %
Quizzes	20%
Paper	20%
Participation	10%

The following statements have been adopted by the English department:

1. In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

2. Grading Policy: The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. Courses graded according to the A,B,C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC, for No Credit, shall replace D or F. In A,B,C, No Credit courses NC shall also substitute for W (Withdrawal) because neither NC nor W affects students' grade point average.

## Classroom Protocol

**Attendance & Participation:** Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions are extremely important. Please arrive on time and stay for the entire class. You are responsible for all materials assigned, presented and discussed. You are encouraged to take notes in class, but you should have studied the materials before class begins. Poor attendance/participation will have negative effects on your final grade.

Since most classes will be based on group discussions, presentations and workshops it is crucial for you to keep up with the readings and take an active as well as thoughtful role in all classroom activities. Your questions, comments, insights, and interpretations are valuable no matter how outlandish they may seem. So do speak up!

**Conferencing:** I encourage you to visit me in my office whenever you need to discuss something, whether it is an assignment or any other difficulty you may be having with the structure and format of the class. I am completely open to criticism and suggestions because the only way I can fix things is if I know what is wrong.

**Submitting work:** All work must be turned in on paper during the class period on the date indicated in the schedule; please do not email assignments to me unless I ask you to do so.

All readings are listed against dates they will be discussed in class; so when you come to class you should have already read the materials and be prepared to discuss them

## Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. [Information on add/drops are available at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html) . [Information about late drop is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/) . Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

## University Policies

### Academic integrity

Students should know that the University's [Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial\\_affairs/Academic\\_Integrity\\_Policy\\_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf).

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for [Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted,

or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

### **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

### **Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

### **Learning Assistance Resource Center**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. [The LARC website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/).

### **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. [The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/).

### **Peer Mentor Center**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering "roadside assistance" to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentor Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/>.

## Course Number / Title, Semester, Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change with fair notice made available via mysjsu.*

Strongly Recommended: Read appropriate chapter from Tyson

N = Norton Anthology

T = Tempest Casebook

H = Heart of Darkness Casebook

CR = Course Reader

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/29	Introduction: Theory & Criticism; Classical & Romantic theories; Mimetic & Expressive theories; Reading With/Against the Grain. Intro <i>Tempest</i> & <i>H of D</i> .
2	02/05	<b>Formalism: New Criticism.</b> <u>Theory</u> : Eliot (N1092-98); Ransom (N 1108-18); Brooks (N 1366-71) <u>Criticism</u> : Reuben Brower "The Mirror of Analogy" (T) Workshop: writing applications
3	02/12	<b>Formalism: Structuralism &amp; Semiotics</b> <u>Theory</u> : Saussure (N 956-77); Frye (N 1442-57) <u>Criticism</u> : Frye "Shakespeare's The Tempest" (CR)
4	02/19	<b>Poststructuralism: Deconstruction</b> <u>Theory</u> : Derrida (N 1815-76) <u>Criticism</u> : Miko "The Tempest" (CR); Miller "Heart of Darkness Revisited" (H) <b>Application #1 Due</b>
5	02/26	Review; Feedback on Application
6	03/05	<b>Poststructuralism: New Historicism</b> <u>Theory</u> : Foucault (N 1622-36); Greenblatt (N 2250-54) <u>Criticism</u> : Frank Kermode "Shakespeare's final plays"; Brown "This Thing of Darkness"; Barker & Hulme "Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish" (all in T)
7	03/12	<b>Postcolonialism</b> <u>Theory</u> : Fanon (N 1575-92); Said (N 1986-2011) <u>Criticism</u> : Loomba "The Postcolonial Tempest" (CR); Achebe (N 1781- 93); Patrick Brantlinger "Heart of Darkness" (H) <b>Application #2 Due</b>
8	03/19	<b>The Postmodern</b> <u>Theory</u> : Lyotard (N 1609-15); Jameson (N 1960-74)
9	03/24-30	<b>Spring Break</b>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
10	04/02	<p><b>Quiz #1</b>  <b>Feminism</b>  <u>Theory</u>: de Beauvoir (N 1403-14); Cixous (N 2035-56)  <u>Criticism</u>: Thompson "Miranda, Where's Your Sister?"; Loomba "Gender, race &amp; renaissance drama" (both in T); Smith "Too Beautiful Altogether" (H)</p>
11	04/09	<p><b>Marxism</b>  <u>Theory</u>: Gramsci (N 1135-43); Williams (N 1565-75); Jameson (N1937-59)  <u>Criticism</u>: Brook Thomas "Preserving and keeping order" (H);  <b>Application #3 Due</b></p>
12	04/16	<p><b>Psychoanalytic Criticism</b>  <u>Theory</u>: Freud (N 919-51); Jung (N 990-1002); Lacan (N 1156-1186)  <u>Criticism</u>: Bernard Paris "The Tempest" (CR); Frederick Karl: "Introduction to the Dance Macabre" (CR)</p>
13	04/23	<p><b>Reader-Response</b>  <u>Theory</u>: Iser (N 1670-81); Fish (N 2067-88)  <u>Criticism</u>: Skilleas "Anachronistic Themes" (CR); Peter Rabinowitz "Reader Response, Reader Responsibility" (H);  <b>Application #4 Due</b></p>
14	04/30	<p>Hogan: Ethnocentrism and the very Idea of Literary Theory (CR)  Krishnaswamy: World Literary Knowledges (CR)  <b>Portfolio Due</b></p>
15	05/07	<p><b>Quiz #2</b>  Final consultation on seminar paper</p>
16	05/12	<p><b>Seminar paper due.</b></p>