

“Doing Things With/To Texts”  
English 271 Literary Analysis  
Section 23591/6676 Autumn 2005 (3 credits)

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Thursday 3.30 – 6.00  
EML 378  
Office Hours: 2-3.00 PM TTh  
and by appointment

[www.ndsu.edu/ndsu/maune](http://www.ndsu.edu/ndsu/maune) and <http://bb.ndsu.nodak.edu/>

### Objectives

According to the course catalogue, this class is an "introduction to traditional and contemporary approaches in the study of literature and the fundamental skills required for the analysis of literary texts." Everyone uses some sort of an approach when reading, talking, and/or writing about literature. Since the 1960s, these theories have multiplied and their study has become as much a subject in English departments as literature. Like the other 200-level literature courses in the department, this course is a general survey. The goal is to help familiarize you with various literary theories, enable you to recognize them, and give you an opportunity to use them yourself. We will also spend the first part of the course reviewing and practicing close reading strategies that are at the heart of any theoretical intervention. By the end of the course, you should be able to identify the major theoretical schools, their assumptions, terminology, issues, and their relationship to each other. You should have a firm grasp of close reading and be able to execute close readings of literary texts.

### Requirements and Methods

Because of the great range of writing covered by this course and the comparatively large number of students, the dominant mode of this course will be lecture/discussion. My lectures will be open in that I expect you to interrupt me with questions and comments. I also will pause regularly to address questions to you based on the day's reading. We will engage in small group discussions as well. Thus, your preparation for class must include a readiness to talk about the texts and ideas we are studying. I will occasionally introduce texts not assigned for homework so that we can work through them together. Because this course involves the study of theories, learning and using terminology is an important part of the work. In order to facilitate this learning, there will be ten quizzes, a mid-term and a final examination. You will also complete a group project and a reading journal. Details of these assignments can be found below.

<b>Grading</b>		<b>Scale</b> (Grade book available at Blackboard site)	
Midterm exam	100 points	A	100-90 %
10 Quizzes	100 points	B	89-80 %
Final exam	100 points	C	79-70 %
Reading Journal	200 points	D	69-60 %
Theory Chart	100 points		
Total	600 points		

### **Texts**

Charles E. Bressler. *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, 3rd Edition

Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness*

Aphra Behn. *Oroonoko*

Jeanette Winterson. *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*

Tayeb Salih. *Season of Migration to the North*

Edward Albee. *Zoo Story*

A dictionary (bring to every class)

Sticky notes

### **Students with Special Needs**

Any students with disabilities or other special needs that need special accommodations in this course are asked to share these concerns with me as soon as possible.

### **Academic Honesty**

I assume that all work you turn in for this course is yours, and any material that you have acquired from an outside source is documented properly. Failure to do so is considered plagiarism and will result in possible failure of the course. See NDSU University Senate Policy, Section 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct <http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/policy/335.htm>.

### **Late Papers**

Late papers will lose ten points per day until they are turned in. You are responsible for turning in all work assigned in this class. Failure to do so will result in failing this class.

### **Attendance and Participation**

As this class meets only once a week, prompt and consistent attendance for the entire class period is an important part of this course. The course builds incrementally through the semester, so missing one class is liable to impair your understanding of subsequent material. If you do miss a class, you are still responsible for the material we covered. Not only are you responsible for material covered in class, you are responsible for actively participating in each class meeting. Coming late is disruptive to discussion and especially to group work. If something does happen, you must contact me via phone, answering machine or email within 24 hours.

Participation includes not only contributing to class discussion, it also covers prompt attendance, listening and responding constructively to your classmates, attending class prepared to discuss the readings, and bringing your books to every class meeting.

### **Paper Format**

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be type-written, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, in twelve-point Times font. Your name, the date, the class, my name and the assignment are to be at the top of the first page. Do not forget to title your work. Any papers longer than one page must have page numbers and be stapled.

### **Quizzes**

These will be unannounced, handed out at the beginning of the class period and collected after fifteen minutes. If you miss a quiz, you may not make it up. The questions will be short answer and based on the homework and lecture material.

### **Mid-term and Final Exams**

These exams are designed to allow you to demonstrate your knowledge of the course subject matter and your ability to use the subject matter in a critical and analytical way. That is, I expect more than a simple repetition of course material. The take home essays in particular are opportunities for you to demonstrate your analytical abilities. The mid-term exam will cover the material up to and including week eight. It will have three parts, a take-home essay due on the day of the exam, short answer, identification of quotes and excerpts. Expect material that has appeared on quizzes, ideas introduced in class lectures and discussions, and pay particular attention to any terms written on the board. The final exam will cover material from week nine until the end of the course. It will also include a take home portion, a short answer, and identification and cover material in the same way as above.

### **Reading Journal**

This is a type-written collection of your writings about the texts and theories we will be studying. You will make at least two 250 word entries on the five primary literary texts and at least one 250 word entry on each theory we explore. I will also ask you to include several explications and annotations of the poems and stories that we will read.

For the primary literary texts, I am interested in your reaction to the work as a piece of literature. What elements were the most meaningful to you? What surprised you or disappointed you? I do not want to read your gut reaction or your thoughts off the top of your head. These entries will be based on your opinion, but you must support your opinion with textual evidence such as identification of literary elements, quotations or paraphrases. As the class develops, you are welcome to refer to class discussions, other texts, and the theories we are examining.

For the literary theories, I am interested in what you find useful or difficult about the theory. You might criticize the theory, pose questions about it, or try to work through ideas that are not clear to you. As with above, I do not want your first reaction or thoughts off the top of your head.

An explication is a commentary or interpretation of a short text from beginning to end. It identifies and explains the importance of the various literary elements in the text. Yours should be 300 - 500 words.

An analysis is similar to an explication, but it focuses on one element of a longer text. Rather than identifying and explaining all of the literary elements in a text, it chooses one or several related elements. This also should be 300 - 500 words.

Annotations are the rough initial work you do on a text. You probably already do this to some extent. Guidelines for annotating are at the end of this syllabus in the section reading and annotating. I will look for identification of literary elements, your own commentary and questions, and definitions of unfamiliar terms.

I will check your journals periodically throughout the semester, so be certain to update them regularly and bring them to every class.

### **Theory Chart**

This is a group project that you will compile throughout the term and turn in on the last day of class. This chart should be a verbal and visual guide to all of the theories that we study this term. It should identify the theories and give fundamental information about each theory that allows the reader to identify and to compare and contrast the theories with each other. You must generate criteria with which each theory will be categorized (i.e. notable practitioners, terminology, basic assumptions). The actual format and size of the chart is up to your group. The chart must have a bibliography in MLA format that lists the texts used to compile the chart.

The chart should serve two audiences. It should be a resource for you that summarizes the class material so that you can consult it in the future. It should also be clear enough that a student taking this course in the future could use it as a guide.

You will prepare this chart in groups that I will assign. In order to get credit for the chart and the work you do, you must follow the rules for group projects, at the end of the syllabus.

This project will be scored based on its comprehensiveness, accessibility, and clarity.

### **Rules for Group Projects**

In order for evaluation and grading to be consistent and reflect work done by individuals, a number of procedures must be followed. Ethical group participation means that each member is responsible for the group's performance. Each member must contribute as well as encourage others to contribute.

During the first group meeting, the group must generate an agreement that describes the group's goal. The goal will be to earn a high score on the project, but in a way that values the opinions of all members. Group members must be committed to the group's goals, complete their individual tasks, avoid interpersonal conflict, encourage group participation, and keep the discussion focused. The group must compose a Code of Ethics that describes the goals and responsibilities of the group. This is to be no more than one page, it must list the group number, each member's name and contact information (whatever means is most reliable), the group's goal, and the responsibilities of members. Each group member and the instructor must receive a typed copy of this.

Each group must meet at least five times outside of class for each project.

On the day the group project is due, each group member must fill out and turn in a *Group Member Evaluation Form* for each member. Each member must also fill out and turn in a *Peer Rating of Group Members*. These forms are available for download from the course website. <http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/ndsu/maune/English271Autumn2005Assignments.html> These forms must be turned in along with the project on the due date.

The group will earn a single score for the project. This score will be modified by the peer response forms in order to determine each student's score.

Group Code of Ethics due: Thursday 6 October

Theory Chart due: Thursday 8 December

## Calendar

While I have not noted it, I expect you to read the relevant introductions and section heads for each assignment.

Week 1 25 August

Introductions, Close Reading  
“Araby,” “The Use of Force,” “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” “Red Wheelbarrow,”  
“Digging”

Week 2 1 September

History of Criticism, Bressler Chapters 1 & 2  
“Ozymandias,” “From the Air,” “Unknown Citizens,” “The Lottery,” “To His Coy  
Mistress,” “Leda and the Swan”

Week 3 8 September

New Criticism, Bressler Chapter 3  
*Heart of Darkness* pp. 1-55;

Week 4 15 September

Psychoanalytic, Bressler Chapter 7  
*Heart of Darkness* pp. 55-90; “To Autumn”

Week 5 22 September

Psychoanalytic continued  
*Heart of Darkness* pp. 90-124;

Week 6 29 September

Structuralism, Bressler Chapter 5  
*Oroonoko*

Week 7 6 October

Structuralism continued  
*Oroonoko*  
Code of Ethics due

Week 8 13 October

Deconstruction, Bressler Chapter 6

Week 9 20 October

Midterm Exam

Week 10 27 October

Reader Response, Bressler Chapter 4  
*Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*

Week 11 3 November

Feminism, Bressler Chapter 8  
*Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*

Week 12 10 November

Marxism, Bressler Chapter 9  
*Zoo Story*

Week 13 17 November

New Historicism, Bressler Chapter 10  
*Zoo Story*

Week 14 24 November (no class, Thanksgiving)

Week 1 December

Cultural Studies and Postcolonialism, Bressler Chapter 11  
*Season of Migration to the North*

Week 16 8 December

*Season of Migration to the North*  
Theory chart due

12 December (Monday) Final Exam (3.30 – 4.45)

### **Subject to Revision**

#### **Books on Reserve at the Library**

Abrams, M.H., ed. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 6th ed. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich College, 1993. PN44.5 .a2 1993

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. PN81.c857 1997

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983. PN94.e2 1983

Groden, Michael, Martin Kreiswirth, and Imre Szeman, eds. *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism*. 2nd ed. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005. PN81.j554 1994

Holman, . C. Hugh and William Harmon, eds. *A Handbook to Literature*. 5th ed. New York: Macmillan, 1986. PN41.h6 1992

Lentricchia, Frank and Thomas McLaughlin, eds. *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1995. PN 81.c84 1995

### Reading and Annotating

Before you start, make some notes in your journal about your general impression of the text, who is the author? What is the genre? What are my expectations of the text? Be sure to read the introduction.

As you read the text for the first time, note (underline/circle):

- unfamiliar words
- the first appearance of a character
- clues about the setting
- repeated literary elements (e.g. images, symbols, metaphors)
- pause occasionally to make observations/predictions/summaries in the margins

Once you have finished reading, write a few sentences about your initial impressions:

- Who seemed to be the most important character?
- Where and when was it set?
- What is the point of view?
- What seems to be the conflict?
- What is not clear about the text?
- What will you pay particular attention to when you read it again?

Read the text again. This time:

- look up unfamiliar words;
- keep a list of characters and their relationships to each other;
- identify the setting (this may require research);
- continue to note repeated elements as well as any other literary elements;
- revise (but don't erase) your marginal comments;
- when you have finished, cross check the comments you wrote the first time and correct or expand your initial impressions;
- note elements that do not seem to be identified in the text, missing information;
- write two or three sentences (or more) summarizing the text.

Write down at least three interpretive questions about the text. These are questions that require the person answering to draw on the text to prepare their answer. These may be questions to which you know the answer; questions to which you do not know the answer; or questions to which you are unsure of the answer and would like to know someone else's thoughts.

Poetry-specific reading questions (number the lines)

- Who is the speaker and what do I know about her/him?
- What is the occasion for the poem?
- Who is the audience for the poem?
- What is the form, rhyme scheme, meter, alliteration and other poetical features?

Drama-specific reading questions

- Who are the characters and what are their relationships to each other?
- To what extent do stage directions shape the play?
- How does the setting function as a literal visual space?
- What you imagine happens on stage?
- What does the visual element contribute to the play?

### Conventions for Writing and Talking about Literature

- Use the present tense (rather than past) to discuss or to summarize.
- Use the past tense to describe historical events, give historical or biographical information, or to describe events that happened before the setting of the text.
- Support your ideas and points with specific examples from the text such as, quotations, line numbers, page numbers, or summaries or paraphrases
- Do not summarize if it does not support your idea
- Be clear about literary terms such as speaker, narrator, author, poem, short story, novel, play, narrative. Do not assume that a text is expressing the author's ideas unless the text explicitly indicates that this is the case. Do not use the word story to refer to anything except a short story.
- Italicize or underline titles of novels, films, magazines, newspapers, and plays. Titles of short stories, essays, articles, songs, and poems are put in quotation marks.
- The first time you mention an author, use his/her full name. From that point on, only use the last name. Never use the first name.

### Grade Guidelines

These descriptions apply to the final grade in the class and the score on particular assignments.

A work is outstanding. It goes beyond the basic requirements of the assignment and the class. The work shows evidence of critical and original thinking. Ideas are clearly supported and explained.

B work is more than satisfactory. It shows understanding of the given task and an understanding of the rules for writing as set out in the syllabus. Thinking is clear, though not necessarily highly critical or highly original. Ideas are supported and explained, although not always clearly or consistently.

C work is satisfactory. It shows familiarity with though not a complete understanding of the given task and rules for writing as set out in the syllabus. Thought shows inconsistent critical engagement or originality. Ideas are too broad and not clearly supported with evidence. Writing tends to summarize or describe rather than analyze.

D work is below average. It shows an inconsistent understanding of the given task, text, and rules. Thought and writing are often disorganized and do not communicate an understanding of audience or genre. Paper seems to be written quickly with little attention to revision or proofreading.

F work is unsatisfactory. It shows little if any understanding of the given task, text, or rules. Thought and writing are disorganized and do not communicate an understanding of audience or genre.



“The Red Wheelbarrow”  
by William Carlos Williams

so much depends  
upon

a red wheel  
barrow

glazed with rain  
water

beside the white  
chickens.

(1923)

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"  
by William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed-and gazed-but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.  
(1804)

“The Use of Force”  
William Carlos Williams

They were new patients to me, all I had was the name Olson. Please send someone down as soon as you can, my daughter is very sick.

When I arrived I was met by the mother, a big startled looking woman, very clean and apologetic who merely said, Is this the doctor? and let me in. In the back, she added. You must excuse us doctor, we have her in the kitchen where it is warm. It is very damp in here sometimes.

The child was fully dressed and sitting on her father's lap near the kitchen table. He tried to get up, but I motioned for him not to bother, took off my overcoat and started to look things over. I could see that they were all very nervous, eyeing me up and down distrustfully. As often, in such cases, they weren't telling me more than they had to, it was up to me to tell them; that's why they were spending three dollars on me.

The child was fairly eating me up with her cold, steady eyes, and no expression to her face whatever. She did not move and seemed, inwardly, quiet; an unusually attractive little thing, and as strong as a heifer in appearance. But her face was flushed, she was breathing rapidly, and I realized she had a high fever. She had magnificent blonde hair, in profusion. One of those picture children often reproduced in advertising leaflets and the photogravure sections of the Sunday papers.

She's had a fever for three days, began the father and we don't know what it comes from. My wife has given her things, you know, like people do, but it don't do no good. And there's been a lot of sickness around. So we tho't you'd better look her over and tell us what is the matter.

As doctors often do I took a trial shot at it as a point of departure. Has she had a sore throat?

Both parents answered me together, No... No, she says her throat don't hurt her.

Does your throat hurt you? added the mother to the child. But the little girl's expression did not change nor did she move her eyes from my face.

Have you looked?

I tried to, said the mother, but I couldn't see.

As it happens we have been having a number of cases of diphtheria in the school to which this child went during that month and we were all, quite apparently, thinking of that, though no one had as yet spoken of the thing.

Well, I said, suppose we take a look at the throat first. I smiled in my best professional manner and asking for the child's first name I said, come one Mathilda, open your mouth and let's take a look at your throat.

Nothing doing.

Aw, come on, I coaxed, just open your mouth wide and let me look. Look, I said, opening both hands wide, I haven't anything in my hands. Just open up and let me see.

Such a nice man, put in the mother. Look how kind he is to you. Come on, do what he tells you to. He won't hurt you.

At that I ground my teeth in disgust. If only they wouldn't use the word "hurt" I might be able to get somewhere. But I did not allow myself to be hurried or disturbed but speaking quietly and slowly I approached the child again.

As I moved my chair a little nearer suddenly with one cat-like movement both her hands clawed instinctively for my eyes and she almost reached them too. In fact she knocked my glasses flying and they fell, though unbroken, several feet away from me on the kitchen floor.

Both the mother and father almost turned themselves inside out in embarrassment and apology. You bad girl, said the mother, taking her and shaking her by one arm. Look what you've done. The nice man ....

For heaven's sake, I broke in. Don't call me a nice man to her. I'm here to look at her throat on the chance that she might have diphtheria and possibly die of it. But that's nothing to her. Look here, I said to the child, we're going to look at your throat. You're old enough to understand what I'm saying. Will you open it now by yourself or shall we have to open it for you?

Not a move. Even her expression hadn't changed. Her breaths however were coming faster and faster. Then the battle began. I had to do it. I had to have a throat culture for her own protection. But first I told the parents it was entirely up to them. I explained the danger but said I would not insist on a throat examination so long as they would take the responsibility.

If you don't do what the doctor says you'll have to go to the hospital, the mother admonished her severely.

Oh yeah? I had to smile to myself. After all, I had already fallen in love with the savage brat, the parents were contemptible to me. In the ensuing struggle they grew more and more abject, crushed, exhausted while she surely rose to magnificent heights of insane fury of effort bred of her terror of me.

The father tried his best, and he was a big man but the fact that she was his daughter, his shame at her behavior and his dread of hurting her made him release her just at the crucial moment several times when I almost achieved success, till I wanted to kill him. But his dread also that she might have diphtheria made him tell me to go on, go on though he himself was almost fainting, while the mother moved back and forth behind us raising and lowering her hands in an agony of apprehension.

Put her in front of you on your lap, I ordered, and hold both her wrists.

But as soon as he did the child let out a scream. Don't you're hurting me. Let go of my hands. Let them go I tell you. Then she shrieked terrifyingly, hysterically. Stop it! Stop it! You're killing me!

Do you think she can stand it, doctor! said the mother.

You get out, said the husband to his wife. Do you want her to die of diphtheria?

Come on now, hold her, I said.

Then I grasped the child's head with my left hand and tried to get the wooden tongue depressor between her teeth. She fought, with clenched teeth, desperately! But now I also had grown furious ~ at a child. I tried to hold myself down but I couldn't. I know how to expose a throat for inspection. And I did my best. When I finally got the wooden spatula behind the last teeth and just the point of it into the mouth cavity, she opened up for an instant but before I could see anything she came down again and gripping the wooden blade between her molars she reduced it to splinters before I could get it out again.

Aren't you ashamed, the mother yelled at her. Aren't you ashamed to act like that in front of the doctor?

Get me a smooth-handled spoon of some sort, I told the mother. We're going through with this. The child's mouth was already bleeding. Her tongue was cut and she was screaming in wild hysterical shrieks. Perhaps I should have desisted and come back in an hour or more. No doubt it would have been better. But I have seen at least two children lying dead in bed because of neglect in such cases, and feeling that I must get a diagnosis now or never I went at it again. But the worst of it was that I too had got beyond reason. I could have torn the child apart in my own fury and enjoyed it. It was a pleasure to attack her. My face was burning with it.

The damned little brat must be protected against her own idiocy, one says to one's self at such times. Others must be protected against her. It is a social necessity. And all these things are true. But a blind fury, a feeling of adult shame, bred of a longing for muscular release are the operatives. One goes on to the end.

In a final unreasoning assault I overpowered the child's neck and jaws. I forced the heavy silver spoon back of her teeth and down her throat till she gagged. And there it was ~ both tonsils covered with membrane. She had fought valiantly to keep me from knowing her secret. She had been hiding that sore throat for three days at least and lying to her parents in order to escape just such an outcome as this.

Now truly she *was* furious. She had been on the defensive before but now she attacked. Tried to get off her father's lap and fly at me while tears of defeat blinded her eyes.

(1938)