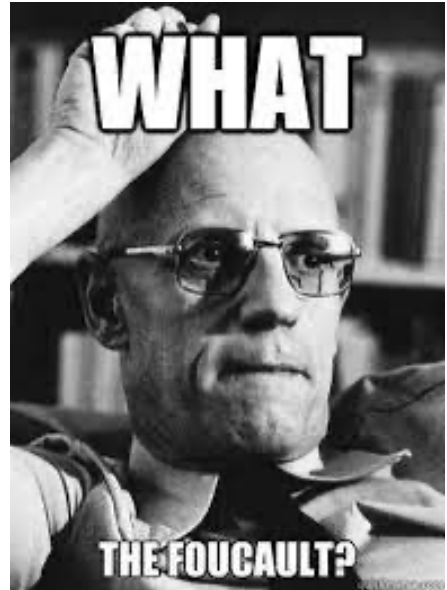


Course: Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theories
Status: Optional, Elective; 2h/week
Instructor: Dr. Lorelei Caraman
Email: lorelei.caraman@gmail.com



Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theories

aka

I LIKE BIG THEORIES AND I CANNOT LIE

Ză Syllabus Magnificus

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to the theory side.

We don't have the cookies, but we do have the memes. Lots and lots of memes.

That and impossibly, intimidatingly, exasperatingly long and difficult words such as "hegemony," "heteronormativity," "anthropocentrism," "phallogocentrism," "carnophallogocentrism"...

What is this strange scary territory called theory? Who are these crazy (and crazy-making) theoreticians who inhabit it? Freud, Jung, Saussure, Derrida, Lacan, Butler, Haraway, Barthes...

And most importantly: why should you care? What can theory bring – or take – from your life? Does it bear any relevance in your personal universe?

Although frequently viewed as the ugly sister of literature and labeled "arid," "boring," "closed," or "intimidating," this semester you will hopefully discover that there is more than meets the eye to this "ugly duckling." In fact, you might even be surprised to learn that theory can be quite the dashing swan! And that instead of being overpowered by it, you can be empowered by it: both academically and in your personal life.

So, this 2h/week introductory course into the world of literary and cultural theories seeks to open your taste buds for this peculiar and enchanting world of questions and ideas we call "theory and criticism,"

So put your brave hat on and step into the madness!

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To improve your critical thinking skills;
- To develop your analytic abilities;
- To equip you with knowledge of the fundamental critical framework in Literary & Cultural Studies (and not only);
- To introduce you to new, emerging theories which can bring fresh perspectives to your thesis research;
- To give you an overview of the evolution of critical theories relevant to the study of literature;

Digital Platform Info

All announcements, materials and relevant information pertaining to this course will be posted in the following MS Team:

Remember that in order to log in, you need to hold a valid institutional e-mail account. If you do not have one, you can apply for one [here](#).

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1	SYLLABUS WEEK Meet, Greet, Crying Together & Other Fun Activities & (most importantly) Going over the Syllabus
Week 2 =	Introductory Lecture: Why We Do Theory & What It Does to Us
Week 3 =	<i>Working with Form:</i> New Criticism & Structuralism
Week 4	<i>Working with the Reader:</i> Reader-Response (Reception Theory)
Week 5:	<i>Working with the Psyche:</i> Psychoanalysis
Week 6:	Applying Theory Workshop 1
Week 7:	<i>Working with Gender and Sexuality:</i> Feminism, Gender & Queer Studies
Week 8:	<i>Working with the Instability of Language:</i> Deconstruction and Post-structuralism

Week 9:	<i>Working with Culture:</i> Cultural Studies
Week 10:	Applying Theory Workshop 2
Week 11:	<i>Working with the Nonhuman: Posthumanism (Transhumanism, Human-Animal Studies, Ecocriticism)</i>
Week 12:	<i>Working with Emerging Theories: Disability Studies, Trauma Studies, Mad Studies</i> Final Review, Paper Guidelines

HOUSE RULES (or “The Emoji Guide to Keeping Me Happy”)

I LIKE IT WHEN:

- You show up for class on time and in a good mood;
- You **turn off** (yes, off, as in black screen no movement off) **your phone** during class;
- In online meetings, you **turn your camera on** so I can see I’m interacting with an actual live being;
- You are fully engaged and participative in class;
- You **do not check or even think about** your Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp or any other kind of social media, but are fully present in our session;
- You courteously let me know whenever you cannot attend class even if I never take attendance;
- You post **memes** related to the theories we discuss each week;
- You voice your opinions with **confidence**;
- You have **opinions**;
- You ask **questions**;
- You are **respectful** towards myself and your colleagues;
- You take an **active interest** in the course;
- You have and make use of a sense of **humor**;



I DON’T MIND IT WHEN:

- You **skip class, the entire semester or your entire university studies, for that matter**; I never take (or care about) attendance (which is different from participation). You are an adult (if such a thing even exists), responsible for your own decisions concerning your own education. What you do or don’t do with your time is your business.
- You attend online classes in your PJs, dressed as a barracuda, with a barracuda, with messy hair, wearing a Cinderella costume, while petting your crocodile; while staying in bed or hanging upside down from the ceiling lamp in a contorted yoga position;



- You are **late** for class;
- You **eat** in class;

I GET ANNOYED WHEN:



- You don't turn off your phone during class;
- You seem distracted and bored during class;

I GET VERY ANNOYED WHEN:



- You **lie, plagiarize, cheat** or in any way try to fraudulently pass the class; (See *Academic Integrity* section below)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Zero Tolerance Policy for Plagiarism

As members of the academic community, you are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards. Any hint of plagiarism or any fraudulent attempt to pass will lead to your automatic failure of the whole course and possibly even your expulsion from the university.

I will go out of my way to teach you how to avoid plagiarism, during the thesis sessions and through various resources that I will happily share with you, but if you still choose to plagiarize, you **WILL fail**. There is **no negotiating** this rule.

Plagiarism = *restanță* for the whole course, but also my deep disapproval and utter displeasure with you.

Disapproval and displeasure makes me frown. Frowning = wrinkles.

Moral of the story? **Keep your professor looking young, don't plagiarize!**



Avoiding Plagiarism

Remember, **to avoid plagiarism:**

- Keep track of the sources you have consulted for the essay (online, offline or other-lines) and consistently cite and quote from your sources;
- If you have not thought of using those exact words yourself, quote and cite;
- If you have not come up with that idea yourself, paraphrase and cite the person who did;
- Take effective notes;
- Do not look at the source when you're taking notes;
- Remember when paraphrasing a source (AND citing it) to always *change the words* (use synonyms) and change the structure (of the sentences, paragraph);

Additional Resources on avoiding plagiarism:

- *Preventing Plagiarism when Writing:* <http://www.plagiarism.org/article/preventing-plagiarism-when-writing>

- *The Writer's Handbook, Avoiding Plagiarism:*
https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

GRADING AND EVALUATION

→ Applied Theory Essay

A brief (2 to 5 pages) academic essay where you apply a minimum of **two theories** on **any** literary or non-literary (movie, ad, music video, song, band, your pet crocodile, literally ANY subject in the world) object. Separate detailed essay guidelines will be provided to you in due time.

- Bonus Fun Task: *Meme Your Theory*
 You will either find, or preferably create, a meme about any critical theory we covered this semester.

→ Participation

Generous extra points will be added to your grades for outstanding participation in class discussions.

Essay Submission

The essay will be submitted as separate assignments (which I will create) on MS Teams. The deadline will be negotiated and agreed upon, but preferably no later than the half of the first week of the examination period.

TURNITIN Info

Before you turn in the theory essay on MS Teams, you will have to upload it (to be checked for plagiarism!) on TURNITIN. You will use the following enrollment info on Turnitin:

(DIS)ABILITIES AND CLASS ACCOMODATION

If you suffer from any physical, mental, visible or invisible impairment(s)/afflictions, including but not limited to: sensory disabilities, chronic illness, temporary disability, chronic mental illness (such as mood, personality, psychotic or stress-related disorders), learning disabilities, cognitive impairments, please let me know preferably at the beginning of the semester in whichever way you feel most comfortable with (instant messaging, e-mail, etc). I will do my best to create an accommodating class environment and to find solutions to enable you to fully benefit from the right learning conditions.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

We are partners in the educational process.

As such, I am deeply committed to respecting and upholding your rights as students at UAIC.

You can (*in fact, I urge you to*) get informed about your rights by accessing [this document](#).

If you ever find that your rights are infringed, contact your student representatives on this [FB page](#)

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING

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USEFUL ONLINE RESOURCES (HYPERLINKS)

- [Shmoop Guide to Literary Criticism](#)
- [Purdue Writing Lab, Introduction to Literary Theories](#)
- [The School of Life \(YouTube Channel\)](#)
- [Library Genesis](#)
- [Introduction to Theory of Literature with Professor Paul H. Fry, Yale Courses](#)
- [Tom Nicolas, What the Theory? \(Youtube Channel\)](#)