



ENGL 3001W-005
Textual Analysis
T H 2:30-4:25
115 Blegen Hall
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Office hours: T H 1:30-2:30

Description

text from Latin *textus* “style or texture of a work,” literally “thing woven,” from past participle stem of *texere* “to weave”

analysis from Greek *analysis* “a breaking up, a loosening, releasing,” noun of action from *analyein* “unloose, release, set free; to loose a ship from its moorings”

This course, intended for English majors and minors, is an advanced introduction to the content, concerns, and methods of literary study. It will cover the traditional major genres (poetry, drama, prose fiction) and examine a new one (the literature of electronic social networks), while also providing a survey of theoretical approaches to literature from Plato to the present. Throughout the course, we will juxtapose literary works with theoretical statements and critical essays that will allow us to pose linguistic, theological, philosophical, ethical, political, psychological, and sociological questions to imaginative writing. In turn, we will be attentive to the limits of these theoretical positions as they confront works whose density of meaning may resist final interpretation. The word “text” refers to any arrangement of words or other communicative signs, from instruction manuals to political speeches to TV shows to status updates. If we privilege *literary* texts over others—“literary texts” being broadly defined as those that emphasize the artful patterning of words/signs equally or more than the message those words/signs communicate—it is because literature has long been considered to be among the most complex, intelligent, and affecting modes of textuality. Perhaps the ultimate question this course will address is whether or not this is in fact the case; in other words, the histories, theories, and methods we learn here may help us to say why we should read literature at all.

Required Books

(available in the Coffmann Union bookstore—please purchase these editions)

- Chris Baldick. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford UP)
- Eavan Boland and Mark Strand, eds. *The Making of a Poem* (Norton)
- William Shakespeare. *King Lear* (Signet Classics)
- Emily Brontë. *Wuthering Heights* (Bedford/St. Martin)
- James Joyce. *Dubliners* (Norton Critical Edition)
- Teju Cole. *Open City* (Random House)

Assignments

Grade breakdown:

Participation.....	10%
5 Critical Reflections.....	50%
Poetry Exam.....	10%
Final Project.....	30%

Participation. It is your responsibility to be here. I do not directly give an attendance grade and I may not take a formal roll-call for every single meeting, but frequent absence will be noticeable in a class this small and may adversely affect your participation grade. Be advised as well that there will be in-class exercises, assignments and activities in this course that you will miss if you are absent. If you miss class for any reason, please ask a classmate rather than the instructor for notes or a summary. If illness or other problems require you to miss more than a normal amount of class (2 or 3 meetings), please let me know. Finally, be on time to class—lateness is highly disruptive and it will affect your participation grade. As for participation itself, it includes speaking up in class at least once a week, contributing to in-class activities, and/or attending my office hours.

Critical reflections. These are short (1-2 pp.) essays in which you'll respond to some aspect of the readings done in a given two- or three-week period. You should select one text, either literary or theoretical, and struggle with it in some way. I emphasize *struggle*: I do not expect a formal argument, but rather some evidence of an attempt to work through the questions posed by a particular reading. Thus, your paper must go beyond summarizing a text, stating that you like or dislike it, or repeating what was said in class about it. You should instead present your sense of the text's difficulty and complexity and attempt to explore them by bringing to bear your own knowledge of and informed opinions about the subject.

Reflection papers should begin with questions such as the following: 1. What does this word or sentence mean in the context of the whole reading? 2. What are the practical real-world (social, political) implications of the ideas or arguments developed in this text? 3. If you were a creative writer, how would this particular idea about literature affect your writing practice? 4. How does this literary style or theory compare to a movie I just saw/book I just read/idea I just encountered on a blog, etc.? 5. Are there some contradictions in this argument/narrative that could hint at some unresolved problems with the issue the text deals with?

These papers should serve as opportunities for you to develop your ideas about the material in this class outside the boundaries of a formal essay. In return for the leeway being granted you here, though, I ask that your papers be as thoughtful as you can make them (and, of course, they should also be carefully proofread for clarity and correctness). When I grade them, I will look for quality of writing, ideas that exceed the summary, understanding of the issues being discussed, evidence of original thought. Each paper will be worth 10% of your grade.

Format: 1-2 pages, double-spaced, in a reasonable 12-point font. Place your name, the date, and the number of the reflection paper in the top left corner and give the whole reflection a descriptive, interesting title. These should be submitted to me as email attachments in .doc or .docx format on the dates indicated on the schedule below. The name of your file should follow this format: yourlastname-reflection#.doc. Example: pistelli-reflection3.doc.

Poetry exam. This will be a very brief (about 15-minute) information-based test meant to reinforce the technical vocabulary that we'll learn in our discussion of poetry. In this short exam, you will be presented with samples of poetry and asked to identify various features, such as poetic form, meter, genre, types of figurative language, etc. The required answers will be brief, usually not more than one or two words—this is not an essay exam. It will take place at the beginning of class on Tuesday, February 21, and can't be made up.

Final project. This will ultimately take the form of a 6-8 pp. argumentative research paper that combines a literary text of your choosing (not one read in this class) with a theoretical approach introduced in the course. The assignment will have several stages, though, beginning around spring break. These will include your choice of a text, your preparation of an annotated bibliography, and your submission of a prospectus. More details for this assignment will be given as the course progresses.

Grades

Grading Policy. It conforms to CLA guidelines. Therefore a "C" is equivalent to basic fulfillment of requirements; to achieve a grade higher than a "C" a student must perform beyond the basic requirements. Please keep the following scale and criteria in mind:

- A (90-100): Outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
- B (80-90): Significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
- C (70-80): Meets the course requirements in every respect
- D (60-70): Worthy of credit, even though it fails to meet course requirements fully
- F (0-60): Work was not completed

Incompletes. A grade of incomplete ("I") is given only in a genuine and documented emergency, and *only* for work which is due during the last two weeks of the course. You must make arrangements with the instructor for an incomplete before the last day of class.

Student Conduct

Please do not engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment for others. This includes any behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either student learning or my ability to teach. In order to avoid disruptions, please observe the following policies: 1. Turn cell phones off and put them away before coming to class. 2. During class, your attention should be directed toward whomever is speaking or to your assigned task; this means no talking, texting, etc. 3. I *strongly* discourage use of laptops during class time as they tend to isolate the user and distract others; if you have a pressing need to use one, come and talk to me about it. 4. During classroom discussions, robust debate and the voicing of all opinions are encouraged, but avoid abusive speech, personal attacks, and generally offensive language.

Contact

The best way to contact me with questions or concerns about the course is to come to my office hours. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, please let me know so that we can arrange to meet at another time. Feel free to email me with brief, fact-based questions, but please allow 24 hours for a response. Don't rely on email—face-to-face communication is best.

Access

Any student with a documented disability condition who needs to arrange accommodations should contact the instructor and Disability Services (626-1333) at the beginning of the semester.

Scholastic Dishonesty

The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows: “Scholastic Dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.” (<<http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/studentconduct.html>>)

Plagiarism, representing someone else's intellectual work as your own, will result in a failing for the assignment, and may result in a failing grade for the course. Plagiarism can include submitting a paper: 1. written by means of inappropriate collaboration; 2. written by you for another course, submitted without the permission of both instructors; 3. purchased, downloaded, or cut and pasted from the Internet; 4. that fails to properly acknowledge its sources through standard citations.

Student Writing Support

Students can get one-to-one-consultations on any course paper or writing project at Student Writing Support. Student Writing Support has several campus locations, including the main location in 15 Nicholson Hall. See <<http://writing.umn.edu/sws/index.htm>> for details about locations, appointments, and online consultations.

SCHEDULE

(subject to change)

Note 1: All readings are to be done before the date indicated.

Note 2: Items marked () will be distributed as handouts, email attachments, or web URLs.*

Note 3: Every week you will be assigned entries to look up in The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (abbreviated as ODLT below). Please be ready to provide at least rudimentary definitions of these terms and please bring the Dictionary to every class.

Week One – What Is Textual Analysis and Why Practice It on Literature?

01/17 – Introduction

01/19 – Elif Batuman: “From the Critical Impulse, the Growth of Literature” (*) / J. Hillis Miller: “What Is Literature?” (*)

Week Two – Poetry: The Poem as Communal Song and as Philosophical Monument

ODLT: caesura, metaphor, metonymy, meter, oral tradition, Platonic, rhyme, trope

01/24 – *Making of a Poem*: Meter at a Glance; The Ballad (read “Sir Patrick Spens,” “The Wife of Usher’s Well,” “My Boy Willie,” Louis MacNeice, Gwendolyn Brooks, Sterling A. Brown)

01/26 – *Making of a Poem*: The Sonnet (read William Shakespeare, Mary Wroth, John Donne, Christina Rossetti, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Patrick Kavanagh, Henri Cole) / Plato: from *Phaedrus* (*)

****Reflection Paper 1 due by midnight to piste004@umn.edu****

Week Three – Poetry: The Poem as Mimesis and as Vision

ODLT: dramatic monologue, Enlightenment, genre, mimesis, neoclassicism, Romanticism

01/31 – *Making of a Poem*: The Heroic Couplet (read Aemilia Lanyer, John Dryden, Samuel Johnson, Phyllis Wheatley, Alexander Pope, Robert Browning) / Aristotle: from *Poetics* (*)

02/02 – *Making of a Poem*: Blank Verse (read John Milton, Charlotte Smith, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Frost); The Ode (read Percy Bysshe Shelley, Joy Harjo) / Percy Bysshe Shelley: from “The Defense of Poetry” (*)

Week Four – Poetry: The Poem as Home and as Exile

ODLT: defamiliarization, formalism, Golden Age, negative capability, Russian Formalism

02/07 – *Making of a Poem*: The Pastoral (read Christopher Marlowe, Andrew Marvell, William Wordsworth, John Keats, Philip Larkin, Derek Walcott, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Louise Glück)

02/09 – *Making of a Poem*: The Stanza (read George Herbert, Emily Dickinson, Claude McKay); The Villanelle (read William Empson, Elizabeth Bishop, Dylan Thomas, John Hollander) / Victor Shklovsky: “Art as Technique” (*)

Week Five – Poetry: The Poem as Tradition and as Textuality

ODLT: death of the author, deconstruction, free verse, modernism, structuralism, post-structuralism

02/14 – *Making of a Poem*: The Elegy (read William Dunbar, Ben Jonson, Anne Bradstreet, Thomas Gray, Emily Brontë, Garrett Hongo, Gjertrud Schnackenberg)

02/16 – *Making of a Poem*: Open Forms (read T. S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, Wallace Stevens, Adrienne Rich, Jorie Graham) / Roland Barthes: “The Death of the Author” (*)

****Reflection Paper 2 due by midnight to piste004@umn.edu****

Week Six – Drama: Tragedy as Historical Document

ODLT: catharsis, early modern, rhetoric, historicism, plot, tragedy

02/21 – *King Lear*: “Shakespeare: An Overview” (optional); Act 1
****Poetry exam at the beginning of class****

02/23 – *King Lear*: Acts 2-3; “Textual Note”

Week Seven – Drama: Tragedy as Form and as Ideology

ODLT: ideology, irony, New Criticism, organic form, paradox, pun

02/28 – *King Lear*: Act 4-5

03/01 – *King Lear*: Maynard Mack: from *King Lear in Our Time*; Linda Bamber: “The Woman Reader in *King Lear*”

****Reflection Paper 3 due by midnight to piste004@umn.edu****

Week Eight – Fiction: The Novel as Gothic Romance

ODLT: Byronic, frame narrative, Gothic novel, narrator, romance, romantic irony

03/06 – *Wuthering Heights*: “Biographical Notice...;” “Editor’s Preface...;” Chapters 1-9

03/08 – *Wuthering Heights*: Chapters 10-15 / Erich Auerbach: “Odysseus’ Scar” (*)

Week Nine – Spring Break

03/13 – No class

03/15 – No class

Week Ten – Fiction: The Novel as Social Realism

ODLT: point of view, polyphonic, realism, unreliable narrator, Victorian

03/20 – *Wuthering Heights*: Chapters 16-34; “A Critical History”

03/22 – *Wuthering Heights*: “Marxist Criticism;” “Cultural Criticism”

****Text for final project due by midnight to piste004@umn.edu****

Week Eleven – Fiction: The Novel as Critical Object

ODLT: cultural materialism, Cultural Studies, new historicism, Theory, reductionism

03/27 – *Wuthering Heights*: “Psychoanalytic Criticism;” “Feminist Criticism”

03/29 – *Wuthering Heights*: “Combining Perspectives”

****Reflection Paper 4 due by midnight to piste004@umn.edu****

Week Twelve – Fiction: The Short Story as Sacrament and as Protest

ODLT: focalization, free indirect style, intrusive narrator, naturalism, short story

04/03 – *Dubliners*: “The Sisters” through “After the Race”; “A Curious History;” “Gas from a Burner;” “Our Weekly Story: ‘The Sisters’”

04/05 – *Dubliners*: “The Boarding House” through “Clay”; Fritz Senn: “‘The Boarding House’ Seen as a Tale of Misdirection”

****Annotated bibliography due by midnight to piste004@umn.edu****

Week Thirteen – Fiction: The Short Story as Mimesis and as Vision

ODLT: indeterminacy, modernism, postcolonial theory, Queer theory

04/10 – *Dubliners*: “A Painful Case” through “Grace”; Roberta Jackson: “The Open Closet in *Dubliners*”

04/12 – *Dubliners*: “The Dead”; Vincent J. Cheng: “Empire and Patriarchy in ‘The Dead’”
****Reflection Paper 5 due by midnight to piste004@umn.edu****

Week Fourteen – Fiction: The Novel as Global Elegy

ODLT: *Bildungsroman*, memoir-novel, metafiction, picaresque novel, *ut pictura poesis*

04/17 – *Open City*: Chapters 1-6

04/19 – *Open City*: Chapters 7-11
****Research paper prospectus due by midnight to piste004@umn.edu****

Week Fifteen – New Media: Networked Literature as Global News

ODLT: alienation effect, comparative literature, *fabula*, medium, *sjuzet*

04/24 – *Open City*: Chapters 12-21

04/26 – *Small Fates* and related online readings TBA (*)

Week Sixteen – Analysis Interminable

05/01 – J. M. Coetzee: “What Is a Classic?” (*)

05/03 – Conclusion and course evaluations

****05/05 – Final research paper due by midnight to piste004@umn.edu****