

MARX, NIETZSCHE, FREUD

ENGL4140 – SELECTED TOPICS IN LITERARY CRITICISM – SPRING 2019

M/W/F 11:00-11:50

Instructor: Dr. Ian Afflerbach

Email: ian.afflerbach@ung.edu

Office Hours: MW 3-5:30 and by appt, Dunlap 206D

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the ideas and influence of Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud. As three of the most powerful critics of modernity, these figures helped define what it means to be a modern subject. Together, they revolutionized how we understand literature, culture, psychology, philosophy, religion, economics, and history. In this class, we will examine the distinctive modes of analysis developed by these figures—historical materialism, genealogy, and psychoanalysis—and their tremendous impact upon the humanities, especially literary criticism. As we do so, we will come to understand key concepts in each thinker's method, which have often taken on an intellectual life of their own: capitalism, commodities, and alienation; eternal recurrence, the will to power, and the death of God; id ego and superego, the Oedipus Complex, and the death drive.

Each unit starts with a week or more of key texts from one figure, then a week exploring how these ideas spread into mainstream culture, and finally a week considering how we might read literature informed by this thinker's ideas. Students will have three major projects to complete in this course: a dialogue placing one thinker into conversation, an expository paper unpacking one text in detail, and an application paper putting ideas into literary-critical practice. These three projects, however, can be completed in any order, matching each assignment to whichever thinker most appeals. At the end of the course, students will collect and revise all three projects for a final portfolio. Finally, our last two weeks of reading will be student-determined: one week for a new critical theorist and one week for a new set of literary readings. You can choose any possible combination, from Plato and *Antigone*, to Derrida and *The Hunger Games*. These weeks aim to provide you with a model for continuing to grow as a reader, placing theory and literature side-by-side, exploring new and unfamiliar ideas.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- *On the Genealogy of Morals*, by F. Nietzsche, trans. Walter Kaufmann
- *The Marx and Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker
- *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay
- Readings on D2L [Must be printed, annotated while reading, and brought to class]

ASSIGNMENTS

- Project 1: Dialogue Paper (15%)
 - Project 2: Expository Paper (15%)
 - Project 3: Application Paper (15%)
 - Final Portfolio (Revised Projects 1, 2, 3) (30%)
 - Final Week Input (5%)
 - Participation (20%) Attending and actively participating will be vital for succeeding in this class.
- All students start with a default grade of 75, which can climb or fall as follows:

A: Always prepared. Consistently responds to texts with insightful comments or relevant questions. Dialogues with instructor and peers.

B: Always prepared. Listens actively in class and comments occasionally.

C: Usually prepared. Sometimes late or tardy. Distracted by use of phone/laptop.

D/F: Frequently tardy, absent, or unprepared. Appears consistently checked-out.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Critical Theory: We will gain familiarity with foundational works in literary critical theory and with the historical events to which they were responding. We will learn to see how these ideas shaped literary history and how they can change our understanding of texts and our experience with reading.

Writing: Through our assignments, you can expect to work on (a) clear, concise expression of your ideas in prose, (b) detail-driven argument, and (c) readerly engagement.

Speaking: During our discussions, you will be able to work on (a) building comfort in fluid group conversation, (b) preparing guiding questions, and (c) directing group discussion.

HOW TO APPROACH THIS COURSE

Active Participation: Because our course will be driven by discussions, it is vital that you show up ready to be actively involved. This means volunteering your ideas and questions, commenting on and challenging our readings, and drawing upon your individual interpretations and experiences.

Active Reading: You must print, annotate, and bring to class all our reading. Annotating a text, or “marking it up,” means taking notes, creating questions, and just recording places that interest, confused, amuse, or otherwise move you.

Professionalism: The classroom is a professional space and demands the same forms of etiquette as you would bring to a workplace. Your participation grade will decrease—or I may mark you absent—if you cannot (a) be on time each day, (b) come prepared each day with readings and notes, (c) respect your peers by refraining from any background chatter.

Technology in the Classroom: We will conduct discussions without laptops or cell phones. At all times, these devices should be kept out of sight (and silent); failure to do so will lead to lowered participation grade, or even an absence for the day.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Students can miss three classes over the course of the semester, for any reason, without penalty. Each of the next three additional unexcused absences will deduct half a letter grade from the student’s final grade. Missing seven classes results in automatic failure. Absences can only be exempted by documentation from official sources (e.g., participation in official athletics, religious observance, medical note, or other campus activities). Students who have not done the pre-writing required or who sleep during class or who arrive late may be counted absent.

Late Work: If you anticipate a situation that will prevent you from finishing a project, you need to e-mail me *before* your due date, explain the situation, and propose a new deadline.

Plagiarism: Whether you intend to do so or not, passing off the words or ideas of others as your own is a serious academic offense. Pleading ignorance is no defense. If you are the least bit unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me and/or check [this website](#). Please also consult UNG’s [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Prerequisites: ENGL 2050, ENGL 2230, and one ENGL 2100-level literature course, each with a grade of B or higher and ENGL 2900 with a grade of C or higher, or permission of the instructor.

FINDING SUPPORT

Instructor Contact: Please try to visit office hours. If you have a scheduling conflict, let me know and we can find another time. Even one meeting per unit can have an enormous impact on your purpose and goals going forward. Email is the best way to reach me for any simple questions; I try to respond within 24 hours.

Outside Help: Students should have a basic understanding of English grammar and a familiarity with the rules of standard English. If you are concerned about your basic grammar and mechanics, or would simply like [additional support](#) for your writing, please contact the [Writing Center](#) or Gainesville’s Academic Computing Tutoring and Testing Center ([ACTT Center](#)). I also wholeheartedly recommend the grammar, citation, and style guide offered by the [Owl at Purdue](#).

Disability Services: University of North Georgia is committed to equal access to its programs, services, and activities. Students who require accommodations must register with Disability Services and submit supporting documentation. Disability Services provides accommodation memos for eligible students to give to their instructors. Students are responsible for making arrangements with instructors, and must give reasonable prior notice of the need for accommodation

Feeling Overwhelmed: College can be a stressful time; don’t hesitate to ask for help if you’re feeling overly anxious, stressed, or depressed. UNG has two main ways to seek support: through the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) and through the counseling services offered by the [Student Center](#).

Please consult [UNG’s Supplemental Syllabus](#) for campus-wide regulations.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1	Jan 7	Syllabus and Course Goals
	Jan 9	Immanuel Kant “What is Enlightenment?”
	Jan 11	O. Henry “The Gift of the Magi” and Rudyard Kipling “The White Man’s Burden”
MARX		
2	Jan 14	Marx, <i>Kapital</i> Ch. 1, 4
	Jan 16	Marx, <i>Kapital</i> Ch. 6, 7
	Jan 8	Marx, <i>Kapital</i> Ch. 26, 27, 31, 32
3	Jan 21	MLK Day
	Jan 23	Marx, <i>The Grundrisse</i> selections and “Estranged Labor”
	Jan 25	Marx and Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>

4	Jan 28	Louis Althusser “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”
	Jan 30	Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno “The Culture Industry”
	Feb 1	Walter Benjamin “The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility”
5	Feb 4	Mike Gold “Ode to Walt Whitman” and <i>Writing Red</i> selections (Rabinowitz, Smedley, Le Sueur)
	Feb 6	Tess Slesinger, “After the Party”
	Feb 8	Flannery O’Connor “The Displaced Person”
NIETZSCHE		
6	Feb 11	Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i> Essay I
	Feb 13	Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i> Essay II
	Feb 15	Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i> Essay III
7	Feb 18	Nietzsche, on “Anti-Nihilism” and “Eternal Recurrence”
	Feb 20	Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying in an Extramoral Sense” and on “Will to Power”
	Feb 22	Nietzsche, from <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
8	Feb 25	Foucault, “The Mesh of Power”
	Feb 27	Paul de Man, “Literary History and Literary Modernity”
	Mar 1	[Writing Workshop]
9	Mar 4	Wallace Stevens “Mozart, 1935,” “Sunday Morning,” “The Snowman,” “The Emperor of Ice Cream,” and “The Anecdote of a Jar”
	Mar 6	Franz Kafka, “Before the Law,” “The Animal in the Synagogue,” “Prometheus,” “The Test,” and “On Parables”
	Mar 8	Laszlo Kraznahorkai, “At the Latest, in Turin,” “A Drop of Water,” “I Don’t Need Anything from Here”
10	Mar 11	HOLIDAY
	Mar 13	HOLIDAY
	Mar 15	HOLIDAY

FREUD		
11	Mar 18	Freud, from <i>Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis</i>
	Mar 20	Freud, “Anna O.”
	Mar 22	Freud, from <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i>
12	Mar 25	Freud, “On Dreams”
	Mar 27	Freud, “The Unconscious” and “Repression”
	Mar 29	Freud, “The Ego and the Id”
13	Apr 1	Freud, from <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i>
	Apr 3	No Class
	Apr 5	No Class
14	Apr 8	Emily Dickinson, 28, 46, 105, 115, 122, 209, 318
	Apr 10	Alice Walker “Everyday Use,” and “The Flowers”
	Apr 12	Junot Diaz “The Sun, the Moon, the Stars” and “ The Silence : The Legacy of Childhood Trauma”
STUDENT-SELECTED THEORY		
15	Apr 15	<i>tbd</i>
	Apr 17	<i>tbd</i>
	Apr 19	<i>tbd</i>
STUDENT-SELECTED LITERATURE		
16	Apr 22	<i>tbd</i>
	Apr 24	<i>tbd</i>
	Apr 26	<i>tbd</i>

**PORTFOLIO DUE on D2L
by Monday April 29th 1:00PM**