

Feminist, Post-colonial, and African American theorists such as:

Monique Wittig,
Hélène Cixous,
Dale Bauer,
Judith Butler,
Helen Tiffin,
Trinh Minh-ha,
Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
Bill Ashcroft,
Edward Said, and
Sara Mills.

The goal in so doing is to explore how each of these thinkers has engaged with post-Saussurean concepts of difference in an effort to rethink the dominant ways in which patriarchal, colonial and post-colonial cultural phenomena and practices have come to be conceptualised.

Assessment:

Regular seminar participation / presentations	40%
1 research paper (c. 20 p.)	60%

Required Texts:

Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle, eds.	<u>Critical Theory Since 1965</u>	R
Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds.	<u>Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory</u>	R
Roland Barthes	<u>Mythologies</u>	R
Pam Morris, ed.	<u>The Bakhtin Reader</u>	R
Michel Foucault	<u>The Archaeology of Knowledge</u>	R
Michel Foucault	<u>The Foucault Reader</u>	R
Edward Said	<u>Orientalism</u>	R
Henry Louis Gates, Jr.	<u>The Signifying Monkey</u>	R
Henry Louis Gates, Jr.	<u>Figures in Black</u>	R
Selected essays by Stuart Hall, Cornel West, Gwendolyn Mae Henderson, and Selected essays by E33D folder in the library to be photocopied.		

Recommended:

Terry Eagleton	<u>Literary Theory: an Introduction</u>	R
Ania Loomba	<u>Colonialism / Post-colonialism</u>	R
Bart Moore-Gilbert	<u>Post-colonial Theory</u>	R

R indicates that the book in question is on reserve in the library. Students should note that they are not required to purchase any / all these texts, although if they wish to do so, they might consider particular the ones marked by an asterisk. The texts listed here lecturers have no control over whether or not the bookstore orders what we request.

Students are cautioned that the **Required Readings** listed below are *absolutely essential* and are to be read in the suggested order. Copies of the Required Readings for students to photocopy in turn may be found in the E33D folder in the library. Wherever possible, students are to make use of the required anthologies (on reserve) as well as the library. (The sources of particular essays are listed in brackets after each entry.)

You will also be provided with a list of **Recommended Readings**. These are designed to provide necessary background and clarification, whether you choose to read them or not. You may find it comes to assimilating the material covered in the required readings and/or writing term papers.

Students should note that this course will be productive as a function of the effort which students put into assigned materials and b) the effectiveness of their presentations and readings. Students must be prepared to read, reread and re-reread the assigned readings the best way to come to grips with difficult readings is to engage in class in a vigorous exchange of ideas. They must also be prepared to engage in class in a vigorous exchange of ideas. It is, in short, through a combination of careful reading and discussion to glean for themselves the important information to be drawn from the assigned readings.

The term paper should preferably be *typed* on a computer and must be in accordance with the guidelines set out in the MLA Handbook or the Faculty of Humanities Essay Writing *carelessly documented or presented work will be lost.*

READING SCHEDULE

MODULE ONE: SAUSSUREAN LINGUISTICS / SEMIOTICS

Week 1: Introduction / Saussurean Linguistics

Required Readings:

Sem. 1: General discussion of the aims of the course, requirements, etc.

Terry Eagleton	<u>Literary Theory: an Introduction;</u> Structuralism and Semiotics Post-Structuralism
Ania Loomba	<u>Colonialism / Postcolonialism:</u> Situating Colonial and Postcolonial Studies
Bart Moore-Gilbert	<u>Postcolonial Theory:</u> Postcolonial Criticism or Postcolonial Theory

Sem. 2: Saussure's Model of Signification

Saussure, Ferdinand From Course in General Linguistics (in Adams and Searle)

Recommended Readings: Terry Eagleton Literary Theory: an Introduction: Structuralism and Semiotics (section on Saussure)
David Robey Modern Literary Theory: Modern Modern L Modern Linguistics and the Modern Linguistics and the Language (section on Saussure)

Seminar Presentations:

1. How did Plato conceive of the nature of reality? Did he?
2. Plato held what linguists refer to as a referential model of language. How has this become a widely shared view of language?
3. Plato also held what linguists refer to as an instrumental model of language. What do you understand by language. What do you understand by a widely shared view of language?
4. How exactly, according to Saussure, do signs signify? Would you agree that this represents a radical change in linguistic models discussed above?
5. Define the following key Saussurean terms: sign, referent, signifier, signified, system or structure, différence, binary oppositions, diachrony, synchrony, langue, parole, paradigmatic axis, the syntagmatic axis.
6. Does Saussure's model of the sign explain why human beings have a limited ability to comprehend reality (i.e. to think) in terms of binary oppositions? If so, how?
7. What do you understand by what philosophers term the Cartesian model of human subjectivity with Plato's and John Locke's respectively.
8. In what ways does Saussure's model of language differ from the Cartesian subject?
9. Explain, in the light of Saussure's essay, the following statement: The meaning of an utterance occurs at the intersection of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes.

Week 2: The Saussurean Critique of a) Realism and b) Self-expression

Required Readings:

Sem. 1: Literature and Historiography / Representation

Roland Barthes The Discourse of History (in Keith Jenkins, ed. The Discourse of History (in Keith Jenkins, ed. The Discourse of History)
Hayden White Metahistory: Introduction: The Theory of Historical Explanation by Formal Argument (pp. 5-21)
Roland Barthes The Reality Effect (in Lillian First, ed. Realism)
Roland Barthes Mythologies:
Myth Today

Sem. 2: Subjectivity and Language / Authorship

Emile Benveniste The Nature of Pronouns (in Paul Cobley, ed. The Communication Reader) (in his Problems of Linguistics also in Paul Cobley, ed. The Communication Reader)

Recommended Readings:

Richard Clarke

The Literary Nature of the Historical Text: Some Implications of the Post-Realism for Caribbean Historiography *Journal of Caribbean History* 32 (1998)**Seminar Presentations**

1. On what grounds does Barthes ask us to rethink the paradigm of literary realism?
2. What do you understand by White argumentation? How are these concepts related to Saussure's notion of the syntagmatic axis?
3. How does White's argument that historical works, like their counterparts in other disciplines, undermine the view widely shared by historians that historical works merely re-present the past as it really occurred?
4. If meaning in language arises not from the referent but from differential relations among the signs themselves, then how does this reflect reality? Use this statement to explore, in the light of this statement, the challenge to the concept of literary Realism or Lukács.
5. Benveniste's point is that words are not vehicles of meaning themselves. Rather, it may be the other way around: given the way words are used in language, people are in fact assigned the meaning they think they use. Explain.
6. The claim has typically been made for literary genres that the writer retrospectively puts into words the thoughts and feelings inspired by the experiences. From this point of view, the writer uses words to describe what exists in reality prior to the act of writing. Saussureans like poets like Wyatt or Sidney, for example, it is not so much that they are inspired by unrequited love and found in Petrarch the perfect discourse of Petrarchanism which predominated the discourse of Petrarchanism which they absorbed and regurgitated and even in turn came to use to alternative ends. Discuss.

Week 3: Feminism: Semiotic Emphases**Required Readings:****Sem. 1:**

Monique Wittig
Hélène Cixous

The Mark of Gender (in her *The Mark of Gender* (in Hélène Cixous, ed. *Sorties* (in Elaine Marks, et al., eds. [New French Feminisms](#)))

Sem. 2:

Hélène Cixous The Laugh of the Medusa (in Adams and Searle)

Week 4: Post-colonial / African American Theory: Semiotic Emphases**Required Readings:****Sem. 1: Post-colonial Historiography / Post-colonial Literature and Historiography**

- Richard Clarke *The Literary Nature of the Historical Text: Some Implications of Postmodernist Critique of Realism for Caribbean Historiography* *Journal of Caribbean History* 32.1 32.1 & 2: 1-10
- Helen Tiffin Post-Colonialism, Postmodernism and Rehabilitation: A Caribbean Perspective *Journal of Commonwealth Studies* (1988): 169-181

Sem. 2: Representation / Authorship

- Henry Louis Gates, Jr. *Binary Opposites in Chapter One of Frederick Douglass's 'Practice'* (in K. M. Newton, ed. *The Feminist Critique of Language: The Difference: a Special Third World Woman* Cameron, ed. *The Feminist Critique of Language: The*)
- Trinh T. Minh-ha *Difference: a Special Third World Woman* Cameron, ed. *The Feminist Critique of Language: The*

Seminar Presentations

1. Does Gates conceptualise Frederick Douglass's expression of 'Practice'? If not, how does he conceptualise it?

MODULE TWO: DIALOGICAL CRITICISM

Week 5: The Dialogical Model of the Sign

Required Readings:

Sem. 1:

- The Bakhtin Circle *Critique of Saussurian Linguistics* (in Morris)
- The Bakhtin Circle *Language as Dialogic Interaction* (in Morris)

Sem. 2:

- The Bakhtin Circle *Reported Speech as Index of Social Change* (in Morris)
- The Bakhtin Circle *Social Heteroglossia* (in Morris)

Recommended Readings:

Simon Dentith *Bakhtinian Thought: an Introductory Reader* Volosinov and Bakhtin on Language

Seminar Presentations

1. Where Saussure emphasised synchrony, the Bakhtin Circle emphasised diachrony. Why does the Bakhtin Circle think it vital to emphasise the latter?
2. The Bakhtin Circle accused, implicitly or explicitly, Saussure of resorting to the traditional mimetic model of the sign. How did they restore the connection between the sign and the world? How did they restore the connection between the sign and the world, if not by resorting to the traditional mimetic model of the sign, criticised?
3. Is subjectivity, for the Bakhtin Circle, something pre-given? If not, how do the Bakhtin Circle adhere to an expressivist model of signification?
4. Is signification, for the Bakhtin Circle, ever a solipsistic affair?
5. In what sense may the sign be described as hybrid or double-voiced?

6. Discourse and dialogism are key to the process of signification. What do you understand by each of these terms?
7. In what ways is the Bakhtin Circle's philosophy of language different to conventional Marxist thinking?
8. Epistemologically speaking, would it be fair to say that the Bakhtin Circle is different from the point of view of conventional Marxism?
9. Where conventional Marxists (eg Lukács) stress the dialectic, the Bakhtin Circle is on the dialogic. What do you understand by this claim?
10. If the Bakhtin Circle used Marxism to critique Saussure, they also critique the conventional Marxist notion of the nature of ideology. How, given Bakhtin's premises, would you conceptualise the relationship between Marxism and Saussurean linguistics in Bakhtinian thought?
11. Compare the Saussurean/Derridean view of language with the Bakhtinian.

Week 6: Dialogism and Literature

Required Readings:

Sem. 1: Carnival

Mikhail Bakhtin Folk Humour and Carnival Laughter (in Morris)

Sem. 2: Literature and Ideology / The Heteroglot Novel

Mikhail Bakhtin Literature as Ideological Form (in Morris)

Mikhail Bakhtin Genres as Ideological Forms (in Morris)

Mikhail Bakhtin The Heteroglot Novel (in Morris)

Recommended Readings:

Simon Dentith Bakhtinian Thought: an Introductory Reader Bakhtin's Carnival
 --- Bakhtinian Thought: an Introductory Reader Bakhtin on the Novel

Seminar Presentations

1. For the poor, the festivities associated with carnival during the Middle Ages served to temporarily suspend or displace the structures of power. Similarly, there was no the truth or a single, unified verbal-ideological centre. There were parodied in the process of being inverted. Similarly, there was no official languages and versions of reality in order to show that none of them could lay claim to authenticity or absolute fidelity to the truth. Is this an accurate summation on the Carnavalesque?
2. What links does Bakhtin perceive between the rise to power in eighteenth century Europe and carnival in Medieval Europe?
3. Why, according to Bakhtin, is there no simple, unmediated relationship between the novel and that which it purports to re-present?
4. What exactly does Bakhtin mean when he describes the novel as heteroglot and polyphonic? What link does Bakhtin perceive between the heteroglot nature of language and the polyphonic nature of the novel?
5. What are the implications of Bakhtin's critique of authorship (to be precise, the view that the authorship (to be precise, the

- that it is this view alone which his/her novel privileges)?
6. What do you understand by the term intertextuality? What do you understand by the term intertextuality? What do you understand by the term intertextuality? Is intertextuality another way of thinking about what other theorists term literary history?
 7. To what literary genre does Bakhtin expressly refer? To what literary genre does Bakhtin expressly refer? To what literary genre does Bakhtin expressly refer? Were critical methods appropriate to this genre mistakenly applied to the novel? Are both genres susceptible to the same analysis?
 8. Compare Derridean and Bakhtinian views on A) Realism; Compare Derridean and Bakhtinian views on A) Realism; Compare Derridean and Bakhtinian views on A) Realism;

Week 7: Feminism: Dialogic Emphases

Required Readings:

Sem. 1:

Bauer, Dale Gender in Bakhtin's Carnival (in Warhol and Hemdl)
 Russo, Mary Female Female Female Grotesques: Carnival and The Female Grotesques: Grotesque; also in Teresa de Lauretis, ed.; also in Teresa de Lauretis, ed. (in Critical Studies)

Sem. 2:

O Callaghan, Evelyn Woman Version:
 Introduction
 Mae Gwendolyn Henderson
 Speaking in Tongues: Dialogics, Derrida, and the Writer's Tradition (in Williams and Chrisman)

Week 8: Post-colonial / African American Theory: Dialogical Emphases

Required Readings:

Sem. 1: Abrogation and Appropriation / Post-colonial Literary History

Bill Ashcroft Constitutive Constitutive Graphonomy Constitutive Graphonomy
Europe: Europe: Critical Theory and Post-colonial Writing; also in Bill Ashcroft, et al., eds. The Post-colonial Studies Reader
 Helen Tiffin and Joanne Tompkins
 Carnival and Carnival Logics (in their Post-Colonial Drama)

Sem. 2: Signifyin(g) / African American Literary History

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. The Signifying Monkey:
 The Signifying Monkey and the Language of Signifyin(g):
 section I
 Figures Of Signification

Recommended Readings:

Houston Baker, Jr. Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Genealogy
 Discovering America: Generational Shifts, Afro-American Discourse
 Study of Expressive Culture
 Brad Bucknell Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and the Theory of Signifyin(g) Ariel 21 (1990): 65-83
 Dorothy Hale Bakhtin in African American Literary Theory ELH 61 (1994): 445-471

Seminar Presentations

1. Explain Gates' concept of Signifyin(g).
2. To what degree is Gates's concept of Signifyin(g) of double-voiced discourse?
3. Compare the concept of Signifyin(g), on the one hand, on the other. Are they informed by the same problematic?
4. How does the concept of Signifyin(g) require the symbolic resistance and counter-discourse?
5. Gates uses the term Signifyin(g) to characterise the relationship between, firstly, the earliest African American literature and their Anglo-American precursors and, secondly, between the authors themselves and the emerging African American canon. Is this an accurate notion of Signifyin(g)?
6. To what degree is Gates's understanding of the process of literary revision indebted to Bakhtin's concept of literary history?
7. Is Gates' concept of Signifyin(g) applicable to emergent Post-colonial literatures?

MODULE THREE: DISCURSIVE CRITICISM

Week 9: Foucault's Model of Discourse

Required Readings:

Sem. 1: Archaeology / Genealogy

Michel Foucault, *The Formation of Objects* (chapter 3 of *The History of Knowledge* also in Rivkin and Ryan)

Michel Foucault, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (Nietzsche, Genealogy, History Reader)

Sem. 2: Disciplining the Subject

Michel Foucault, *Panopticism* (in Rabinow)

Recommended Readings: David Shumway, Michel Foucault *passim*

Seminar Presentations

1. What precisely does Foucault mean when he speaks of the 'rules of formation' to which he alludes?
2. What do you understand by Foucault's terms 'discourse'? How is his use of the term different from the Bakhtin Circle's?
3. What does Foucault mean by the terms 'discursive formation' and 'discursive practice'?
4. Compare Foucault's notion of 'discourse' with the Marxist concept of 'ideology'.
5. What does Foucault mean when he speaks of 'undertaking an archaeology of knowledge' (for example, an archaeology of knowledge)?
6. What exactly is involved in tracing the 'genealogy' of concepts and the genealogies thereof that may be traced?

7. Compare the terms archaeology and genealogy as used by Foucault.
8. Does the following comment by Benveniste shed any light on Foucault's project in *Discipline and Punishment*: [c]onsciousness of self is only possible by contrast. I use I only when I am speaking to someone who will be by contrast.
9. For Foucault, the exclusion of lepers from mainstream European society is paradigmatic of a whole host of other exclusions. Homosexuals, women, etc. were each in their own right and thus excluded from the mainstream of society. What does this serve?
10. What does Foucault mean by the term discipline?
11. Foucauldians claim that normalisation and the compulsion to disciplinary power. What is the link between disciplinary power and subjectivity?

Week 10: Discursive Criticism and Literature

Required Readings:

Sem. 1: Authorship

Michel Foucault What Is an Author? (in Rabinow; also in Adams and Searle)

Sem. 2: Representation / The Role of the Reader

Edward Said Secular Criticism (in Adams and Searle)

Stanley Fish What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable (in his Is There a Text in this Class?)

Seminar Presentations

1. Given that the original title of this essay is *What is an Author?*, what is his thesis here?
2. Why does Foucault speak of an author-function rather than author per se?
3. What are the three main functions which authorship performs?
4. What are the four main characteristics of authored discourses, according to Foucault?
5. Discuss some of the implications of Foucault's theory for questions of literary and theoretical history.
6. How does Said envisage the process of literary criticism? To what extent is he indebted to Foucault?
7. In what ways may literature be said to be complicit, according to Said, in the processes of which Foucault writes?
8. What, according to Fish, are the main insights into interpretation?

Week 11: Feminism: Discursive Emphases

Required Readings:

Sem. 1: The Discursive of Construction of Gender

Butler, Judith Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychology

(in Linda Nicholson, ed. Feminism/Postmodernism; her Gender Trouble)

Sem. 2: Linguistics and Criticism

Maria Black and Rosalind Coward

Linguistic, Linguistic, Social and Sexual Relations: a Linguistic, Social and Sexual
Man Made Language (in Deborah (in Deborah Came (in
Feminist Critique of Language: a Reader)

Martin, Biddy

Feminism, Feminism, Cri Feminism, Criticism and Foucault (in Irene Diam
Quinby, Quinby, eds. Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on
Resistance)

Week 12: Post-colonial / African Post-colonial / African American Theory: CoPost-colonial Discourse

Required Readings:

Sem. 1: Colonial Discourse / Gender and Colonial Discourse

Edward Said From Orientalism (in Chrisman and Williams)

Sara Mills Knowledge, Knowledge, Ge Knowledge, Gender, and Empire (in Alison Blunt, et al.
Women and Space; see also her Discourses of Difference)

Sem. 2: Counter-Discourse

Helen Tiffin Post-Colonial Post-Colonial L Post-Colonial Literatures and Counter- Post-C
(1987): 17-34

Helen Helen Tiffin Rites of Resistance: Counter-Discourse and West India Rites of Resistance: Count
Journal of West Indian Literature 3.1: 28-46

Gayatri Gayatri Spivak Three Women s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism (in Three Women s Texts a
Belsey, et al., eds. The Feminist Reader)

Recommended Readings:

Bart Moore-Gilbert Post-colonial Theory: chapter on Said
Robert Young White Mythologies: chapter on Said

Seminar Presentations

1. According to Said, the greatest oversight in Foucault's work is the oversight of race. Orientalism represents an effort to fill this gap by treating the process by which Europeans gained a sense of their own identity as a process of Easterners. Discuss.
2. Is the process described by Said in Orientalism applicable to Europe's relationship with other regions of the world? If so, which?
3. He shows us not only how we were constructed but also, more importantly, how we were constructed to our own detriment. Is this an apt description of Said's Orientalism?
4. What do you understand by the term abrogation and appropriation? What do you understand by Empire Writes Back? Compare this notion with Gates's notion of Signifyin(g).

RESEARCH PAPER

Word Limits: One (1) approx. 20-page paper
(The paper should be double-spaced.; please)

Deadline: Friday of the week following our last class

Answer one of the following questions:

1. Analyse a (Post-)colonial text of your choice from the point of view of one of the following schools of criticism:

Semiotics
Dialogical criticism
Discursive criticism

Your essay should include a clear outline of the methodological principles which you employ.

2. Drawing upon the arguments advanced by a relevant Post-colonial theorist(s), discuss **ONE (ONE)** of the following topics:

The discursive construction of the Other ;
Counter-Discourse;
Post-colonial linguistic signification;
Rethinking Post-colonial authorship;
Rethinking Post-colonial realism ;
Rethinking Post-colonial literary histories;
The Post-colonial reader;
Post-colonial literature and historiography..

You should aim to ground your argument through concrete evidence of your choice.

WARNING

Essays must be written according to the guidelines laid out in the pamphlet summarised in the pamphlet Faculty of Humanities Guidelines from the Faculty Office). Poorly presented and documented essays will be penalised.

Students should keep a copy of their term paper in case it gets lost.