Course meetings: Wednesdays from 4.00pm until 6.50pm
Seminar room: Culture and Society Building 321 A
Professor's office: CU 268
Email: fconrod@fau.edu
Phone: 561 297 3313
Office Hours: MW, from 1 to 4 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This seminar is designed for incoming graduate students who are starting a Masters degree in Literature (Comparative, English, French, Spanish, etc.) and need to acquire a panoramic knowledge of the critical tools that their future discipline of expertise has been using and promoting in the analysis of literature. Parting from an understanding of the limitations of traditional philological approaches, students will follow the chronological order of theoretical development in the area of Comparative Literature since its beginning, and focus on the school of thoughts that have most influenced the study of Literature. As the semester progress, the concept of “theory” will be questioned and challenged with newer approaches and possibilities that make Comparative Literature an ever-changing discipline in the age of Multiculturalism.

TEXTS REQUIRED:
- Rikvin
- Eagleton
- Eagleton

EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:
○ Students are expected to come to every seminar scheduled during the semester.
○ Students are expected to have completed the active¹ reading of all assigned pages prior to the seminar.
○ Students are expected to have prepared all other assignments (short papers), and should always be prepared to present them orally to the rest of the class.
○ All assignments should be typed in case the professor choses to collect them.

¹ By “active” we mean the opposite of “passive.”
• Students are expected to take notes on their reading before and during class. No electronic device (unless required for medical reason) is allowed during class time.
• Every student is expected to participate during every seminar session.
• Each student will prepare a 20-minute presentation that follows the professional format. These presentations will be followed by a discussion when other students will ask questions they have prepared.
• Students will work on a final research project that will involve several of the critical tools learned during the semester. This 12-to-15-page paper will be turned in to the professor on the day scheduled for the final exam. Every student is expected to come to the professor’s office to discuss his/her ideas at several points in the semester.

GRADE DIVISION:
Participation and Attendance................................................................. 20%
Short papers ................................................................................................ 30%
Presentation of Critical Work ................................................................. 20%
Short Presentation of Final Research Project ......................................... 10%
Research Paper.......................................................................................... 20%

SEMINAR PROGRAM:

AUGUST 24th: Why do we need to be critical? What is the point of having a theory of literature? Is there such thing as literary academic research? Can I apply any theory to any text? Where can/will Comparative Literature take me professionally?
• DISCUSSION of theses fundamental issues in class.
• What are your intentions, your background and goals?
• Reading of excerpts from Auerbach and Sartre handed out by professor.
• Workshop of literary analysis: how to read a poem by Baudelaire?

AUGUST 31st: In the beginning was Aristotle? A brief history of literary studies from the Greek Antiquity to the 19th Century.
• Read pp. 3-28 in Rikvin and pp. 1-14 in Eagleton.
• Aristotle, Genres, Categories, and the Birth of Comparative Literature
• Apply the Formalist method in a two-page analysis of the short story “The Mask of the Red Death” by Edgar Allan Poe (available online: http://www.online-literature.com/poe/36/)
• How do we define Modernity? (Class discussion to be prepared)

2 Professor will cover this format in class.
SEPTEMBER 7th: The Bourgeoisie, the Industrial Revolution and Karl Marx.
Literary Criticism defined through Political Lenses.
- Read selection of works by Karl Marx: pp. 650-673 (Rikvin) and by Mijail Bakhtin: pp. 686-693 (Rikvin).
- Bring to class an excerpt from a published article using the Marxist approach.
- Resume reading of Eagleton, pp. 15-47.
- Discussion: are Politics and Literature compatible?

SEPTEMBER 14th: Structures and Signs: the Foundations
- Read Eagleton pp. 79-110
- Read Rikvin pp. 53-72, 76-81.
- Apply the theory of Vladimir Propp to your favorite folk-fairy tale in a two-page analysis
- Introduction to the work of Roman Jakobson (_____________________),
- Introduction to the work of Roland Barthes (_____________________),
- Introduction to the work of Michel Foucault (______________________)

SEPTEMBER 21st: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States
- Introduction to the work of Jacques Derrida (____________________)
- Introduction to the work of Gilles Deleuze (______________________)
- Introduction to the Intellectual Revolution of May 1968 (____________________)
- Discussion: European Philology vs. North American Theory
- Read Rikvin pp. 81-97, 257-262, 278-300
- Understanding Deconstruction and Derridean Thought

SEPTEMBER 28th: The Application of Psychoanalysis to Literary Criticism
- Read Eagleton 131-169, and Rikvin pp. 389-418, 431-447
- Apply at least three concepts to the analysis of a character of your choice in a 2-page paper
- Introduction to the work of Sigmund Freud (_______________________)
- Introduction to the work of Jacques Lacan (_______________________)
- Discussion: The Imaginary, the Real and the Symbolic Order in Un Chien Andalou by Luis Buñuel

OCTOBER 5th: Post-Structuralism, Post-Modernism, and Sex
- Read Eagleton pp.110-131, and Rikvin pp. 355-389, 892-300
- Introduction to the work of Jean Baudrillard (_______________________)
Introduction to the History of Sexuality (___________________________)
Discussion: Why should Comparative Literature care about Sex?
Prepare a 2-page analysis of an expression of Post-Modernism of your choice

OCTOBER 12th: Analyzing the Spaces, Various Approaches
- Read Rikvin pp. 508-533, pp. 549-567, pp. 1247-1258
- Introduction to the work of Michel de Certeau (___________________________)
- Apply three of the concepts identified during your preparatory reading in a 2-page analysis of one of your favourite movie scene (involving spatial dynamics) and be prepared to show it in class
- Discussion: what other theories can we use to understand and analyse the urban world? (Prepare ideas)

OCTOBER 19th: From Narratology to Reception Theory
- The Narratological System for Dummies (Lecture)
- What is the value of Reception Theory? (Discussion)
- Introduction to the work of Stanley Fish (___________________________)
- Assignment: chose any of the short papers you have written so far and re-write it with narratology/reception concepts

OCTOBER 26th: Ideology does not mean Politics!
- Read Eagleton pp. 169-190, Rikvin pp. 693-704, pp. 712-725
- Introduction to the work of Slavoj Zizek (___________________________)
- Discussion: How do you identify Ideology? Is it everywhere?
- Assignment: Analyse a short news report broadcast or the cover page of a newspaper, and explain what ideology motivates this text
- The mission of identifying Cultural Materialism (In-class close-reading)

NOVEMBER 2nd: Entering the Realm of Feminism, Gender and Masculinity
- Read Rikvin pp. 348-355, pp. 765-812
- Introduction to the work of Luce Irigaray (___________________________)
- Discussion: Should I teach what I am?
- Assignment: Deconstruct a sequence from Thelma and Louise using Feminist theory (2-page paper)
- Debate: Do Feminism and Gender Studies limit our critical scope?

NOVEMBER 9th: A Big Bag Called “Cultural Studies”
- Read Rikvin, pp. 1233-1247, pp. 1268-1285
• Assignment: Identify Mechanical Reproduction within a Culture of your choice (2-page paper)
• Discussion: Is Culture the Core of Literature (and its Future)? (Prepare bullet points)
• Introduction to the work of Walter Benjamin (________________________)
• The abuses of Cultural Studies: Comparative Literature or Anthropology?

**NOVEMBER 16th:** The Future of Literary Theory in the 21st century
- Read Eagleton, *After Theory*, pp. 1-102
- Assignment: Make a list of six points in favour of Eagleton’s arguments, and then prepare six refutations of these points.
- Guest speaker: The possibilities of Comparative Literature and Studies
- The tendencies of the Market: A look at the MLA Job Information List
- Discussion: How to reconcile our true calling with the needs of the market?

**NOVEMBER 23th:** The Future of Comparative Literature
- Read Eagleton, *After Theory*, pp.103-end
- Debate: What role do we have to play as Comparatists?
- Connecting with other disciplines (Presentation of New Trends)
- Short Presentations of Final Research Projects – Part I

**NOVEMBER 30th:**
- Short Presentations of Final Research Projects – Part II
- Course conclusions

**FINAL RESEARCH PROJECTS ARE DUE ON DECEMBER 3rd AT 5PM**