

West Virginia University at Parkersburg Uniform Course Syllabus

Name of Course: Literary Criticism
Delivery Format: Traditional
Division: Humanities

Course#: English 381
Department: English
Credit Hours: 3

Is there a textbook for this course? Yes
Is the textbook required? Yes

Catalog Course Description:

ENG 381: "Literary Criticism from Aristotle to Modern Times."

I. Course Objectives

Based upon this course description, course objectives should include development of a familiarity with representative theories and master works in this history of literary criticism, a working definition of what literary criticism is and what its practice involves, and an overview of the dynamics of these theories in their cultural and historical contexts.

II Topics to be Studied

Topics to be studied in English 381 include the concepts dealt with by classical and contemporary schools of literary thought – for example, the various evaluations of literature presented by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, by the “art for art’s sake” proponents at various historical times, formalism, structuralism, post-structuralism, feminist theory, Marxist theory, and deconstruction. These concepts could include defining text, the relationships between the author and the text, the text and meaning, and the reader and the text; the concept of the “ideal reader” or the “intended audience,” and certainly a working knowledge of what literary criticism is and what it is for. Essential working terms and definitions should also be introduced.

III. Special Projects to be Included in the Course

Research Papers. Students may be assigned short research essays on individual theorists or theoretical approaches to literature, essays applying various critical concepts to an assigned literary work, or essays and research concerning historical and philosophical background material.

Surveys. None

Reports. Oral reports based on student research could be presented in class.

Annotated Bibliography. Annotated bibliography could be useful in this course.

IV. **Methods of Student Evaluation**

Methods of student evaluation may include:

Tests. A midterm and a final examination will be given, which will include both objective and interpretive sections designed to evaluate students' factual knowledge from the assigned readings, along with their ability to think about this material abstractly, concretely, evaluatively, and creatively. The objective portion of each exam should include identification questions calling for familiarity with the assigned readings, definitions of key terms, and questions concerning key concepts, their authors, and their application. The interpretive portion should include essay and discussion questions applying critical thinking concerning the assigned reading.

Quizzes. Unannounced informational or evaluative spot quizzes based upon students' responses to assigned readings will be given.

Oral presentations. Students may be assigned research projects to be presented in this class.

Written Papers. Students may be assigned two interpretive essays – one to be due before midterm and the other before finals. Each will be based on assigned course materials and will include the student's response to the readings, as well as critical interpretation.

Other. None

V. **Assessment of Outcome**

In English 381, assessment of course outcome can be based upon observation of classroom dynamics, observing students' developing ease, skill, and familiarity with discussing the assigned reading material and using the theoretical, historical, and interpretive categories and vocabulary required in the course. These evolving skills can also be observed by reading the assigned essays, quizzes, and exams as groups of responses. Students taking the course should receive at least a C on all course assignments, quizzes, and exams.

VI. **Other Information**

English 381 is a course that does not require or depend on students' previous familiarity with the assigned authors, texts, or literary or philosophical concepts to be treated in the course. However, it is an upper division course, and so its prerequisites are English 101, English 102, and 48 hours of college credit.

VII. **Disability Statement**

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (424-8378).

VIII. **Social Justice Statement**

West Virginia University at Parkersburg is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our college does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.