Comparative Literature 390  
Literary and Cultural Theory Since 1900  
Fall 2010

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**Literary and Cultural Theory Since 1900: A Survey for Comparatists**

“What’s left of theory?” The title of a recent collection of essays speaks to anxieties voiced by many of us who study literature. What is it we do as comparatists, as students of literature, and as humanists? This survey of recent literary theories will begin with these questions. Haun Shaussy’s anthology of essays on the status of the Comparative Literature suggests how the field has changed over the past six decades. Selections from two essay collections on the humanities will help us situate transformations in Comparative Literature in a broader context.

In the weeks that follow, we will read texts that exemplify various critical positions and approaches, ranging from Anglo-American New Criticism to various schools inspired by developments in linguistics to recent interdisciplinary work that refuses traditional distinctions between literature and other forms of human expression. Our focus on these texts will be twofold: we will look at them closely, often reading them against themselves; but we will also try to come to grips with the usefulness of the theories they expound.

**Assignments and grading:** One oral report of not more than twenty minutes on a theorist or text (10%); four short position papers (70%); class participation (20%).

Texts on reserve at PCL are followed by the call number.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

**RECOMMENDED:**
Auerbach: *Mimesis:* PN 56 R3 A8313 1957 PCL Stacks  
Auerbach: *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* PN710 A83 1984  
Bernheimer, ed.: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism* PN 863 C586 1995 PCL Stacks  
Casanova: *The World Republic of Letters* PN 703 C3713 2004 PCL  
Eagleton: *Literary Theory:* PN94 E2 1983 PCL Stacks  
Lodge: *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader,* 2nd ed. PN94 M57 2000 PCL Stacks  
Lodge: *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism: A Reader* (UTCAT entry begins with “20th-century”): PN94 L6  
Milner: *Literature, Culture & Society:* PN51 M48 1996B  
Mitchell, W. J. T and Mark B. N. Hansen, eds. *Critical Terms for Media Studies* PN56 T37 C75 2010  
PCL
Rimmon-Kenan:  *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics.*  PN 212 R55 1983; 2nd edition online:  
Rivkin and Ryan:  *Literary Theory: An Anthology.*  PN 45 L512 1998 PCL Stacks
PCL Stacks
Warhol and Herndl:  *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism.*  1st ed.  PN 98 W64 F366 

For specific topics, such as performativity, memory, ecocriticism, and subjectivity, see the individual 

**Reference Works:**
The *Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory.*  Ed. David Macey
*Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms.*  Ed. Makaryk.  PN 81 E43 
1993 PCL Reference
PCL Reference; 2nd ed. PN 81 J64 2005 PCL Reference.  Online edition: 
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/indexes/titles.html?id=422
*Key Contemporary Social Theorists.*  Ed. Elliott and Ray:  H 61 K473 2003
*The Columbia History of Twentieth-Century French Thought.*  PCL Reference; DC 33.7 C575 2006

Useful Web Site:
http://www.grad.washington.edu/envision/index.html

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**Course Outline**

Week 1:  Introduction:  Erich Auerbach 
Aug. 25

Week 2:  Foundations? 1: Nietzsche, Wilde, Heidegger 
Aug. 30  
Sept. 1

Week 3:  Foundations? 2:  Freud,  
Sept. 6    LABOR DAY HOLIDAY! 
Sept. 8

Week 4:  Foundations? 3.  Marx; Saussure 
Sept. 13  
Sept. 15

Week 5:  Formalisms:  Brooks, Eichenbaum, Shklovsky (photocopy), Jakobson, Todorov
Sept. 20  **FIRST POSITION PAPER DUE IN CLASS**  
Sept. 22

Week 6: Race and Interpretation:  W.E.B. DuBois, Zora Neale Hurston, Henry Gates Jr., bell hooks;  
Sept. 27  
Sept. 29

Week 7: Marxism: Gramsci, Althusser, Williams Benjamin, Horkheimer and Adorno  
Oct. 4  
Oct. 6

Week 8: Ordinary Language:  J. L. Austin, Wittgenstein (photocopy), Bakhtin  
Oct. 11  
Oct. 13

Week 9: Desire, Spectatorship, and Performance:  Lacan, Mulvey, Butler  
Oct. 18  **TIMED WRITING ASSIGNMENT (TAKE-HOME) DUE IN CLASS**  
Oct. 20

Week 10: Cultures, Fields, and the Public Sphere:  Habermas, Bourdie, and Casanova  
Oct. 25  
Oct. 27

Week 11: Power and Narrative Discourse:  Michel Foucault and Hayden White  
Nov. 1  
Nov. 3

Week 12: Deconstruction and French Feminisms:  Derrida; Cixous and Kristeva  
Nov. 8  
Nov. 10

Week 13: Language, Gender, Identities, and Emotions—Anzaldua, Berlant and Warner  
Nov. 15  **SECOND POSITION PAPER DUE IN CLASS**  
Nov. 17

Week 14: History, Postcolonialism, Style, and Hypertext:  Greenblatt, Fanon, Hebdige, Moulthrop  
Nov. 22  
Nov. 24  
Nov. 25-26  **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Week 15: Conclusions  
Nov. 29  
Dec. 1  **IN-CLASS TIMED WRITING ASSIGNMENT**