

English 2200F (001): History of Theory and Criticism

Department of English

Western University

Fall 2014

Lectures: TC 341 ~ Tuesday 7:00-10:00

<https://owl.uwo.ca/>

Instructor

Dr. Christopher Keep

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30-11:30 and Thursday 1:30-2:30 (or by app't)

Teaching Assistant

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to important issues in the history of literary theory and criticism from Plato to the early-Twentieth Century. Students will read a selection of representative texts from different historical periods (Classical and Medieval, Renaissance, Neoclassical and Eighteenth Century, Nineteenth Century, early-Twentieth Century). Our goal will be to trace the continuities and discontinuities that distinguish this intellectual history, and to develop methods and practices that will allow us to treat criticism itself in a critical manner. That is to say, we will strive to see criticism not only as a set of terms and concepts that one may apply to the study of literary texts, but as a creative act in own right. As Oscar Wilde writes, "Criticism itself is an art. And just as artistic creation implies the working of the critical faculty, and, indeed, without it cannot be said to exist at all, so Criticism is really creative in the highest sense of the word." If criticism is "really creative in the highest sense of the word," so too is it an occasion to study the aesthetic, cultural and political practices that have shaped it, and forge connections between the strategies it offers and our own historical moment.

Learning Outcomes

Successful students who complete the course will be able to:

- identify the major historical periods of criticism: C

Essay assignments will be posted to the course website at least two weeks before they are due.

Essays will be written according to standard essay style: typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, and margins will be 1." A title-page is not necessary, but the first page must include the title of the essay, your name, the course number, the professor's name, teaching assistant's name, and the date.

Originality of argument, the ability to support the argument with reference to the primary text, rhetorical persuasiveness, syntax, grammar, spelling, and accurate bibliographic citation will *all* be factors in the grading of the essay.

All bibliographic notation will employ the MLA method of parenthetical notation and a works cited page. Please consult a standard style guide such as that found in the Little Brown Compact Handbook or the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, which is available in the reference shelves of the D.B. Weldon Library. A good online guide to the MLA method can be found here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

Assignments will be submitted electronically through the owl site, and are due by 4:30 on the due date. Papers submitted late will be returned with a grade but no comment

marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a

30	Augustine, from <i>On Christian Teaching</i> (156-62) Aquinas, from <i>Summa Theologica</i> (181-84) Sidney, from “The Defence of Poesy” (254-83)
October 7	Pope, from “An Essay on Criticism” (349-62) Johnson, “The Rambler, No. 4” (367-71) de Staël, from “Essay on Fictions” (507-15)
14	Wordsworth, from “Preface to <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> ” (559-79) Wordsworth, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” (owl)
21	Coleridge Preface to

