ENG 483RHAPW: Seminar in Criticism and Theory
How to Read
Deepika Bahri
Fall 2019, MW 2:30-3:45, Aug 28, 2019-Dec 10, 2019; Callaway Center N118

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Content: Why do you read literature? What are you looking for? Do you bring a toolkit to your reading? Or a theory? A set of theories? Do you read writing by women or non-Western writers differently? Do you wonder why an author chooses to tell a story that isn't even true? Why does art exist? If you think you'd like to discuss these questions, join us so we can talk about reading and writing practices and how both are embedded in historical and cultural contexts. We will read works by Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Marx, Walter Benjamin, Homi Bhabha, Judith Butler, Toni Morrison and a novella composed for Twitter feed by Pulitzer-prize winning author, Jennifer Egan

This seminar will introduce students to the historical trajectory of debates central to literary studies today (the value of literature; the significance of art in the world; theories of taste, art and technological developments) through thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant, Adorno, Derrida, Butler etc. In general, we are preparing to answer the following questions: What do we do when we read literature? What are our underlying assumptions about the text, criticism, and the role of art in the world? The goal of this course is to prepare you to write about literature with a clear methodology and purpose.

Here are the skills our assignments will help you develop: How to read, represent (others') ideas that are not your own (thereby increasing your social skills in interactive situations); summarize key ideas represent in clear language (thereby enhancing your capacity to communicate); how to harvest useful kernels of wisdom (thereby increasing your ability to retain information and learn how to use it when appropriate), how to accommodate a diversity of ideas and how to understand by diversity matters in the real world; how to assess audience and purpose, establish credibility, and communicate clearly and purposefully using evidence from the text (thereby developing these skills for real world interactions).

Required Texts:
- Eagleton, Terry, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*
- Ross, Stephen David, ed. *Art and Its Significance: An Anthology of Aesthetic Theory*
- "Black Box," Tweet text novella by Jennifer Egan circulated by email

Selections on Course Reserves available under the Libraries tab at http://libraries.emory.edu:
Click on ENG 483RW for required readings as well as suggested further readings.

Grading Scale: 94-100=A   84-93.9=B   70-83.9=C   55-69.9=D   54.9 and below=F

Requirements
- **300-word summary** of each theoretical piece of reading beginning with Plato's *The Republic*. **Due before class by 10AM on CANVAS**. On CANVAS look for the name of the author or author+short title if there's more than one piece by the same author. The summaries will be discussed in class. I will check every summary to ensure that it meets the standards of a college summary (I will assess comprehension and control over grammar and sentence structure). If it does, responsible completion and submission of all summaries will earn you a full 40 points.

Failure to submit the summary on time will cost you 10 points each (your final grade is calculated on a total of 100 points including all assignments, so yes, this is a hefty penalty given that this component is graded at 40% of your final grade). Absence is not a valid excuse. If you need to be absent, you must upload the summary and send me an email explaining your absence. If you miss more than 4 summaries (thus losing all 40 points), 5 points will begin to be deducted from the remaining 60 points for each further summary late or missed. **Summary submissions begin with Plato (Sept. 9)** **40%**

- **One Classroom presentation** [10 minutes each] with a handout (1 sheet front and back) including key points, important quotes, and follow-up questions for discussion. (Handout also due to me by email with the subject line: 483[yourlastname]:Handouttitle). Please do not exceed 10 minutes. **Presentations begin with Aristotle 20%**

- **Final Paper [1000 words].** Write your final paper to show off your theoretic acumen. The final paper will analyze Egan's novella "Black Box" using a critical lens that grows out of 2 or more theoretical sources. Begin by introducing the literary piece, author, and genre. Introduce the issues/themes addressed in the piece, and any other context you can provide based on secondary research. Then go on to formulate a critical research question that the essay will respond to. Refer to critics and theories, and include pertinent quotations. Submit the final paper in class on 12/11 with all previous versions and peer review sheets attached below the final version. You must also email me an electronic copy with the subject line 483[your last name]:paper **30%**

- **5 Reflections: 10%**

  - Inventory of 5 good ideas
  - 5 quotations with sources (author, title)
  - List of 5 skills used / learned
  - List of 5 lessons learned that are relevant for the real world
  - 250-word paragraph for a web site on "English Literary Studies" (This para will reflect your understanding of the material, topics, issues, and skills that students studying English literature and theory will learn 10%

- <u>Final Paper Assignment Stages</u>: Proposal; Review of Proposal with regard to Evidence for the argument proposed, clarity of statement, cultural sensitivity; Revision of Proposal (if necessary) or Selection of an alternative topic, followed by a new proposal and review; Submission of a rough draft for review of the framing of the argument, testing for adequate development of the argument and sufficient support from evidence; organization; sentence structure and grammar; Revision of rough draft; Submission and review of pre-final draft in class for micro-level details such as phrasing, style, and a final check for sensitivity to a diverse audience and cultural differences; Submission of final draft with a statement regarding your own assessment of your success in meeting the stated criteria for the assignment.

GRADING POLICY (for written papers)
Each paper you write will be graded A, B, C, D or F. An explanation of these grades follows:
- **A**: Demonstrates a superior command of the subject matter and shows a clear pattern of organization which captivates the audience and keeps readers involved through all stages of the paper. Moreover, the A paper reveals a sophistication in style and an original voice; sentences are appropriately varied in length and construction; transitions are used to produce a smooth flow for the reader; the connections between sentences and ideas are clear; individual sentences are concise, clear, and highly specific. The A paper demonstrates a high degree of selectivity in word choice and contains no errors in grammar and mechanics.
- **B**: Demonstrates above average competence with the language and subject matter. It delivers a substantial amount of interesting information effectively. The specific points are logically ordered, well-developed, and unified according to a clear organizing principle. The introduction and conclusion are effective, but not as engaging as in the A paper. The transitions are adequately

smooth, sentence structure is sufficiently varied in both length and construction, and the choice of words has been made selectively. The writing in a B paper is organized, clear, coherent, and correct; the paper is far more than competent. Very few errors in grammar and mechanics.

• **C**: Demonstrates competency in the language and subject matter. It passes in the categories of development, organization, audience sensitivity. There may be some minor errors in grammar and mechanics but no errors in other categories. The C paper fulfills the assignment adequately.

• **D**: Meets the basic requirements of the assignment but may have minor flaws in the categories of development, organization, audience sensitivity or major errors in grammar and mechanics.

• **F**: Has major flaws in one or more categories or enough minor problems to indicate that the draft is unfinished or shows lack of control by the writer.

More than 3 absences will cost you a 5% decrease in your letter grade per subsequent absence

Electronic Devices Policy:
Computer use is restricted to taking notes or viewing relevant Canvas material or reading the short online text being discussed in class. Cell phones must be turned off (*off off*, not set to vibrate). No IM, social networking, web surfing (*even* to come up with ostensibly relevant nuggets of information from Wikipedia), or recording devices, unless agreed to in writing by the instructor. I-Pad, Touch etc. use restricted to class-related work.

This policy is based upon research available on multi-tasking which seems to conclude, in a nutshell, "you think you're multitasking. Not." Look up (outside class ☺):
Bowman, L. L., Levine, L. E., Waite, B. M., & Gendron, M. (2010). Can students really multitask? An experimental study of instant messaging while reading. *Computers & Education*, *54*(4): 927-931. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2009.09.024
http://news.stanford.edu/news/2009/august24/multitask-research-study-082409.html
http://www.nais.org/publications/ismagazinearticle.cfm?ItemNumber=155242

How to Access Canvas:

Go directly to Canvas at https://classes.emory.edu/webapps/login/?action=relogin Your username and password are the same ones you use for OPUS.

From the homepage, you can access our class under the "Courses: Quick View" box.

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Course Schedule

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All readings are on course reserves unless otherwise indicated or the author is Eagleton or the source is indicated as "Ross"

Aug 28: Introduction to the course.

Sept 02: LABOR DAY
Sept. 4: **The Rise of English**
Select 2 readings from the syllabus to meet your presentation requirement. You will be assigned one for your presentation
READ Eagleton, "The Rise of English Studies" to prepare for discussion in class
SCHEDULE CHANGE ENDS

Sept. 9: Plato, Republic, Book X, 32-44 (Ross) **Summary submissions begin with Plato**
Sept.11: Aristotle, Poetics, 66-76 (Ross) **Presentations begin with Aristotle**

Sept. 16: Hume, "Of the Std. of Taste," 78-92 (Ross)
Sept. 18: Marx and Engels, "The Communist Manifesto"

Sept. 23: Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"
Sept. 25: Benjamin, "The Storyteller"

Sept. 30: Benjamin, "The Work of Art" (Ross or course reserves)
Oct. 2: "Black Box" No summary required but you may select this text for presentation

Oct. 7: Viswanathan, "Currying Favor"
Oct. 9: "Black Box" Discussion

Oct 14-15: Fall Break
Oct 16: Eagleton, "Psycho-analysis," 151-193

Oct 21: Barthes, "Death of an Author"
Oct 23: Butler, *Gender Trouble* excerpt (circulated by email)

Oct 28: Eagleton, "Post-Structuralism," 127-34 Discussion on the Signifier/signified Think about Plato's table, different tables referred to by the word "table" INSERT ANDERSON TEXT ON NATION FOUCAULT DERRIDA? NIETZCHE SOUND OF LISTENING
October 30: "Black Box" discussion on words and meanings (beauty, woman) and feminist issues

Nov. 4: Bhabha, "Of Mimicry"
November 6: Morrison, "Unspeakable"

November 11: "Black Box" content discussion; Review of concepts so far. Generate a list of key terms. Make a list of quotes that you found useful for a reading of "Black Box"
November 13: Bring 3 paper topics with 3 thesis statements. ADD CIXOUS?

November 18: Discussion of paper topics and selection of final paper topic. Consider the following questions: what is your research question? what do you want to demonstrate to the reader? what is your argument?
November 20: Bring a printed full rough draft for review in class.

November 25-27: Work on final paper
November 27: Thanksgiving. No class.

December 2: Identify what needs to improve in your own draft. Ask questions about every idea, sentence, word you are unsure about. Bring a print out of questions and a list of areas that need improvement
December 4: Bring a printed and revised full rough draft; Peer review of papers in class

December 9: Final paper due by email to me; Bring a hard copy to class.