



**ENG 496**  
**Literary Theory**  
**and Research**  
**Syllabus and Policy Statement**

TR 12:30-1:45 p.m., Carter Hall 108

**Professor:** Matt Oliver  
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**Office Phone:** 789-5240

**Office Hours:** MWF 12 – 1 p.m.  
WF 3 – 4 p.m.  
TR 3 – 4:30 p.m.  
or by appointment

**Why are there superheroes at the top of this page?**

It is easier to learn and remember complex subjects if we can relate them to simple, memorable, and familiar things. Many people already know the basic narrative facts about these heroes, and since you will be learning this semester to apply literary theories to specific narrative details, we will be using a basic analysis of Superman, Batman, the Hulk, and possibly other superheroes as an entry point into these theories. We will, of course, also spend plenty of time applying these theories to more complex works of literature. Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is a bit of a literary superhero, and Melville's Babo in *Benito Cereno* could be a sort of Lex Luthor-ish supervillain (or anti-hero, depending on what theoretical approach you use). And Keats's Grecian Urn does have the super power of immortality. By using the same texts to discuss each theoretical approach, you should get a good overview of how different theoretical methods yield different readings of the same material.

**Required Materials:**

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Routledge, 2006. (ISBN 978-0-415-97410-0)

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. (Norton Critical Edition) Norton, 2004. (ISBN 978-0-393-97819-3)

Melville, Herman. *Melville's Short Novels*. (Norton Critical Edition) Ed. Dan McCall. Norton, 2002. (ISBN 978-0-393-97641-0)

Course Reader (provided by the instructor, includes "Ode on a Grecian Urn" by John Keats)

RECOMMENDED READING: *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

**Catalog Course Description**

This capstone course is an introduction to the discipline of advanced literary studies, with an emphasis on reading literary theory and applying it in producing scholarly writings about literary

critical analysis of it. These will be shared in class as part of class discussion in addition to being collected and graded by the instructor. You will each write three position papers.

### **Grades**

Research Paper 30%  
Research Stages 20%  
Research Presentation 10%  
Position Papers 20%  
Participation and Minor Assignments 10%  
Midterm and Final 10%

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is required for this course. There are no excused absences, and the only valid grounds for absence are illness, emergency, and university activities. According to the university attendance policy, I am required to notify the Dean of Academic Support if you miss two weeks of classes (6 absences), and they will send you an official warning. If you miss four weeks of classes (12 absences), you will fail the course.

If you know you will be missing a class, contact me ahead of time, make arrangements to turn in any missed work (if possible), and provide documentation of the reason for the absence if I ask for it. Please bear in mind, though, that I am not required to offer the opportunity to make up more than four absences, even if you miss more classes.

If you will be missing classes due to prescheduled university activities, please give me a schedule within the first two weeks of class. These will still count as absences, but I will need to discuss with you any potential difficulties.

Excessive tardiness (defined as missing a substantial portion of the class) may be converted into absences at my discretion.

For more details, please see the “Undergraduate Student Attendance Policy” in the student handbook. If you have any questions, please ask me as soon as possible. It is easier for me to be flexible if you inform me ahead of time.

### **Late Work**

You are required to turn in all work on its due date. **I do not grant extensions on assignments. I will not accept late work.** If you have a university activity or other prearranged activity on the due date of an assignment, it is your responsibility to turn the work in early. If you are the victim of exceptional circumstances (unplanned emergencies: death in the family, appendectomy, nervous breakdown), I will consider requests for extensions on a case-by-case basis. Otherwise, I will deduct a half letter grade for the first day your paper is late and two points for each day after that.

PLEASE NOTE: Contacting me as soon as possible shows good faith on your part. I am much more likely to work with you on deadlines if you approach me before the paper is due.

## Out-of-Class Resources

### *Academic Support*

The Writing Center and Learning Commons, both located in the Badgett Academic Support Center, provide tutors and general support for reading, writing, research, and learning on all topics. Consult the CU webpage for Learning Commons and Writing Center hours as well as posted announcements. Ask for tutoring in any subject with which you need help. Students may also use the Center and Commons in self-guided learning, employing the study rooms or computers and checking out video cameras.

### *The Writing Center*

I strongly recommend that everyone visit the Tutorial Program or Writing Center at least once before turning in a paper. The Writing Center, which is located in the Learning Commons, provides an experienced reader to review your paper drafts and make suggestions for improvement. Although this is not the same as feedback from your professor, a fresh pair of eyes and good advice will always help you make some improvements, provided you apply that advice.

### *Disability Services*

Campbellsville University is committed to reasonable accommodations for students who have documented physical and learning disabilities, as well as medical and emotional conditions. If you have a documented disability or condition of this nature, you may be eligible for disability services. Documentation must be from a licensed professional and current in terms of assessment. Please contact Disability Services at 270-789-5450 to inquire about services.

### *Internet Resources*

The following are a few useful websites for writing information. For a more complete list of links, see our class portal on TigerNet.

[literaryhistory.com](http://literaryhistory.com)—A dazzling array of academic research on topics from 20<sup>th</sup>-century, 19<sup>th</sup>-century, and 18<sup>th</sup>-century literature as well as African-American literature.

[nosweatshakespeare.com](http://nosweatshakespeare.com)—Has modern-English ‘translations’ and other notes on Shakespeare.

[hyperhistory.com/online\\_n2/History\\_n2/a.html](http://hyperhistory.com/online_n2/History_n2/a.html)—A good site for historical context. It includes timelines for world categories such as famous people, politics, and religion.

[goshen.edu/English/litanalysis.html](http://goshen.edu/English/litanalysis.html)—A guide for writing a literary analysis.

### *My Office Hours*

I’m available in my office eight hours per week for walk-in appointments (see page 1 for times), and I’m sometimes available to make appointments outside those times as well. There is a noticeable difference in papers and exams after students talk to me ahead of time, often resulting in higher grades. Don’t wait until you’re disappointed with your first paper or test grade—come see me early and often.

### *Campus Security Phone Numbers*

(270) 789-5555 (office)

(270) 403-3611 (mobile)

- Thursday, Sept. 25      Reader-Response Overview & Theory Reading  
 Read Tyson Chapter 6, "Reader-Response Criticism" (169-190 required, 190-203 recommended)  
 Read Wolfgang Iser, "Readers and the Concept of the Implied Reader" (reader)  
 Midterm Project Assignment Sheet
- Week 6*  
 Tuesday, Sept. 30      Read Wolfgang Iser, "Readers and the Concept of the Implied Reader" (reader)
- Thursday, Oct. 2      Structuralism Overview  
 Read Tyson Chapter 7, "Structuralist Criticism" (209-234 required, 234-245 recommended)
- Week 7*  
 Tuesday, Oct. 7      Deconstruction Overview  
 Read Tyson Chapter 8, "Deconstructive Criticism" (249-266 required, 267-279 recommended)
- Thursday, Oct. 9      Deconstruction Overview  
 Read Tyson Chapter 8, "Deconstructive Criticism" (249-266 required, 267-279 recommended)
- Week 8*  
 Tuesday, Oct. 14      Structuralism/Deconstruction Applied  
 Read Barbara Jones Guetti, "Resisting the Aesthetic" (reader)  
 Structuralism/Deconstruction Response Paper due (if necessary)
- Thursday, Oct. 16      FALL BREAK
- Week 9*  
 Tuesday, Oct. 21      Psychoanalytic Theory Overview & Theory Reading  
 Read Tyson Chapter 2, "Psychoanalytic Criticism" (11-39 required, 39-50 recommended)  
 Read Sigmund Freud, "The Dream-Work" and "Creative Writers and Daydreaming" (reader)
- Thursday, Oct. 23      Psychoanalytic Theory Applied  
 Read Stephen Orgel, "Prospero's Wife" (Norton Critical Edition)  
 Psychoanalytic Theory Response Paper due (if necessary)

*Week 14*

Tuesday, Nov. 25

Job Search/Grad School  
Individual Conferences

Thursday, Nov. 27

THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS

*Week 15*

Tuesday, Dec. 2

Review and Presentations  
Individual Conferences

Thursday, Dec. 4

Review and Presentations  
Individual Conferences

*Exam Week*

Monday, Dec. 8

Major Research Paper Due by 4 p.m. (drop it off at my office)

Thursday, Dec. 11

“I am a \_\_\_\_ critic” assignment, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.