



FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**SCHOOL OF ENGLISH,
MEDIA AND PERFORMING ARTS**

ARTS3031

**Literature and the
Contemporary World**

(six units of credit)

SESSION 1 2015

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COURSE CONVENOR:

Dr Paul Dawson

Room: Robert Webster 218

Phone: 9385 2220

Email: paul.dawson@unsw.edu.au

Consultation hours: 2.30-3.30pm

Course Structure

Lectures

- One lecture per week, from Week One to Week Twelve
- Fridays 10-11am, Webster 327

Seminars

- Weekly two-hour seminars from Week Two to Week Thirteen
- Wednesdays 12-2pm Webster 250; Fridays 11am-1pm Webster 251 and 302

Mobile phones MUST be turned off during lectures and tutorials

Textbooks

- D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Penguin)
- Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*
- Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections*
- A course reader is available from the university bookshop

Summary of the course

As a discipline, literary studies is constituted less by an objective set of texts, than by a series of ongoing debates about the nature, meaning and value of what we call literature. What is a classic, what is a hoax, what is obscene, and what is “worthless”? The course centres around three novels and the public debates they sparked about the role of literature: the obscenity trial brought about by the paperback publication of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*; the fatwa issued in response to the publication of *The Satanic Verses*; and the anxiety over the fate of the novel crystallized in the inclusion and subsequent rejection of *The Corrections* from Oprah's Book Club. Throughout the course we will consider the relationship between literature as a creative act and literature as public discourse; broadly speaking, the relationship between aesthetics and politics in literary culture. Ultimately these engagements will lead students to reflect upon the contribution of literary studies and criticism to the private and social act of reading.

Aims of the course

As the Capstone course for the English major, this course will encourage students to reflect upon what they have learned about the discipline of literary studies and the key disciplinary debates which have arisen throughout their undergraduate education. The basis of this reflection will be a reconsideration of the aims of the two English Gateway courses: a critical awareness of literary forms and genres; and an understanding of canonicity and literary value. The core disciplinary skill of textual analysis formed in these courses and developed throughout the major will be tested as students investigate how literature operates in the public sphere, leading to a reflection on the importance of criticism itself.

Expected learning outcomes

- the capacity to interrogate the disciplinary assumptions and institutional history of literary studies
- the ability to reflect upon and articulate your personal reasons for studying and reading literature
- the capacity to consider your private reading experience in a broader social and critical context
- the ability to engage in debate about the significance of literature to public discourse, and the relative merits of a formal education in literary studies
- the ability to construct an original argument in relation to a field of scholarly debate
- the critical skills necessary to support arguments with textual evidence
- the ability to conduct formal textual analysis of literary works

Graduate Attributes

It is hoped that the above learning outcomes will foster the following qualities identified as graduate attributes for the English major:

- Skills in literary analysis through close reading of texts in English
- Ability to relate literary texts to the contexts in which they were produced
- Ability to reflect upon one's own practice as a literary critic within the discipline of English

LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READING LIST

MODULE ONE: READING LITERATURE

SET TEXT: Kim Addonizio, “Fuck” (poetry)

Week One: Friday 6th March

What is Literature?

Readings

Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, “The Nature of Literature” (1949)

Tvzetan Todorov, “The Notion of Literature” (1973)

Peter Widdowson, “What is Literature?” (1999)

J. Hillis Miller, “What is Literature?” (2002)

Week Two: Friday 13th March

Why do we read? The Private World and the Public Sphere

Readings

Martha C. Nussbaum, “The Literary Imagination” (1995)

Suzanne Keen, “Reader’s Empathy” in *Empathy and the Novel* (2007)

Timothy Aubry, Introduction to *Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans* (2011)

Joan Swann and Daniel Allington, “Reading Groups and the Language of Literary Texts: A Case Study in Social Reading” (2009)

Brian Boyd, “Fiction as Adaptation” (2009)

Virginia Woolf, “How Should One Read a Book” (1925)

Week Three: Friday 20th March

What is literary criticism?

Readings

Matthew Arnold, “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” (1865)

T.S. Eliot, “The Function of Criticism” (1923)

Jim Merod, “On the Road to Work” from *The Political Responsibility of the Critic*

Edward Said, “Secular Criticism” in *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983)

Terry Eagleton, conclusion to *The Function of Criticism* (1984)

Ronan McDonald, “The Value of Criticism” from *The Death of the Critic* (2007)

Rita Felski, introduction to *Uses of Literature* (2008)

MODULE TWO: STUDYING LITERATURE

SET TEXT: *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

Week four: Friday 27th March

What is Literary Studies? The Rise of English

Readings

Sir Arthur Quiller Couch, "Inaugural" (1913)

F.R. Leavis, "A Sketch for an English School" (1949)

Graham Hough, "Crisis in Literary Education" (1964)

Terry Eagleton, "The Rise of English," from *Literary Theory* (1983)

Gerald Graff, "The Humanist Myth" in *Professing Literature* (1987)

Leigh Dale, "Proper Subjects," from *The English Men* (1997)

Week Five: Friday 3rd April: No lecture – public holiday

Week six: Friday 17th April

The Trial of *Lady Chatterley* and the Crisis in English Studies

Readings

Alvin Kernan, "Lady Chatterley and 'Mere Chatter about Shelley': The University Asked to Define Literature" (1990)

F.R. Leavis, and Denys Thompson, "Culture and Environment: Introduction"; "The Loss of the Organic Community" (1933)

Alec Craig, "Lady Chatterley's Lover" (1962)

Hunter, Saunders, Williamson, "Twentieth Century English Obscenity Law" (1993)

Kate Millett, "D.H. Lawrence" (1970)

Week seven: Friday 24th April

From Criticism to Theory: The Canon Debate

Readings

Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text" (1971)

Lillian S. Robinson, "Treason our Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon" (1983)

John Frow, "Beyond the Disciplines: Cultural Studies" (1990)

Gerald Graff, introduction to *Beyond the Culture Wars* (1992)

John Guillory, introduction to *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (1993)

Harold Bloom, "An Elegy for the Canon," in *The Western Canon* (1994)

Eugene Goodheart, "The Uncanny Canon" in *Does Literary Studies Have a Future?* (1999)

Ankhi Mukherjee, "'What is a Classic?': International Literary Criticism and the Classic Question" (2010)

MODULE THREE: THE LIMITS OF LITERARY CRITICISM

SET TEXT: *The Satanic Verses*

Week Eight: Friday 1st May

Political Correctness: From Critics to Intellectuals

Readings

- Colin MacCabe, "Cultural Studies and English" (1992)
Russell Jacoby, "Missing Intellectuals" from *The Last Intellectuals* (1987)
Edward Said, "Representations of the Intellectual" (1994)
Christopher Newfield and Ronald Strickland, "Introduction: Going Public" in *After Political Correctness* (1995)
Michael Berube, "Bite Size Theory: Popularizing Academic Criticism" (1993)
Henry A. Giroux, "Academics as Public Intellectuals: Rethinking Classroom Politics" (1995)
Paul Dawson: "What is a Literary Intellectual?" from *Creative Writing and the New Humanities* (2005)

Week Nine: Friday 8th May

The Rushdie Affair and the Question of Tolerance

Readings

- M.M Ashan and A.R. Kidwai, "The Muslim Perspective" (1991)
Malise Ruthven, "Honour and Shame" (1990)
Daniel Pipes, "Censorship and its Costs" (1990)
David Edwards, "The History of Blasphemy and the Rushdie Affair" (1993)
Alex Kvonagel, "*The Satanic Verses*: Narrative Structure and Islamic Doctrine" (1991)
Leela Ghandi, "Postcolonial Literature" (1998)

Week Ten: Friday 15th May

The Post-Theory Academy: From Close Reading to Distant Reading

readings

Sedgewick

- Franco Moretti "Conjectures on World Literature" (2000)
Jeffrey Williams, "The Post-Theory Generation" (1995)
Vincent Leitch, preface to *Theory Matters* (2003)
Jonathan Culler, "The Literary in Theory" (2007)
Peter D. McDonald, "Ideas of the Book and Histories of Literature: After Theory?" (2006)

MODULE FOUR: DOES ANYONE STILL READ?

SET TEXT: *The Corrections*

Week Eleven: Friday 22nd May

The Decline of Print Culture: Is the Book Dying?

readings

Sven Birkerts, Preface and Afterword to *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* (2006)

Johnathan Franzen, "Why Bother (The *Harper's* Essay)" (2002)

Onnesha Roychoudhuri, "Books After Amazon" (2010)

James Wood, "Hysterical Realism" (2004)

Stephen J. Burn, "The End of Postmodernism: American Fiction at the Millenium" (2008)

Jeremy Green, "Jonathan Franzen, Oprah Winfrey, and the Future of the Social Novel" from *Late Postmodernism: American Fiction at the Millenium* (2005)

Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "Obsolescence, the Marginal and the Popular" from *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television* (2006)

Paul Dawson, "The Return of Omniscience in Contemporary Fiction" (2009)

Week Twelve: Friday 29th May

Recuperating Literary Studies: Affect, Fictionality and the Narrative Turn

Readings

Lisa Zunshine, "Why Fiction Does it Better" (2013)

Jonathan Gottschall, "Why Fiction is Good for You" (2012)

Lecture/Seminar schedule

Week	Lecture Title	Seminar Topic
One	Introduction: What is Literature?	No Seminar
Two	Why Do We Read? The Private World and the Public Sphere	Can you tell me what makes “Fuck” a poem?
Three	What is Literary Criticism?	So you’ve just read this great book and you want to talk to someone about it . . .
Four	What is Literary Studies? The Rise of English	Why should we read (and write) <i>about</i> literature?
Five	No Lecture (public holiday)	If only we could have studied English in the old days . . .
Six	The Trial of <i>Lady Chatterley</i> and the Crisis in English Studies	Is <i>Lady Chatterley’s Lover</i> pornographic?
Seven	From Criticism to Theory: The Canon Debate	Is <i>Lady Chatterley’s Lover</i> a classic?
Eight	Political Correctness: From Critics to Intellectuals	Why are there so many left-wing intellectuals in the Humanities?
Nine	The Rushdie Affair and the Question of Tolerance	Is <i>The Satanic Verses</i> blasphemous?
Ten	The Post-Theory Academy	What can a ‘close reading’ do about the <i>fatwa</i> ?
Eleven	The Decline of Print Culture: Is the Book Dying?	So apparently <i>The Corrections</i> saved us from postmodernism . . .
Twelve	Recuperating Literary Studies	Who is the most interesting character in <i>The Corrections</i> ?
Thirteen	No Lecture	Is a major in English worth a HECS debt?

Modes of assessment

Annotated Bibliography and Personal comment

- A brief summary and evaluation of the set readings for any one week from week one to week four. This should include at least four pieces from the course reader, and at least another two references derived from your own research: half a page to a page per reading
- Here is a helpful resource from the university's Learning Centre: <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/annotated_bib.html>
- Your own informed opinion in response to the question which has organized the readings for that particular week (ie, what is literature, why do we read, what is literary criticism, what is literary studies?): 250 words
- 40% of overall mark
- DUE DATE: Thursday 2nd April (Week Five)

Scholarly Essay

- 3500 word essay which analyses at least one of the set novels (*Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *The Satanic Verses*, *The Corrections*) in the context of their public reception, and which engages critically with the debates that have informed the course
- no topic questions will be provided for this essay; students are expected to develop their own topic in consultation with their tutor
- 60% of overall mark
- DUE DATE: Thursday 11th June

Plagiarism is a serious offence and may result in failure for the course

In order to pass this course you must seriously attempt and submit all of its assessment tasks. Failure to complete any single component will result in an overall failure for the course

You must attend at least 80% of the tutorials and lectures if you wish to pass the course

Assessment criteria

The criteria for the annotated bibliography are:

- Ability to concisely and accurately summarize the main argument of the piece, including at least one salient and representative quotation
- Ability to evaluate this argument in the context of its relation to the broader question of the week and the other set readings
- Ability to choose appropriate extra references from your own research
- The effectiveness of your choice of structuring principle: alphabetical, chronological, thematic
- Ability to correctly and consistently employ the bibliographic referencing system of your choice

The criterion for the personal comment is:

- The clarity and persuasiveness of your personal comment and the extent to which it is informed by your reading

The criteria for the scholarly essay are:

- ability to produce a clearly written, grammatically correct, and logically structured essay, proof-read for all errors
- ability to construct a sustained and coherent argument about the chosen topic
- ability to situate your argument in the context of a wider scholarly debate
- ability to support this argument with a ‘close reading’ of the books discussed
- ability to cite and analyse appropriate passages as textual evidence
- demonstrated awareness of the issues raised and debated in class
- demonstrated knowledge of the books being discussed
- ability to correctly and consistently employ a recognised referencing system

The first assessment task is designed to facilitate the first four learning outcomes and the third graduate attribute. The second assessment task is designed to facilitate all the learning outcome and graduate attributes.

Rationale for the inclusion of content and teaching approach

I am dedicated to promoting the value of literature as an art form, and as a vital element of public discourse. My teaching is conducted within the context of literary studies as an academic discipline. I conceive of a discipline not just as a body of knowledge to be learned, but as a series of recurring questions to be debated. As a result, I aim to introduce students to some of the foundational questions of literary studies and to current scholarly debates in the field. I encourage students at all levels, from undergraduate to postgraduate, to conceive of themselves as participants in these debates, to which they can contribute via their essays.

I feel that my role as a teacher, beyond ensuring that students acquire relevant disciplinary knowledge, is to demonstrate how to succeed in this field, how to contribute to its ongoing development. The qualities and attributes which I think are necessary to this success include: a spirit of open enquiry; a willingness to experiment; the capacity to interrogate received opinion; and an ambition to produce high quality work. To promote this ambition I try to lead by example, engaging students with my passion for the subject and my commitment to teaching. I aim to give students as much autonomy as possible in the learning process, encouraging them to pursue the work which most interests them. I aim to foster a learning environment which is both respectful and critically robust. To this end I engage openly with all student opinions and encourage open and honest debate in classes.

Teaching strategies

- lectures to familiarise students with key issues and concepts in the course
- group discussion of issues raised by lectures and material in course reader
- close reading and textual analysis of set texts to develop critical skills

- occasional in-class group exercises
- time allocated for each student to offer their own opinion
- no set questions for major essay to encourage students to research the topics which most interest them, and to provide them with the opportunity to make their own original intervention in a scholarly debate

Course evaluation and development

The formal, and anonymous, CATEI evaluation process at the end of semester is of great significance, particularly considering this is the first time this course has been offered. Your feedback will be invaluable for assessing the appropriateness, relevance and value of the course as a “capstone” for the English major.

Now that CATEI evaluations are conducted online, student participation has dropped dramatically, resulting in feedback which is statistically unreliable. For instance, when only a small proportion of students respond, one dissatisfied student can constitute 20% of the overall response. It tends to be only the students who loved a course or those who were disillusioned by it who take the time to fill out the surveys. This presents a skewed overall impression of what students thought. You are thus urged to take the time to fill out the CATEI survey at the end of semester. Remember too, that in the same way comments on an assignment are more helpful than a mark, your written feedback on the course is more important than the boxes you tick, or the circles you click on with your mouse.

OTHER STUFF

Resources for students

For information on Academic Honesty and Plagiarism, Essay-Writing Resources, Late Work, Submission of Assignments, and other relevant School and University Policies, please consult the document “Essential Information for All SAM students”, which may be accessed here:

<https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

School Office address: Room 312, Level 3, Robert Webster Building.

Attendance

Students must attend a minimum of 80% of classes (including lectures, tutorials, and seminars) to be regarded as having fulfilled the requirements of the course.

Assessment extensions

1. A student enrolled in an undergraduate or postgraduate course taught by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences may apply for an extension of time to complete an assessed task.
2. These guidelines apply to all assessed tasks regardless of whether or not a grade is awarded, except the following:
 - i. any form of test/examination/assessed activity undertaken during regular class contact hours
 - ii. any task specifically identified by the Course Authority (the academic in charge of the course) in

the course outline or Learning Management System (LMS), for example, Moodle, as not available for extension requests.

A student who missed an assessed activity held within class contact hours should apply for Special Consideration via myUNSW.

3. A student seeking an extension should submit a SAM extension application form (found in Forms on SAM website) to the Course Authority before the due date.
4. The Course Authority should respond to the request within two working days of the request.
5. The Course Authority can only approve an extension up to five days. A student requesting an extension of greater than five days should complete an application for Special Consideration.
6. If a student is granted an extension, failure to comply will result in a penalty. The penalty will be invoked one minute past the approved extension time.

Late Assessment penalties

1. These guidelines apply to all students enrolled in undergraduate or postgraduate courses taught by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.
2. These guidelines apply to all assessed tasks in a course without an approved extension or special consideration.
3. These guidelines do not apply to any form of test or examination or other assessed activities undertaken within class contact hours.
4. An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).
5. The late penalty is the loss of 3% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof the work is late. Lateness will include weekends and public holidays. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.
6. Work submitted fourteen days after the due date will be marked and feedback provided but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but for the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.
7. Work submitted twenty-one days after the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course a student will automatically fail the course.
8. Assessed work that is capable of being submitted electronically should be submitted through the Turnitin portal.
9. For work delivered by mail the submission date is the date stamp on the package.
10. For work delivered in hard copy the School date stamping procedures will apply.
11. Where an extension has been granted the late penalties outlined above will apply from the revised due date.
12. When grading the assessed task the marker will note both the mark/grade the work would have received had it been submitted by the due date as well as the revised mark/grade due to the late penalty.

Attendance

1. These guidelines apply to all students enrolled in undergraduate or postgraduate courses taught by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for either face-to-face (F2F), blended or online delivery.

2. Information on students' rights and responsibilities in relation to attendance will be published in the Faculty section of each Course Outline and/or Learning Management System (LMS) site.
3. These guidelines may be varied for a student registered with the Student Equity and Disabilities Unit, or a student in the Elite Athletes and Performers program.
4. A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a F2F or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.
5. If a student is unable to attend all classes for a course due to timetable clashes, the student must complete the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences "Permitted Timetable Clash" form. A student unable to attend lectures in a course conducted by the School of Education can apply for "Permission to Participate in Lectures Online".
6. Where practical, a student's attendance will be recorded. Individual course outlines/LMS will set out the conditions under which attendance will be measured.
7. A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.
8. If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.
9. Reserve members of the Australian Defence Force who require absences of more than two weeks due to full-time service may be provided an exemption. The student may also be permitted to discontinue enrolment without academic or financial penalty.
10. If a Course Authority rejects a student's request for absence from a class or activity the student must be advised in writing of the grounds for the rejection.
11. A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance.
12. A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course's learning outcomes and/or volume of learning.
13. A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.
14. The Dean will only grant such a request after consultation with the Course Authority to ensure that measures can be organised that will allow the student to meet the course's learning outcomes and volume of learning.
15. A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a final grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).
16. A student who has submitted the appropriate documentation but attends less than 66% of the classes/activities will be asked by the Course Authority to apply to discontinue the course without failure rather than be awarded a final grade of UF. The final decision as to whether a student can be withdrawn without fail is made by Student Administration and Records.