**English 60123**

**Introduction to Modern Critical Theory**

**Spring 2015**

**Beasley 322**

**M 2:00 – 4:40pm**

Dr. Jason Helms

317c Reed Hall

817-257-7082

jason.helms@tcu.edu

Office hours: MWF 8-8:45 am, T: 10-10:45a and by appt.

Pearson LearningStudio class site: www.tcuglobal.edu

# Course Description

ENGL 60123 introduces students to modern critical theory. This will not be a historical survey. Students will not leave the class with anything like a comprehensive knowledge of critical theory over the last 100 years. Instead, we will be focusing on particular problems (e.g. Genre, Representation, Agency, Material) and reading a variety of thinkers’ responses to those problems. We will read across various literary, rhetorical, and philosophical traditions on both sides of the atlantic (and perhaps elsewhere!). Students will learn to incorporate these theories into their own work, formulate their own answers to particular theoretical problems, and present their research to a scholarly audience. Students are not expected to have a background in any particular school of theory or theorist. However, students will be expected to read deeply and write thoughtfully.

# Outcomes

*English Studies*

(TY) students will read and discuss key figures and texts concerned with modern critical theory. They will produce writing that reflects an understanding of the schools being studied, connecting them to their historical contexts and current conversations.

*Rhetoric and Composition*

(RC) and (TY) The texts we will read impact both rhetorical and literary theory. Theory's very generality allows it to influence multiple contexts.

*Professionalization*

1. Students should be able to conduct research independently.
2. Students will be able to give scholarly presentations.

Students will be required to compose sustained research projects that depend on theorists from the class. They will also present their research to the class as though it were a conference presentation.

# Books to Purchase

Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*

Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*

Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

# Assignments

**Presentation of Class Reading**

You will be responsible for introducing one of the readings and leading a class discussion on it. You will have 30 minutes of class time to do both. You may create a powerpoint or handout but are not required to do either. You *should* do some background research on the author as well as the original context of the reading. How does this fit into the author's oeuvre? Would the author consider him or herself a literary theorist? Philosopher? Cultural critic? Activist? Something else? What is the common understanding of this reading? How is it typically used by other authors? Is there a common misunderstanding of this reading? These are the kinds of questions you will want to have answers for. You will select your reading from a list on the first day of class. See grading rubric.

**Theory Essay**(Due March 2)

For this assignment, you will look closely into Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* in order to discover gaps. Start with the assumption that Foucault is correct. Carefully trace his *theoretical arguments* and look for places where he skips a step, leaves a detail ambiguous, or contradicts himself. Then fill in the gaps. In your filling in, you may discover new gaps (Foucault skips a step here, and then I fill it in, but that leads to a contradiction, which might be why Foucault didn't fill it in, so now I have to decide whether his theory can stand as is, needs to be modified, or should be thrown out). You should be preparing for this assignment while outlining Foucault *and* while reading other writers (how does Lyotard find gaps in Lacan or Edbauer in Bitzer or Davis in Burke and Kennedy?). This essay should be 1700 - 2300 words. See grading rubric.

**Seminar Paper**(Final draft due April 6)

You will produce a seminar paper of publishable quality of 7000-8000 words. Please list at the top of the paper the journal or journals (no more than three) at which you are aiming. A week before the seminar paper is due (March 30), you will send a draft of your paper to an assigned peer in the class. You are responsible to respond to your peer's essay with a 500-600 word commentary (constructive criticism, ideas, possible new avenues for exploration, etc.) by Friday (April 3) before the final Seminar paper is due. You will use these commentaries to improve your seminar paper. See grading rubric.

**Conference Presentation** (Final Exam Period: Wednesday, May 6, 3 - 5:30p)

You will give a 10 minute presentation of *some* of the material from your seminar paper. This will involve selecting a section, modifying it a bit, adding new material, etc. You will turn in a script on April 27. One page equals roughly two minutes of speaking time (depending on speaker), so keep this in mind. Scripts should be roughly three or four pages, double-spaced, but this is up to you. The key is that you can deliver it within the timeframe. After looking at the proposals, I will group you into three panels by topic. Each panel will last about 45 minutes, including time for questions. You may include visual elements but are not required to. See grading rubric.

**Minor Assignments**

Throughout the semester you will be turning in minor assignments. These are all worth the same percentage of your final grade. They may be outlines (see example and instructions online), short responses, in class-presentations, and the like. I would recommend you spend a similar amount of time on each (if five outlines are due one week and one the next, spend about five times as much time and energy on the one than on the five, for example).

# Grades

Simply fulfilling the minimum requirements of the course warrants an average grade (i.e., C). Coming to class every day and doing assignments is not something that earns extra credit or an automatic A; it’s an expectation for being in the course.

Final Numerical Grade Calculation (+/-):

| **Grade** | **Score** |
| --- | --- |
| A  | 94-100 |
| A- | 90-93 |
| B+ | 87-89 |
| B | 84-86 |
| B- | 80-83 |
| C+ | 77-79 |
| C | 74-76 |
| C- | 70-73 |
| D+ | 67-69  |
| D | 64-66 |
| D- | 60-63 |
| F | 0-59 |

Your final grade will be computed based on the following weighting:

Presentation of Class Reading 10%

Theory Essay 15%

Seminar Paper 35%

Conference Presentation 20%

Minor Assignments 20%

# Course Policies

**Attendance**

Regular attendance is necessary to your success in this course. Students representing TCU in a university-mandated activity that requires missing class should provide official documentation of schedules and turn in work *in advance.* **Three unexcused absences constitute grounds for failure of the course.** Absences due to illness, sleeping, and long weekends are NOT excused--they all count toward the three absences limit. Since illness is likely at some point during the semester, students are urged to save their unexcused absences for times when you are too sick to come to class. **Absences under the three-week maximum can still affect your grade adversely.** After one unexcused absences, a letter grade will be subtracted from your final grade for each additional absence (i.e.: if you are at a B and miss two classes, your grade would be a C, with three, a D, with four, an F, etc). Students whose absences are due to circumstances beyond their control may appeal this policy by scheduling a meeting with me. Generally, I do not excuse additional absences without documentation. To do well in this course, you must come to class.

**Tardies**
Please be on time for class. Students who are tardy (five minutes late or more) are a distraction to the whole class. Keep in mind that in-class work cannot be made up. ***Three tardies will equal an absence for the course.***

**Late Work**

Work will be due at the beginning of class and will be considered late thereafter. If you know you will be missing a class, you need to submit the assignment ahead of time. Note: Some due dates may not be class dates; please read the course calendar carefully. Late papers will not be excepted unless the instructor has agreed to late submission *in advance of the due date*. If you know you will be missing a class, you need to submit the assignment ahead of time or come meet with me well in advance of the due date for us to discuss the issue. *Note:* This course relies heavily on technology, so you will need to have reliable access to the internet, which is always available in several places (including the library) on campus. Problems with technology (i.e.: computer crash, printer malfunction, internet connectivity issues, etc.) are not acceptable excuses for submitting late work. Plan ahead to avoid last minute crises related to submitting assignments. Also, please note that some assignments related to this course will be submitted online through Pearson LearningStudio, and some of those deadlines will be due before the next day’s class.

**Class Conduct**Our classroom is a place for the free exchange of ideas in an environment of mutual respect. Students whose behavior distracts or disrespects others will be asked to leave and will be counted absent.

**Office Hours**
During my office hours, I will be available to talk with you about any questions, comments, or concerns you have about the course. Please stop by and see me during these hours—that time is yours. If the hours don’t work for you, come make an appointment with me.

**Technologies**

Please silence cell phones and any other electronics during class. Texting, checking Facebook, etc. from your phone or computer means you’re not engaging in the daily activities of our course, and succeeding in the course will be difficult as a result. Failure to adhere to these policies can impact your grade for the course. Please note: unless otherwise told that you don’t need to turn in a hard copy of an assignment. When requested, you are responsible for bringing hard copy assignments—stapled, sorted (if multiple copies), and ready to be submitted—at the beginning of class.

**Pearson LearningStudio Class Website**

We have a course website we’ll use for various activities throughout the course: some required course readings will be there; discussion threads (when applicable); sharing resources on the webliography; accessing handouts for the course; and sometimes submitting course assignments to the course dropbox.

**TCU Disability Statement** (verbatim from [TCU catalog](http://www.catalog.tcu.edu/))

Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Student Disabilities Services in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 11. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-7486.

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations and accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. *Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator*. Guidelines for documentation may be found at <http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability_documentation.asp>

Students with emergency medical information or needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

**Academic Misconduct (Sec. 3.4 from the Student Handbook):**Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

* **Cheating**: Copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings; Using, during any academic exercise, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test; Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or laboratory without permission; Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release; Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself;
* **Plagiarism**: The appropriation, theft, purchase or obtaining by any means another’s work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one’s own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another’s work without giving credit therefore.
* **Collusion**: The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.

**TCU Resources**

* **New Media Writing Studio** | Scharbauer 2003 | [www.newmedia.tcu.edu](file:///C%3A%5CDocuments%20and%20Settings%5Cchogg%5CApplication%20Data%5CMicrosoft%5CWord%5Cwww.newmedia.tcu.edu) | newmedia@tcu.edu | 817‐257‐5194 | The New Media Writing Studio (NMWS) is available to assist students with audio, video, multimedia, and web design projects. The Studio serves as an open lab for use by students during posted hours and has both PC and Mac computers outfitted with a range of design software. A variety of equipment is available for checkout to students whose teachers have contacted the Studio in advance. See their website for more information and a schedule of open hours.
* **Center for Writing** | Reed 419 | [www.wrt.tcu.edu](file:///C%3A%5CDocuments%20and%20Settings%5Cchogg%5CApplication%20Data%5CMicrosoft%5CWord%5Cwww.wrt.tcu.edu) | 817‐257‐7221 |The William L. Adams Center for Writing is an instructional service with the mission of helping members of theTCU community improve their writing. Consultants offer feedback on writing projects to students, staff, and faculty from all academic disciplines. In addition to serving as a friendly audience, consultants address any issue a writer would like to discuss, though consultations often focus on topic generation, organization of ideas, style, clarity, and documentation. Go to their website to see their hours and make an appointment.
* **IC Computer Lab** | Mary Couts Burnett Library | [www.ic.tcu.edu](http://www.ic.tcu.edu) | The Information Commons computer lab is an open use lab available to all TCU students. Access is first come, first served, with the exception of four multimedia stations that can be reserved for use at specific times if requested. Assistance is available from the Information Commons desk staff during all open hours, with additional support from either the full‐time Computer Services Librarian or the full‐time Computer Lab Assistant during most hours.
* **TCU Computer Help Desk** | Mary Couts Burnett Library (first floor) | [www.help.tcu.edu](file:///C%3A%5CDocuments%20and%20Settings%5Cchogg%5CApplication%20Data%5CMicrosoft%5CWord%5Cwww.help.tcu.edu) | 817‐257‐5855 The Help Desk provides support for TCU related computing accounts and services.
* **Mary Couts Burnett Library** | [www.lib.tcu.edu](file:///C%3A%5CDocuments%20and%20Settings%5Cchogg%5CApplication%20Data%5CMicrosoft%5CWord%5Cwww.lib.tcu.edu) | reference@tcu.edu | 817‐257‐7117 | The Library provides resources and services for the research and information needs of the TCU community.

# Tentative Schedule

Week 1 - 1/12

Stiegler, "Doing and Saying Stupid Things in the 20th Century" (pdf)

Week 2 - 1/19 (No class: MLK Day) **Structure as Foundation**

Post-structuralism explained with hipster beards (Buzzfeed link, read parts one and two)

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/chrisr414d8a71a/post-structuralism-explained-with-hipster-beards-xwfz#.pcw6WJ74Q>

Saussure, from *A Course on General Linguistics* (pdf)

Levi-Strauss, "Nature and Culture," from *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (pdf)

**HW: Complete outlines of Saussure and Levi-Strauss**

Week 3 - 1/26 **Deconstructions: Structure as Anti-foundation**

 Heidegger, "Introduction to *Being and Time*" (pdf)

 Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (pdf)

 Gasche, "Deconstruction as Criticism" (pdf)

 **HW: outline Heidegger, Derrida, and Gasche**

Week 4 - 2/2 **Rhetoric in the 20th Century**

 Corbett, from *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (pdf) SKIM

 Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation" (pdf)

 De Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric" (pdf)

 Burke, from *Language as Symbolic Action* (pdf)

 **HW: outline De Man and Burke, come to class with YOUR definition of rhetoric**

Week 5 - 2/9 **Foucault: Power/Knowledge as non-structural anti-foundation**

 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* outline

 **HW: outline Foucault (broad strokes)**

Week 6 - 2/16 **Rhetoric without Rhetors**

 Kennedy, "A Hoot in the Dark" (pdf)

Edbauer, "Unframing Public Discourse: from Rhetorical Situations to Rhetorical Ecology" (pdf)

 Davis, "Autozoography: Notes Toward a Rhetoric of the Living" (pdf)

Rickert, "Rhetoric, Language, Attunement: Burke and Heidegger" from *Ambient Rhetoric* (pdf)

**HW: Outline Kennedy, Edbauer, Davis, and Rickert. Create a map that plots their positions, common ground, and disagreements.**

Week 7 - 2/23 **Snow day!**

Week 8 - 3/2 **Psychoanalysis: An Unknown (anti)Foundation**

 Freud, "the Unconscious" (link)

<http://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/freudselection.html>

 Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function in Psychoanalysis" (pdf)

 Lacan comics (pdfs)

 Lyotard, "The Dreamwork does not think" (pdf)

**HW: Outline Lyotard, bring in one article that cites DP and a two-page essay explaining how the article uses it**

Week 9 - 3/16 **Difference, Agency, and Autonomy (Gender)**

 Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa" (pdf)

 Irigaray, "This Sex which Is not One" (pdf)

 Colebrook, "Feminism and Autonomy" (pdf)

 **HW: respond to Cixous and Irigiray, outline Colebrook.**

 **Theory** **Essay due: find and explore a gap in *Discipline and Punish***

 **\*\*\*SPRING BREAK\*\*\***

Week 10 - 3/23 **Difference, Agency, and Autonomy 2 (Race and Sexuality)**

 Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" (pdf)

 Gates, "Talking Black: Critical Signs of the Times" (pdf)

 Smith, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" (pdf)

 Halberstram, "Queer Temporalities and Postmodern Goegraphies" (pdf)

 **HW: outline Smith and Halberstram.**

 **Seminar paper proposal due**

Week 11 - 3/30 **What Is Philosophy?**

 Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy* part 1

 **HW: outline Deleuze and Guattari (broad strokes)**

Week 12 - 4/6 **What Isn't Philosophy?**

 Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy* part 2

 **HW: outline Deleuze and Guattari (broad strokes)**

Week 13 - 4/13 **Digital Difference**

 Deleuze, "Post-Script on Societies of Control"

Hardt and Negri, from *Empire* from Part 2. Section 4. "Symptoms of Passage" (pdf)

**HW: Map the positions of Deleuze, Hardt and Negri, Galloway, and Chun.**

**Seminar paper draft due to peers on previous week, Peer comments due back by Monday at noon**

Week 14 - 4/20 **Conference Papers**

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Race and/as Technology" (pdf)

 **Seminar paper due**

**Bring in notes toward final presentation (choose section and identify what it needs to stand alone) in the form of a conference proposal (about 150 words).**

Week 15 - 4/27 **Possible Futures for Theory**

 Hayles, "Hyper and Deep Attention: The Generational Divide in Cognitive Modes" (pdf)

 Stiegler, Interview (pdf)

 Cassin, Interview (pdf)

**Script for final presentation due**