

Eng 378: Survey of Current Literary and Cultural Theory

Professor: Jason Puskar

Office: Off-campus spring 2021

e-mail: puskar@uwm.edu

Office hours: By appointment

Course Information: MW 1:15–2:30

DESCRIPTION

Literary theory attempts to explain what literature is, how it works, and with what effects. Most people recognize novels, poems, and plays as literary, but what about pop songs, television shows, or newspaper articles? Is the U.S. Declaration of Independence a literary or a legal document, or both? How might private letters be literary in a different way than video games? Moreover, because different kinds of people have very different assumptions about what literature is and does, cultural theories of gender, race, class, sexuality, and more tend to be closely related to literary theory. In this course we will survey a wide range of theoretical approaches to literature and culture, from Russian formalism to deconstruction, queer theory to post-colonialism, and much more. Students will learn the main movements in recent literary and cultural theory, and will learn how to incorporate theory into their own reading and writing.

TEXTS

Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 3rd Edition (2017). ISBN: 978-1-118-70785-2.

Additional readings distributed in Canvas by PDF or by link to UWM Library networked resources.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To survey influential readings in literary and cultural theory.

To historicize the rise and fall of theoretical movements from the early twentieth century to the present.

To learn to read and write about literature in ways that are informed by theoretical perspectives.

[Complete Syllabus to be posted soon...]