

English 221: INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY THEORY@AUB ENGLISH.DEPT.

Spring 2021 {Tu-Th. 12:30-1:45} Fisk 204a

(Textual details subject to change—Textbooks are not)

Associate Professor Joshua D. Gonsalves (FisK225/ex.4122): jodago@aub.edu.lb--Office Hours: T/Th 3:15-4:00 pm

This course will survey and examine diverse moments in what is often easily labeled (and dismissed) as Literary Theory. The very term “theory” implies that Literary Theory imagines itself as all too pure and can only be abstract, alienating and reductionist when applied either to the complexities of cultural texts (literature, film and art—i.e., culture—in the context of this course), or to the existential matters, lived experience and structural problems (sociological, economic, geopolitical) communicated by these texts. After surveying the movements that are generally agreed to constitute Literary and Cultural Theory we will then engage the possibilities of applying these movements to a historical study of the literary, cultural and theoretical emanations of a specific period: the Italian Seventies; or the so-called Years of Lead. We begin this embedded analysis with a novel focusing on *Life as Resistance to the Social Factory*, and then move on to explore Italian Literary, Cinematic and Art Cultures in the decades leading up to this ‘Hot’ Decade. Life, Literature, Cinema and Art will all be shot through with the insights gained from Italian explorations in theory, history and cultural analysis aka AUTONOMIA.

Written and oral assignments are to display:

A historically informed comprehension of what defines literary theory and the various strands that constitute it.

An ability to apply these various strands to the analysis of cultural texts.

A critical reflexivity in regards to the ambitions, limitations and effects of theory vis-à-vis literary criticism and the analysis of culture & media.

REQUIRED TEXTS

(please use these specific editions and read relevant introductory and editorial matter)

The Norton Anthology of Criticism, Third Edition (ed. V.B.Leitch)

Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction, by Jonathan Culler

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Class Participation/Attendance: 15% * Class Presentation: 15%

Midterm: 4-5 page essay 30% * Final: 5-6 page essay 40%

FIRST DAY OF CLASSES (Tues.) Introduction/Over-view.

PURE THEORY: A POSSIBILITY?

- 1: Defining the History of Literary Theory: Introducing our Touchstone text (a sonnet)—
2. New Criticism (all readings in Norton 3rd. unless noted; read Culler as well for context): 1179-1211.
3. Reader-Response Criticism: 1450-1460.
4. Structuralism: 820-840, 1074-1078, 1262-1267, 1277-1282.
5. Deconstruction (Derrida) Plato?: 89-95, 1602-1620, 1631-1636 (Feb.)
6. American Deconstruction (de Man): 1311-1327.
7. Psychoanalysis (Freud): 793-799, 816-820; for both class 7 and 8 read: 2221-2242.
8. Psychoanalysis (Lacan): 1105-1137.
9. Feminism I: 1211-1221, 1839-1853.
10. Feminism II: 1865-1886, 1952-1965.
11. Foucault and the New Historicism: 1409-1450.
12. Cultural Studies, Neo-liberalism and Class: 652-680, 1772-1779, 2506-2524 (March)
13. Cultural Studies and Race: 2389-2410; and Frank Wilderson, "Gramsci's Black Marx" (TBD: To Be Distributed).
14. Postcolonialism, Neoliberalism and Globality: 1079-1095, 1361-1367, 1997-2012.
15. Disability Studies/Trauma Theory: 2171-2191, 1856-1865.

15. Queer Theory: 1513-1534, 2283-2290, 2372-2388.

16. March 19; Marxist transitions to Autonomia: Panzieri: "Capitalist Use of Machinery: Marx versus the Objectivists"; Tronti, "Selections from *Workers and Capital*," trans. Timothy S. Murphy. *Genre* 43 (2010); Bologna, "Theory and History of the Mass Worker in Italy," *Common Sense* 11/12 (1991): 16-29.

THEORY MEETS HISTORY: AUTONOMIA

17 Marxist transitions to Workerism/Autonomia:

Panzieri: "The Capitalist Use of Machinery: Marx versus the Objectivists"; Mario Tronti, "Selections from *Workers and Capital* [**Labor as Non-Capital**]," *Genre* 43 (Fall/Winter 2010); Sergio Bologna, "Theory and History of the Mass Worker in Italy," *Common Sense* 11/12 (1991): 16-29; 52-78.

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1.1. Nanni Balestrini, *We Want Everything* (TBD): **Novel-Form**, SOCIAL-INFORME.

1.2. Continued . . . Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency: Cultures of Revolt in Italy from 1968 to 1978* (New York: Verso, 1990; TBD): *Part III: The Worker's Movement* (April).

1.3. *Autonomia: Re-Constituting THEORY IN ACTION* (Readings from **Autonomia: Post-Political Politics**, TBD; v-xvi, 8-71).

1.4. J. Mansoor, **Marshall Plan Modernism**/Introduction (1-38; TBD).

1.6. Readings: **Marshall Plan Modernism**, Chapter 4 on Manzoni (119-166; TBD).

1.7. **A:PPP (72-107)** and Balestrini, relating both texts to the theories surveyed in **PURE THEORY: A POSSIBILITY?**—"RethinkingPsychoanalysis: Lacan"—Reread: Mulvey on the *Male Gaze* (from Feminism II; above), which we will use alongside psychoanalysis to read Fiat promotional films...

1.8. **A:PPP—"RethinkingHistory from the Factory Floor":** "Workers Leaving the Factory," Harun Farocki; and **Accelerating the Auto-Nomos: Gramsci, the FIAT Occupations & the Aesthetics of Car Design/Art.** TBD.

1.9. **A:PPP—"RethinkingFeminism: Unpaid Work & SocialReproduction"** Silvia Federici: "Wages Against Housework"; "Why Sexuality is Work" (1975); *Rivolta Femminile* Manifesto (1970); "Let's Spit on Hegel," Carlo Lonza (1970). **All TBD.**

1.10. **A:PPP—"RethinkingLiterature: Socialform-beyond-the-Sonnet-form";** Pasolini, *Ashes of Gramsci* (1957); (152-218, in *Pasolini: The Selected Poetry*, trans. Sarterelli, TBD).

1.10 Contextualizing Conclusions Concerning **Literary Theory & Historical Studies** (Tues. April 30).

GUIDELINES FOR THIS COURSE

Absolutely no rewrites of essays are permitted. Prepare readings and bring handouts (when relevant) to class (participation points will be deducted for non-compliance with this all-too-obvious guideline).

CLASS PRESENTATION:

Students will have to present a short talk (8 minutes/ 4 double-spaced pages) on a theoretical movement (or on an aspect of one of these movements) we are studying this semester. Present the text to the class by leading us through a discussion based on textual details and rhetorical modes of argumentation that are relevant to your attempt to outline; 1) what is being analyzed; 2) why it is being analyzed; 3) methodical assumptions; 4) aims and goals at issue. The point of this assignment is to open the text to further discussion for the benefit of the class as a whole, hence a handout covering your major points would be a definite asset.

ESSAYS:

MLA-formatted essays are required at the mid-term and at the end of the term. Topics, due dates and guidelines for each essay will be distributed two weeks prior to the due date.

Papers should be formatted according to the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* and must be turned in during the class session on the due date, with no exceptions. Papers will be penalized 5 points a day (i.e., a deduction from 85% to 80%) starting immediately after the class session for which they are due. NO papers will be accepted by email. In regard to plagiarism: <http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/generaluniversitypolicies/Documents/StudentCodeConduct/StudentCodeConduct.pdf>; see section 1.1, concerning academic misconduct including cheating, plagiarism, in-class disruption, and dishonesty. Be aware that misconduct is vigorously prosecuted and that AUB has a zero tolerance policy. Course policy is that credible evidence of cheating will result in course failure.

In order to make this learning experience as accessible as possible, please inform me if you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to any kind of disability. If so, we can immediately and privately discuss options. If need be, we can also contact Accessible Education Office: accessibility@aub.edu.lb; +961-1-350000, x3246; West Hall, 314.

AUB is committed to facilitating a campus free of all forms of discrimination including sex/gender-based harassment prohibited by Title IX. The University's non-discrimination policy applies to, and protects, all students, faculty, and staff. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. If you speak to a faculty or staff member about an issue such as harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, the information will be kept as private as possible, however, faculty and designated staff are required to bring it to the attention of the University's Title IX Coordinator. Faculty can refer you to fully confidential resources, and you can find information and contacts at www.aub.edu.lb/titleix. To report an incident, contact the University's Title IX Coordinator Trudi Hodges at 01-350000 ext. 2514, or titleix@aub.edu.lb. An anonymous report may be submitted online via EthicsPoint at www.aub.ethicspoint.com