

How to Do Literary Criticism: Theory / Method / Practice
ENGL 7/8000 // Literary Research // Fall 2015

Professor:
Donal Harris

Class Information:
TBA

Contact:
(o): PH 426
(e): donal.harris@memphis.edu

Office Hours:
TBA

Course Content: This course offers a selective introduction to several recent initiatives in literary theory and critical methodology, with the goal of acclimating new MA and PhD students to the expectations of advanced research and writing in the field of English Studies. We have two related course objectives: 1) a primer on trends in contemporary criticism and literary theory 2) a practicum on developing and then executing graduate-level scholarship.

To accomplish the first objective, each week we will examine key essays from the last half-century of literary and cultural criticism, putting them in intellectual and historical context, analyzing them as rhetorical constructions, and assessing their implications for contemporary literary and scholarly practice. To accomplish the second, our in-class discussions and course assignments will emphasize how to replicate the various skills in original research, stylish writing, and convincing argumentation that these articles exemplify.

Readings inevitably reflect the interests of the instructor, but they will range across several major phases and schools of thought, and will be paired with relatively brief, canonical primary texts that repeatedly show up on MA and PhD exams.

Required Texts:

1. T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*. Ed. Michael North (New York: Norton, 2000) ISBN 978-0-393-97499-7
2. Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (New York: Norton) ISBN 978-0-393-95904-8
3. Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987. New York: Vintage, 2004) ISBN: 978-1400033416
4. Colson Whitehead, *Zone 1* (New York: Anchor, 2012) ISBN: 978-0307455178
5. Eric Hayot, *The Elements of Academic Style* (New York: Columbia, 2014) ISBN: 9780231168014
6. Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997) ISBN: 978-0199691340