

**English 7000/8000 Literary Research**  
**Fall 2024 5:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday in PT 317**  
**CRNs 81373 & 81458**  
Prof. Theron Britt  
453 Patterson Hall [tbritt@memphis.edu](mailto:tbritt@memphis.edu)  
Office Hours: Tuesday 4-5p.m. or by appointment

**TEXTS:**

Peter Barry ***Beginning Theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory***, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition ISBN-13: 978-1526121790

F. Scott Fitzgerald ***The Great Gatsby*** ISBN-13: 979-8409130329

Joseph Gibaldi ***MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers***, 9<sup>th</sup> ed.  
ISBN-13: 978-1603293518

Lois Tyson ***Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide***, 4<sup>th</sup> edition  
ISBN-13 : 978-0367709426

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This introductory course is meant to provide a survey of contemporary literary theory and research methods with the aim of giving students a strong and useful grasp on the critical tools necessary for literary scholarship. **Course syllabus and other materials will be posted on Canvas.**

We will begin with an overview of literary research methods and library and online research tools, and we will continue by reading primary literary texts—short stories and *The Great Gatsby*—through a number of contemporary critical approaches. Such approaches will include but not be limited to psychoanalysis, feminism, deconstruction and postmodernism, Marxism, postcolonialism, queer theory, trauma theory, ecocriticism, speculative realism (object oriented ontology), cognitive theory, African American criticism, and cultural criticism.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the recent history and variety of theoretical perspectives.
- Have a knowledge of library methods and research tools used in literary scholarship
- Identify and research a key problem or issue in contemporary literary scholarship.
- Write a scholarly seminar paper focused on a literary issue or problem that employs literary theory
- Have a critical understanding of how contemporary literary theory is used in literary study to examine concepts of gender, race, and class
- Identify ongoing important developments in contemporary literary theory

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:** Students will be responsible for a seminar paper on a literary topic of the student's choosing (including a prospectus outlining the project), and for an in-class presentation summarizing the key issues of their chosen literary work and problem, and short weekly written response paper assignments based on the reading. Students are encouraged to focus their seminar paper and presentation on a topic that could be developed into a dissertation chapter, part of a thesis, or a conference presentation.

Grades will be figured on a **1000 point system**:

- Seminar paper, **400 points**
- In-class presentation, **100 points**
- Weekly response papers on assigned reading, **500 points**.

The short papers will be on assigned topics within the reading. The seminar paper will be on a literary topic of your choosing (in consultation with me) and will also engage theoretical issues or themes brought up in the course. Papers should conform to the *MLA Handbook 9<sup>th</sup> edition* Works Cited citation format.

- **Plus/minus grading.** Note that final point grades will be translated to letter grades and rated on the plus/minus scale as follows: an "A+" 966-1000; an "A" 935-965; an "A-" 900-934; a "B+" 866-899; a "B" 835-865; a "B-" 800-834, and so on.
- **Your written work may be submitted to *Turnitin.com*** for an evaluation of the originality of your work and, where appropriate, proper use and attribution of sources. By taking this course, you agree that all written assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included in *Turnitin.com*'s restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents.

**GENERATIVE AI:** As we all now know, various generative AI tools such as ChatGPT are widely available. These tools can help you in your coursework but they cannot replace your own careful engagement with the course material. To help guide you, here are some guidelines for using Generative AI in your coursework for this class:

- First, students are welcome to use generative AI tools like ChatGPT as supplementary invention and editing aids. *But such tools are NOT approved for completing entire assignments.*
- In general, AI-generated content must be revised for clarity, correctness, and audience appropriateness. Please note that these tools may not be used in ways that violate the university's policy on academic integrity.
- **SO, what this means in practice is this:** first, don't rely on GenAI tools alone to complete assignments. Second, be careful not to use GenAI tools to violate academic integrity. And third, don't assume GenAI output is always correct or appropriate.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** In general, late assignments will suffer point reductions, or if very late, not be accepted without prior arrangements, though exceptions may be made for medical, financial, or familial emergencies. If a problem arises that makes it difficult to impossible for you to finish an assignment on time, the earlier that you are able to contact me about it the better, as this class moves quickly through the reading material and the writing assignments.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All work submitted for the class must be your own, and you are not allowed to use previously submitted academic work to fulfill requirements. If you use the work of others in your assignments (including anonymously published analyses, comments, or postings on websites), you must acknowledge and accurately cite their contributions. Plagiarism of any kind or extent will result in failure on the assignment and other consequences as per University policy, which can include failure in the course, suspension, and/or expulsion from the university. For further information, please see “Academic Dishonesty” at the website for Judicial and Ethical Programs: <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES:** For further information on University policies regarding both online and classroom conduct, plagiarism, and other issues, please see the website for the Office of Judicial and Ethical Programs: <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>.

**DISABILITY RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:** Reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be provided to students with disabilities. Students who have a disability or condition that may impair their ability to complete assignments or otherwise satisfy course criteria are encouraged to contact **Disability Resources for Students** (DRS) to identify, discuss, and document any feasible instructional modification or accommodations. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be provided to all students with disabilities who present a memo from DRS. Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to discuss your specific needs with me in private. Students with disabilities should also contact DRS at 110 Wilder Tower, 678-2880 or at [www.memphis.edu/drs](http://www.memphis.edu/drs). DRS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**THE CENTER FOR WRITING AND COMMUNICATION:** The Center for Writing and Communication (CWC), located on the first floor of the Ned R. McWherter Library, is a combined writing and speaking center that provides free, one-on-one consultations either online or in person with a trained staff of graduate students from the Departments of English and Communication. The CWC serves all members of the University of Memphis (UofM) community (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff) as they work to become successful writers and speakers. CWC consultants are trained in writing- and speech-tutor methodology and can provide one-on-one feedback on any writing

or speech in any stage of development. While the CWC welcomes the opportunity to assist clients with their writing and/or speech, it does not function as an editing service. CWC consultants can provide feedback on your writing and speaking assignments at any stage of the creative process, from understanding an assignment, developing a topic, and implementing standard citation styles such as APA and MLA. To make an appointment with the CWC go to:

<https://www.memphis.edu/cwc/>

### SYLLABUS

Week 1:	Introduction: Barry chapter 1 Kate Chopin "The Storm"
Week 2	Tyson chapter 5 "New Criticism" Fitzgerald <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week 3	Psychoanalysis: Tyson chapter 2 Barry chapter 5 Continue <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week 4	<i>Library: Tools and Methods (presentation at library)</i> Barry, chapter 6, "Feminist Criticism" Chopin "The Story of an Hour" (e-copy) <b>Identify topic or literary problem: September 15<sup>th</sup></b> (a sentence or paragraph)
Week 5	Feminism: Tyson chapter 4 Welty "Petrified Man" (e-copy) Barry, chapter 6
Week 6	Tyson ch. 10 "Lesbian, Gay and Queer Criticism" Barry ch. 7 "Lesbian / Gay Criticism" Kate Chopin, stories
Week 7	Postmodernism and Deconstruction; Tyson chapter 8 Barry, chapters 3 & 4 <b>Preliminary Bibliography: October 6<sup>th</sup></b> (ten sources, briefly annotated) <b>Fall Break October 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup></b>
Week 8	Tyson ch. 3 "Marxist Criticism" Barry ch. 8 "Marxist Criticism" Blake "London"
Week 9	Barry chapter 9 "New Historicism" Tyson chapter 9 "New Historical and Cultural Criticism" Faulkner "Barn Burning"

**Project Prospectus: October 20<sup>th</sup>** (a page)

Week 10	Tyson chapter 12 "Postcolonial criticism" Barry ch. 10 "Postcolonial Criticism"
Week 11	Tyson chapter 11 "African American criticism" <b>Project brief outline or rough draft: November 3<sup>rd</sup></b>
Week 12	Terry Eagleton <i>After Theory</i> , chapters 1-3 (e-copy)
Week 13	<b>Student Presentations</b> <b>Seminar Papers Due</b>
Week 14	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>
Week 15	Study Day