

Mississippi Valley State University
Department of English and Foreign Languages
EN 308: Principles of Literary Criticism
Fall 2018

Professor: Dr. Lin Knutson
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Office hours: MWF 12-1; 2-4; Wed 4-5

Class Location: TED 108 1:00-1:50
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Office Location: TED 161

Texts: *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison
Literary Theory. 3rd edition. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan
 Course packet of articles in the library
 Films and videos shown in class

Course Textbook: The texts are for purchase in the campus book store. Buy *Invisible Man* immediately and begin reading today. I will be providing you with a course packet on criticism on *Invisible Man* that will be held in the library. Each student will need to make copies of the packet. Selections from the *Literary Theory* text will also be required. Students are required to buy the textbooks assigned for the course. If after one week, you have not purchased *Invisible Man*, your attendance grade will be lowered by one point every day until you purchase one.

Course Description: EN 308 is a study of the basic approaches literary theory uses to understand ways of reading texts and literature. We will be stressing the more contemporary theoretical emphasis on race, gender, and class. Other critical theories will include: formalism, psychoanalytic criticism, Marxist criticism, reader response criticism, and post-colonial criticism.

Purpose: This course is designed to equip students with the language of literary criticism and a general understanding of approaches or syntheses of approaches from which to analyze texts, especially literary texts. Literary criticism offers a more analytical methodology for understanding not only literary texts but other texts, whether they are historical documents, textbooks, advertisements, films, television programs, billboards, etc.

Course Outcomes:

At the end of this semester, students will be able to

1. interpret and analyze texts in greater depth than before;
2. explain basic tenets of contemporary race, gender, and class analysis
3. identify tenets, methods, and terminology of formalism, psychoanalytic criticism, Marxist criticism, reader response and post-colonial criticism
4. apply a variety of methods and approaches when interpreting and evaluating texts;
5. understand the intertextual and interdisciplinary nature of texts.

Teaching/Learning Strategies:

Two literary analysis papers of 5-7 pages are required. Students will receive a rubric for each of these papers. The papers must focus on one or more critical analyses (feminism, race, class), and must be in the form of a focused, well-organized, grammatically correct essay. This essay needs an interesting introduction, a focused thesis statement relevant support through many body paragraphs, that incorporate citations and solid support

from both the literary text, and theoretical texts. The essay will follow the Modern Language Association guidelines.

This essay is required to have a draft that is turned in about 1 week before the paper is due. Private one-on-one conferences with the professor are required. Any student who does not write an “acceptable” paper will be given an opportunity to revise it within one week. Be sure to keep all drafts and comments from peers, since they are required to be turned in with the final paper on the due date.

Furthermore, students are required to write six (6) critiques over different types of literary criticism that are discussed in this class. You will receive a rubric regarding the critiques. This critique must include at least one quotation from the theoretical criticism.

Finally, each student is required to give one ten to twenty-minute oral presentation during the course of the semester. The oral presentation must include each of the following requirements:

- a. A discussion of the theory you have chosen to discuss
- b. A summary of the main events in the chapter of *Invisible Man* assigned for that day.
- c. A discussion of how the theory relates to that chapter of I.M.
- d. A “visual”: a handout, power point, video to present in front of the class
- e. The grade is determined by the presentation rubric

Vocabulary quizzes will also be included throughout the semester

Policies:

Absences: Students may obtain from the Office of Student Affairs an official excuse from class due to an emergency (illness, accidents, jury duty, or death in the immediate family) or for attendance at officially – authorized functions and authorized field trips sponsored by the University. Official absences presented to the instructor within seven days from the date of the absence entitle the student to make up work missed. Whenever students have three or more unexcused absences, faculty members are required to report the absences to the Office of Student Affairs. Students are allowed three absences. They will lose one point from their attendance grade for every absence over three. Tardies: Three “tardies” equals once absence from class. Anyone may take a brief restroom break without permission, but leaving the classroom for longer than 15 minutes counts as an absence for that day. Absences are counted from the first day of class. I honor university excused absences, but only the university excuses absences, I do not. When students know in advance that they will be absent from class, instructors should be notified and, arrangements made to secure assignments.

Classroom Demeanor: Please be on task when class begins. Having a hard copy of the reading is required for every class period. Be sure to bring *Invisible Man* to every class period. Be sure to complete the reading before the class period. Unannounced quizzes may occur at the beginning of any class period. Be sure to show respect to other students and the professor at all times. I am hoping for lively discussions of the literature; however, it is important that you do not carry on private conversations during the class.

There is a no-cell phone policy for this class. Although we will occasionally use our phones for assignments in class, the rest of the time phones and electronic devices must be turned off and stored out of sight. You may receive a zero for class participation if you are found texting and watching your phone during the class period. In case of a family emergency, please let me know at the beginning of the hour, and you will be allowed to keep your phone on “buzz” for an emergency call.

Cheating and Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism is the deliberate submission of someone else’s work as your own. It and other forms of academic dishonesty (such as cheating on exams) will not be tolerated. Students will receive a grade of “0” for plagiarizing or cheating on any given assignment.

Make-up Policy: No make-up work will be given if you do not turn in an assignment on time except for documented emergencies or official absence. In either case, the instructor’s prior approval is required, and work made up must be turned in no later than the next class meeting following the student’s return to class.

Acceptable Draft Policy: You must turn in an acceptable draft of every formal assignment in order to be eligible to pass the course. I will make a draft unacceptable when it has not met key requirements of an assignment. If I return a draft to you marked unacceptable, see me immediately. You only have one week to resubmit it.

Changes to Syllabus: Inevitably, we will vary from the course schedule. It is your responsibility to note those changes and be ready for class with any assignments due, even if you were absent when I announced the change. If you're absent, contact a classmate or me to make sure you know what you missed and to prepare for the next class.

Emergencies: If you have any kind of emergency that is preventing you from attending regularly or getting your coursework done, please talk to me sooner rather than later. I am generally flexible and willing to give an extension when students keep me informed about illnesses or other problems. I am generally not flexible if a student disappears for several classes with no explanation and then wants to make arrangements for turning in late formal assignments

Save Everything: For your own sake, keep copies of everything from the course—your drafts, memos, reflections, peer review sheets, everything! You may be asked to turn in some pieces of your work again at the end of the semester. Also, this evidence is the best way to protect you in the event of a clerical error on my part.

ADA Statement

Students must inform the instructor of any special need(s) within first week of class to ensure that such need(s) can be addressed in a timely fashion. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Service at 254-3446 and to submit appropriate documentation prior to receiving services

Grading Scale:

90-100=A

80-89=B

70-79=C

60-69=D

59 and below=F

Evaluation:

Homework	10%
Midterm	10%
Final	10%
6 reading critiques	20%
Essay Paper 1	20%
Research Paper 2	20%
Group Work/Assignments	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

COURSE SCHEDULE & TOPIC OUTLINE:**Week 1:**

- Mon 8/20 Intro to course/Identity Paper
- Wed 8/22 Race criticism discussion and rdgs; early 20th CWEB Dubois: “double consciousness,” “the veil,” “talented 10th”; Booker T. Washington, etc; Black realism
- Fri 8/24 Race criticism discussion and rdgs; 1960s through present day

Week 2: *Invisible Man*

- Mon 8/27 Paper #1 due
- Wed 8/29 IM prologue
- Fri 8/31 IM chpt 1

Week 3:

- Mon 9/3 Labor day holiday
- Wed 9/5 IM Chpt 2 Discussion, Formalism
- Fri 9/7 IM Chpt 3; **critique #1 due: Race and IM**

Week 4:

- Mon 9/10 Gender criticism discussion and rdgs
- Wed 9/12 Gender criticism discussion and rdgs
- Fri 9/14 IM chpt 4

Week 5:

- Mon 9/17 IM chpt 5 **Draft Essay #1**
- Wed 9/19 IM chpt 6 Discussion: psychoanalysis
- Fri 9/21 IM chpt 7 **critique #2 due: Gender and IM**

Week 6:

- Mon 9/24 IM chpt 8; **Essay #1 due**
- Wed 9/26 IM chpt 9
- Fri 9/28 IM chpt 10; review for midterm

Week 7: Midterm week

- Mon 10/1 **Midterm Exam**
- Wed 10/3 Discussion Class/ Marxism
- Fri 10/5 Discussion Class

Week 8:

- Mon 10/8 IM Chpt 11
- Wed 10/10 IM Chpt 12
- Fri 10/12 IM Chpt 13

Week 9:

Mon 10/15 IM chpt 14; Discussion: Reader Response criticism

Wed 10/17 IM chpt 15

Fri 10/19 IM chpt 16 **critique #4 due**

Week 10:

Mon 10/22 IM chpt 17; discussion: postcolonial theory

Wed 10/24 IM chpt 18

Fri 10/26 IM chpt 19

Week 11:

Mon 10/29 IM chpt 20

Wed 10/31 IM chpt 21

Fri 11/2 IM chpt 22; **critique #5 due**

Week 12:

Mon 11/5 **Draft Essay #2 due**

Wed 11/7 IM chpt 23

Fri 11/9 IM chpt 24

Week 13:

Mon 11/12 IM chpt 25; **Essay #2 due**

Wed 11/14 IM Epilogue

Fri 11/16 **critique #6**

Week 14: Fall Break/ Thanksgiving Week/ no classes held Nov 19-23

Week 15:

Mon 11/26 class presentation

Wed 11/28 class presentation

Fri 11/31 last class “carnival of the critics”

Final Exam: tba