Fall 2014 Undergraduate Course Offerings

Ewa Ziarek  
COL 303: Criticism  
Mondays & Wednesdays 3:30-4:50  
A: 23932  
Clemens 640

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO LITERATURE

This course is offered for students who would like to be more self-conscious about their interpretation of literature. What do we mean when we use such common terms in our critical vocabulary as "author," "desire," "language," "narrative," "discourse," "power," "difference," "interpretation," "representation"? How are some of these terms re-defined by considerations of gender and race? What are the assumptions underlying our readings of literary texts and culture? These and other questions will guide our analysis of several important critical essays in contemporary literary theory. The course will try to articulate and clarify the main positions, issues, and stakes in current critical debates. We will start with the exploration of the new linguistic perspectives introduced by Saussure, and discuss how Saussure's analysis of language becomes a model of structural analysis of literature and culture. Then we will explore challenges to structuralism represented by deconstruction (Derrida), biopolitics (Foucault), psychoanalysis (Freud, Lacan), feminist analyses of race and gender (Butler, Henderson), imperialism and post-colonialism (Said, Spivak). In order to see in practice how these various theoretical approaches affect our reading of literature, we will study in depth two literary texts, Conrad's Heart of Darkness and Achebe, Things Fall Apart from various critical perspectives.

Requirements: class presentations, intelligent participation in class discussions, annotated bibliography, and short research paper with drafts and revisions, midterm, final.

Kalliopi Nikolopoulou  
COL 311: Women in Tragedy  
Mondays & Wednesdays 3:30-4:50  
A: 23929  
Baldy 118

The seminar focuses on the function of women in ancient tragic works. Along with the social, historical, and symbolic roles of women, we will explore some philosophical questions that the experience of femininity poses in the ancient world. How does sexual difference inflect tragic experience itself? How does the feminine as lover, mother, sister, citizen, or worshipper affect and become affected by strife and suffering—whether this is war, tyranny, betrayal, or the trials of revelation?

We will read four representative tragic works—namely, Medea, The Trojan Women, The Bacchae, and Antigone, as well as some theoretical writings on tragedy.

You will be expected to actively participate in the discussion as well as to complete all writing assignments.