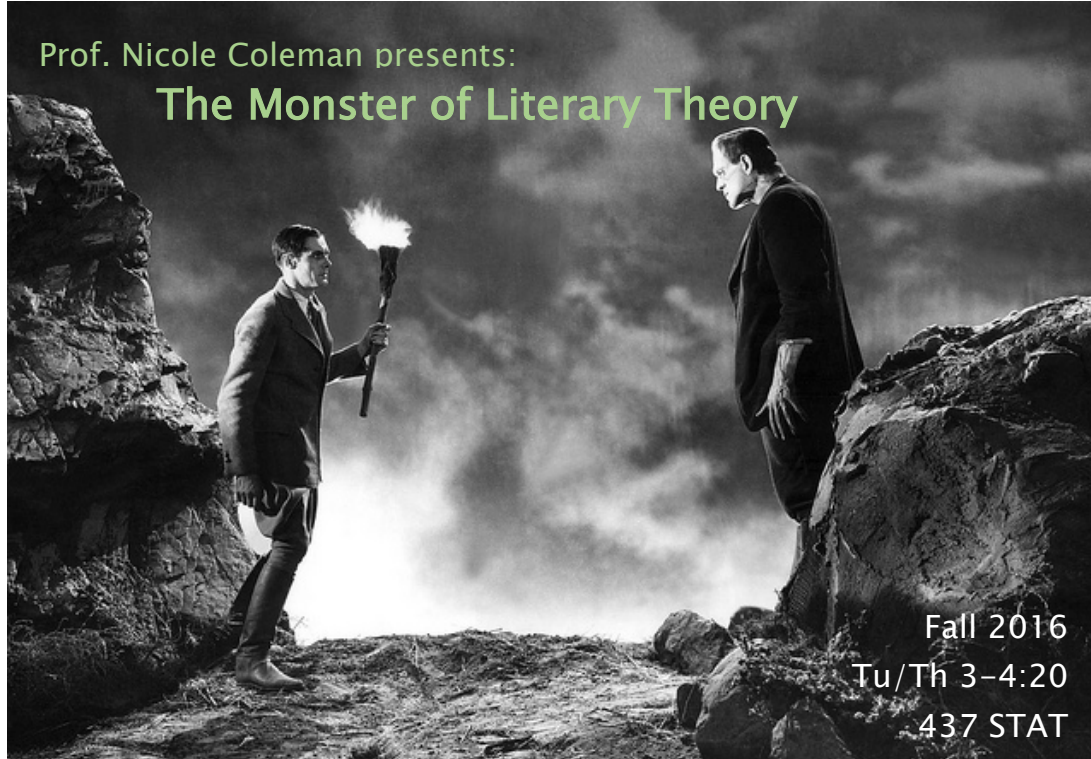


FRE/GER/ITA/SPA 7010
Introduction to Literary Theory



Professor Nicole Coleman
Office: 475 MANO

Office Hours: Tu 10:30-11:30am and Th 1:40-2:40pm, and by appointment

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Required texts:

Peter Barry (2009). *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*
(ISBN: 978-0-7190-7927-6)

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Ed. by Johanna M. Smith (2016). *Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism* (ISBN: 978-0-312-46318-2)

All other primary sources will be posted to Blackboard.

Optional texts:

Bertens. *Literary Theory: The Basics* (e-book: <http://elibrary.wayne.edu/record=b4754222~S47>)

Eagleton. *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (e-book: <http://elibrary.wayne.edu/record=b4455263~S47>)

Tyson. *Critical theory today* (on course reserve in the library)

Course Description and Objectives

In this class we will explore the various schools of modern literary criticism. You will be introduced to the different ways in which scholars of literature have tried to interpret texts, and will learn how to read texts using the methods they have developed. We will not just be reading about the theories but begin to do it for ourselves. In class, we will apply the critical methods to one primary text

(*Frankenstein*) and you will also have ample space to experiment with and reflect on your own research in relation to the different theories we discuss. The goal of the class is to provide you with a solid theoretical foundation. You will be able to identify the theories that are most beneficial for your research and to apply the methods learned in future work.

Grading

Active participation in class	15%
Quizzes	5%
Twittertheory	10%
Presentation (practice)	20%
Blog posts (3 posts, 10% each)	30%
Final paper or exam	20%

Participation

Your active participation is essential to the success of this class. Since this class is a collaborative endeavor, we will share the reading of most primary texts and teach each other about the most important insights from each theorist. You will need to do all reading from secondary and primary sources before class and read closely your assigned primary source(s). You must bring a copy of the assigned readings to class (preferably an annotated hard copy). The primary texts are dense and often written in difficult language. By reading one or two of them closely, you have the time to read the text multiple times and really work with them. By sharing the insights, you gained with your classmates, you will demonstrate that you can find the most important ideas and phrase them in your own words. This will help you tremendously in applying the methods to literary texts. Your participation will be graded on a scale from 0 (absent) to 10 (well prepared, actively engaged, asking important questions, contributing to our class discussions).

Attendance is mandatory. If you must miss a session, please inform me before class. Should you miss more than two class meetings, your participation grade will be negatively affected. You are encouraged to safeguard your number of allowed absences for true emergencies. Excessive and repeated tardiness will also negatively affect your participation grade. It is your responsibility to make up the in-class work and homework assignments you missed. Please refer to the syllabus and ask your classmates to fill you in and maybe share their notes with you.

Quizzes

To ensure that we do not mix up terminology, authors and their methods, there will be 5 quizzes, always concentrating on the two to three most recent theories but possibly drawing connections to earlier material. I recommend starting a glossary with crucial terms and some information about the theorists we discuss. You will not have to know exact dates or other biographical information but should know the names and major points of each theorist's approach as well as the century they lived in and their working language. We will fill in a timeline as we go which will also help you with the chronology of authors and methods.

Twittertheory

We will cover dense and difficult theories. Summarizing them is a challenge, but we will go further. We will tease out the main points in 140 characters. Before each class (until 9am on the day of the class, usually on Tuesdays unless there are theory texts on Thursdays as well, marked on the schedule with the twitter sign), you will tweet your summary/take/reflection on the theory we will

discuss that day. Include the hashtag #lit7010 so that we can find the tweets easily. Including the hashtag, use exactly 140 characters. We begin during week three (first structuralism meeting). If you do not have a twitter account, post your 140 characters in the discussion forum on blackboard. You begin with 100% in this category and lose 4 points for every tweet not submitted on time.

Presentation

Your presentation will not be a traditional lecture presentation but rather a guided practice. You will (most likely with one other person) be the expert for a particular theory and lead the class through an interpretation of *Frankenstein* utilizing the week's (7-9) method. You can decide to give out questions beforehand or a handout with the most important points of the approach or prepare a power point/prezi to help you direct the class discussion. The guided practice presentation will be graded out of 100.

Blog

We have a communal blog that is located outside of Blackboard in order for you to have access to all posts after the course ends. This blog can serve as a database for your future work that you can consult when you are trying to remember some of the points we have made or specific theories that could work with your own research. Our blog is housed at: <https://lit7010.wordpress.com/>. You will write three blog posts throughout the semester and sign up for the exact week during our first meeting to ensure that we cover all theories. All blog posts should be 400-700 words long. Each blog post is graded on a scale of 0 (not done, no reflection) to 10 (excellent summary/comparison/case study with remarkable understanding of theory and own reflection).

Blog 1 is due during weeks 4-7: In this first blog you will sign up for one of the first four theories (Structuralism, Psychoanalysis, Marxism, Feminism) and summarize the main points of this theory (one week after we discuss it in class). You decide whether you want to write about the theory in general or focus on one specific primary text we read. Questions to consider for this blog post are: What are the main ideas? What are, in your opinion, its strong/weak points? What additional questions does the method bring up? [What questions can you apply in your own research?]

Blog 2 is due during weeks 8-10: During this time, we will practice applying theories as the methods in this section of the class are not covered in *Frankenstein*. Your second blog post, accordingly, will be a case study. You will interpret *Frankenstein* using either a reader-oriented theory, the post-structuralist approach, or the new historicist method (one week after we discuss it in class). The essays on *Frankenstein* that you read in the previous section of the class will help you and suggest a structure for these blog posts. But remember: these are blog posts and do not have to be as formal as a term paper.

Blog 3 is due during week 11-13: This blog post prepares your own work. Here you will consider different theories and compare at least two approaches. You can relate the similarities and differences between the methods to your own research and reflect on what might be (more) beneficial to you or what each method can contribute. If you are unsure where you are going with your research at this point, choose two different theories and compare them with each other (you could refer to the *Frankenstein* interpretations if that helps you reflect on the contributions each theory makes and the theory's place within literary scholarship).

Final Paper or Exam

This one is up to you. If you are a Ph.D. student and close to your comps or if you are working on an article or if you are a M.A. student working on a Master essay, you might want to choose the final paper option. If you are in your first semester or unsure about where your research is going at this point, the final exam may be the better option for you. But you choose, and you will not have to decide until right before Thanksgiving. Both options are graded out of 100%.

Final Paper. Here you have multiple options again: You can write a 10-12page case study of a text of your choice (it would be good if it existed in an English translation if it is in a language other than German). You interpret the text with your own mix of critical perspectives, explaining why you use these particular ones. Or you can decide to revise a longer paper (article, term paper that might become an article, dissertation proposal or similar) by adding substantial theoretical work. In both cases you should include at least five critical works. If you plan on doing the second option, please come and see me by mid-semester at the latest, so that we can talk about it in more detail. I would also need to see the work that you are intending to revise by then. The Final Paper will be written in MLA style and is due on 12/16/2016.

- OR -

The **Final Exam** will consist of some questions about theories, authors and terminology as well as an interpretive part. I will give you a short story and you apply a mix of theories in your critical reading of the text – explaining why you chose these particular approaches. It is a take home exam, you have three days to complete it (given out on study day and due on 12/16/2016).

Late Assignments

Assignments will lose 1/3 of a grade every day they are late. But things can come up, you find a “stuff happens” coupon at the end of the syllabus that allows you to submit one assignment 48 hours late.

There are no exams in this class (unless you choose the final exam option).

Academic Integrity

Academic misbehavior means any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution or subvert the education process. All forms of academic misconduct are prohibited by Wayne State University, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.doso.wayne.edu/student-conduct-services.html>).

