

English 3600 – Literary Theory

Overall English Department Mission Statement

The English Department at Dixie State College strives to instill in students an appreciation for the centrality of language and literature in human culture, particularly their function in social, historical, and political contexts. Students who major in English master skills in analyzing and evaluating texts and other media, as well as learning how to produce focused critical essays.

Emphasis Mission Statement (Literature)

Our literature courses seek to broaden and deepen students' understanding of the unique value of literary expression as an aesthetic form that challenges the senses, the intellect, and the imagination. Students also learn to appreciate the complex relationship between the aesthetic and intellectual aspects of literature and the culture and time in which it was produced.

Course Description

Required of English majors pursuing an emphasis in Literary Studies, and open to other interested students. Covers the major branches of contemporary literary theory. Theoretical perspectives will include structuralism, reader-oriented theory, feminist theory, new historicist and materialist critique, post-colonialist critique, and deconstruction. Topics may also include foundational problems such as canonicity, class, consumerism, gender, ideology, race, sexuality, and textuality. Prerequisite: ENGL 2010 (Grade C or higher); AND ENGL 2600. FA

Course Goals:

Goals to be reached in this course:

- A knowledge and awareness of the importance of critical theory to literary studies.
- An understanding of the major authors and major movements of literary theory.
- Read primary texts as a way to understand how those texts have shaped theoretical trends.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will have improved their ability to:

- Explain and identify major authors and tenets associated with particular theoretical movements and trends.
- Recognize and synthesize the broad continuities as well as disputes among past and current critics regarding the nature of "literature," "language," "interpretation," and other related concepts whose meaning is often taken for granted.
- Utilize at least two different theoretical/critical methodologies to analyze literary texts.

Methods of Assessment:

Formative Assessment Methods

Discussion Groups/Boards: Students will weekly pose questions, answers, and comments pertaining to reading assignments to a class discussion group.

Exams: Students will take a series of exams to assess their understanding of literary concepts and to test their ability to synthesize the material within a larger framework of theoretical methodologies. Exams will be returned promptly with instructor feedback.

Essay: Each student will also write at least two critical essays that utilize the tools of a specific methodology, which will be determined by the instructor. Essays will be returned promptly with instructor feedback.

Summative Assessment Methods

Final Exam: At the end of the semester, students will write a final essay that assesses their ability to synthesize concepts and course material.

Value-Added Assessment Method

Pre/Post Test: Students will take a course-specific pre- and post-test, to assess the ways in which their learning has increased during the semester. This will be a multiple-choice (scantron) test.