

HUM 3805-0001: CRITICAL THEORY IN THE HUMANITIES

T&TH: 12:00-1:15PM

Location: ENG1 435

Spring 2017

Instructor: Christian Ravela

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Office: PSY 227

Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30-2:30PM

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides a general introduction to Critical Theory. As a term, Critical Theory narrowly designates a philosophical tradition formed out of Western European Marxism, which is more often called the Frankfurt School. However, this course approaches Critical Theory more broadly from a Cultural Studies tradition, surveying a suite of theoretical traditions that are now understood to be in line with the project of Critical Theory. These formations will include: Marxist Cultural Theory, Psychoanalysis, Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Critical Race Theory, and Feminist Criticism. As such, the course pursues three broad aims:

- It will situate and outline the general project of Critical Theory in terms of Marxism
- It will frame these various non-Marxist theoretical traditions in terms of the general project of Critical Theory
- It will draw from these various theoretical traditions interpretive methods for social and cultural analysis.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Understand the general project of Critical Theory
- Understand main theoretical concepts from each tradition of Critical Theory
- Understand how different theoretical traditions align with the project of Critical Theory
- Apply different interpretive methods from each tradition of Critical Theory
- Evaluate the differences, similarities, strengths, and weaknesses of different traditions of Critical Theory

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIAL:

- Course Reading (online)
- Maurice Sendack's *Where The Wild Things Are* (online)
- Margret & H.A. Rey's *Curious George* (online)
- *Rumpelstiltskin* (online)
- Disney's *Tarzan* (in-class)

REQUIRED WORK & GRADING

University Required Work – (0%)

- **Syllabus Quiz:** In order to make sure that financial aid is distributed in a timely manner, UCF requires documentation of student engagement in the first week of class. This syllabus quiz serves as that documentation. This quiz will not be graded instead you will just need to complete the quiz on time to receive credit.

Participation – (15%)

Participation consists of several factors:

- **Engagement:** At the most basic level, you should be present in class in order to participate. Not being present means that you cannot engage with the texts, lectures, discussions, group activities, free-writes, and workshops. But showing up every day is certainly not enough; you must be contributing to the overall productive dynamic of the classroom. What this means then is:
 - When we have group work days, I will be observing and walking around to see how your general involvement with that activity is while you are working, and what contributions you make in the ensuing discussion or group presentation.
 - When we have class discussions, you actively engage in the ensuing discussion. This means that you bring up topics to discuss, attentively listen to others, and thoughtfully respond to other people's comments.
- **In-class Free-Write:** When we have free-writes, you use the allotted time to thoroughly engage with the writing prompt whether it asks you to jot initial impressions of a text or develop a discussion question for the class. Afterwards, I expect you to share your insights to begin a class discussion.
- **Homework:** Occasionally in the semester, I will assign you homework. This is done in service of prompting or enabling class discussion. These homework assignments can range from a free-write to finding a cultural object to discuss. Completion of the homework is all that is need to receive full credit.

Student Group Course Leadership – (10%)

Students will sign up for a group to lead seminar. These class periods will mainly focus on prompting and guiding class discussion on cultural objects in relation to the unit's tradition of Critical Theory. This entails a brief summary of the key points of the tradition, identification of particular concepts, and a series of questions about the cultural object (three to four) as well as the identification of parts/sections/aspects of cultural objects that are of interest.

Written portion: On the day of the seminar, groups must submit a short summary of key points of the tradition, short discussion of key themes/concepts addressed in the tradition, and a list of questions for the class. This will ensure preparedness.

In-Class Midterm Exam – (10%)

This midterm will be held in-class and cover course material from the first half of the class. The midterm will most likely be composed of multiple choice questions, identifications, short answer responses, and longer in-class essays. You will be given a study guide for preparation.

In-Class Cumulative Final Exam – (15%)

This final will be held in-class during our finals schedule and cover course material from the entire semester. Like the midterm, the final will most likely be composed of multiple choice questions,

identifications, short answer responses, and longer in-class essays. You will be given a study guide for preparation.

Short Essay on Critical Theory – (10%)

After the first unit, you are tasked to write a brief essay that addresses the following questions: What is Critical Theory? What is the aim/purpose of Critical Theory? At minimum, this brief essay must be 600 words and use only the texts from the class.

Short Analysis Essay – (15%)

For this short analysis essays, you will need to analyze a cultural object of your choice using the interpretive method of a tradition of Critical Theory. These essays must be, at minimum, 700 words and you ought to use the cultural objects discussed in class. (You may use other cultural objects for your analysis; however, it must be approved by me). You will have an opportunity to complete this analysis essays after each unit. If you would like, you may complete this analysis essay as the same time as your synthesis essay.

Final Long Evaluative and Analytical Essay – (25%)

For the final essay, you will need to make an argument about two different traditions of Critical Theory that evaluates them on their merits and limitations as interpretive methods. This must done by not only comparing and contrasting them theoretically via citation of primary texts but more importantly through a comparative analysis of a single cultural object. In other words, you will need to demonstrate the merits and limitation of specific traditions of Critical Theory by showing how they bear out in analysis. Thus, you are demonstrating how certain traditions illuminates some aspects over other in a cultural object or shuttles in a set of interpretive assumptions in the analysis. For instance, how does (Freudian and/or Lacanian) psychoanalysis and feminist theory compare in their treatment of gender? What kind of gender analytic and interpretive assumptions do psychoanalysis provide? What kind of gender analytic and interpretive assumptions do feminist theory provide? What are the merits and limitations of these gender analytics and interpretive assumptions? And, given the general project of Critical Theory, which theoretical tradition is better? And why?

You may use both of your short analysis essays as the starting point for the longer essay and you may use the cultural objects discussed in class. At minimum, the essay must be 1900.

In preparation for the final long evaluative and analytical essay, you will need to submit an initial draft for peer review. The peer review will be guided and will require you to write a letter to your peer about their draft. This letter will be both submitted to me on webcourses and emailed directly to your peer. You must complete this task for me to accept the final evaluative essay.

GRADING SCALE

A	100-90%	C	76-70%
B+	89-87%	D+	69-67%
B	86-80%	D	66-60%
C+	79-77%	F	59-0%

* This grading scale does not apply if I round up your grade. In this circumstance, you will receive a minus grade rather than a non-minus grade. For example, if you receive a final grade of 79.6%, then, after rounding up the grade to *0%, you will be assigned a B- rather than a B.

ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

Paper Format:

All submitted papers must be written in a .docx or .pdf format. The body of the papers must be double-spaced and in Times New Roman, Size 12 font. Place your name, my name, the date, and the assignment type (e.g. short analysis essay) in the upper right-hand corner of the first page (single spaced, please).

Late Work Policy:

All late assignments will be docked a full letter grade for every day it is late. Furthermore, after the fifth day (including weekends) that an assignment is late, I will no longer accept it. Also, all late assignments will not be given any feedback. However, you may come to my office hours for feedback.

Revision Policy:

For this class, you are given the option to revise your short papers (e.g. Short Analysis Paper). These revised papers may be submitted to me at any time until the final day of instruction (04/20). If you do not submit a revised short paper(s) at that point, you forfeit your right to do so. Furthermore, if you submit a revised paper, you are not guaranteed a higher grade. In fact, you run the risk of receiving a lower grade.

In order to submit a revised paper, you will also need to perform two other tasks on top of revisions. First, your revised draft must highlight all parts of the paper that have been changed from the previous one. You will also need to include the unrevised paper as well. Second, and most important, you will also need to draft a letter addressed to me that both identifies the revisions that you have made and explains how these revisions redresses the issues that I raise in my comments to your original paper. Without accomplishing these other tasks, I will not accept any revised submissions.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct (<http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu>) for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule (<http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu>) for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Many incidents of plagiarism result from students' lack of understanding about what constitutes plagiarism. However, you are expected to familiarize yourself with UCF's policy on plagiarism. All work you submit must be your own scholarly and creative efforts. UCF's Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: "whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own."

Turnitin:

In this course we will utilize [turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com), an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit all assignments in electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as an instructor I receive a report from [turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process, visit www.turnitin.com.

COURSE POLICIES

Communication:

In this class, our official mode of communication is through email. Please include the course and section number in the subject line of all email communications. All communication between student and instructor and between student and student should be respectful and professional. At minimum, this means that you need some sort of salutation with my name (e.g. Dear Dr. Ravela) and a valediction with your name (e.g. Sincerely, Dr. Ravela). As of 2009, Knightsmail is the only official student email at UCF. Class rosters list Knightsmail addresses rather than external email addresses, and all official class communications will be sent only to the Knightsmail addresses. Students are responsible for checking their Knightsmail accounts regularly

Email:

I check my email only once a day and I do not check my email on the weekend. Thus, depending on when you email me, I may take up to two to four days to respond. If you have a question that needs to be addressed immediately, I recommend that you speak to me during office hours or right before or after class.

Being Prepared for Class:

You need to have the assigned readings done before class so that you are prepared to participate in discussions and activities. Also, you need to bring your textbook and other assigned readings to class with you every day.

Punctuality and Attendance:

Even though I do not take attendance, I do believe it is essential to your success in the course, especially in processing the information from each chapter. It may not directly impact your participation grade but it does so indirectly as a necessary prerequisite to both class engagement and completing the in-class Free-Write journal. Along the same lines, punctuality will be equally important to your success. I understand that arriving on time can be difficult with such a large campus and short break in-between each session. Therefore, I provide a 10 minute grace period after the class has begun. However, if you arrive after this grace period, I will politely ask you to leave the class for that day.

Cell Phones and the Use of Other Technologies:

You **MUST** turn off your cell phone **BEFORE** you enter the classroom. Failing to turn off your cell phone is a sign of disrespect to your fellow students and myself. Other signs of disrespect include: text-messaging, wearing headphones, or using any type of electronic devices, including laptops, during class time. This policy is enforced at all times unless I instruct otherwise. If you continually text or sleep or talk inappropriately, etc. it will negatively impact your participation in the class.

Classroom Culture:

I want all of you to feel welcomed *and* challenged in this class – by me and by each other. This necessitates that you enter the classroom with an understanding that all of us bring something different to discussion (backgrounds, viewpoints, experiences and identities) and that those “somethings” can potentially rub other people the wrong way. While I encourage academic debate, it can only occur productively in an environment that not only puts respect for all viewpoints first and foremost rather than relying on rudeness or antagonism. We are here to learn from each other. As I have iterated elsewhere in this syllabus, open communication will be an important part of this class and if at any time you feel uncomfortable, I encourage you to speak to me about it so that the issue can be addressed appropriately.

ACCOMMODATIONS, RESOURCES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Accommodations, Ferrell Commons 185, 407-823-2371

It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting SAS (Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; sas@ucf.edu) to talk about academic accommodations. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

University Writing Center, Colbourn Hall 105, 407-823-2197

The University Writing Center (UWC) offers writing support to students from first-year to graduate in every discipline. Tutors provide help at every stage of the writing process, including understanding assignments, researching, drafting, revising, incorporating sources, and learning to proofread and edit. The UWC's purpose is not merely to fix or edit papers, but to teach writing strategies that can be applied to any writing situation. Consultations are available for individuals and small groups. You may schedule a 45-minute appointment by clicking the *Success Resources* tab on Webcourses, calling the UWC at 407-823-2197, or through <http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/>.

The UWC seeks graduate and undergraduate tutors from all majors. To learn more about becoming a writing tutor, please contact us.

Student Academic Resource Center, Howard Phillips Hall 113, 407-823-5130

Our mission is to strengthen comprehensive learning, enhance retention, and promote student success by providing academic support services to University of Central Florida (UCF) students.

We offer free programs and services to UCF students such as peer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI), workshops and seminars, learning skills consultations, and first-year transition programs. Many of our services are offered across campus, and peer tutoring is conveniently located at three facilities, including Howard Phillips Hall, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, and the Veterans Academic Resource Center. Our services are delivered in a variety of formats, including peer-led group tutoring and study sessions, workshops, and individual consultations. Additionally, SARC Online is available on demand to offer a variety of tools, resources, and materials designed to help students be successful, whether they are taking online classes or simply seeking online academic support.

Additionally, SARC is proud to be part of the Knights Academic Resource Services (KARS) coalition. KARS provides a virtual one-stop shop to connect students with up-to-date information about resources and helpful academic services available at the University of Central Florida.

CALENDAR

This calendar is subject to revisions, additions, and removal at my discretion

Date	Reading & Work Due
Tuesday – 01/10	Introductions & Syllabus
Thursday – 01/12	Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Analysis • On Theory and Practice • Basic Primer on Marxism
Unit 1: Situating and Outline Critical Theory	
Tuesday – 01/17	Read and Discuss:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection from Marx's <i>The German Ideology</i>
Thursday – 01/19	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Horkheimer's "Traditional and Critical Theory"
Tuesday – 01/24	Complete Discussion
Cultural Objects	
Thursday – 01/26	Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disney's <i>Tarzan</i> Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maurice Sendack's <i>Where the Wild Things Are</i> • H.A. Rey's <i>Curious George</i> • <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i>
Unit 2: Structuralism	
Tuesday – 01/31	Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disney's <i>Tarzan</i> Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ferdinand de Saussure – selection from <i>Course in General Linguistics</i> • Claude Lévi-Strauss – selection from "The Structural Study of Myth" • Lois Tyson – "Structuralist Criticism" • Catherine Belsey – "Criticism and Meaning" • Daniel Chandler – "Syntagmatic Analysis" • Daniel Chandler – "Paradigmatic Analysis"
Thursday – 02/02	Continue Discussion
Friday – 02/03	Submit: Short Essay on Critical Theory to Webcourses by 11:59pm
Tuesday – 02/07	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 02/09	Student Leadership #1: Structuralism
Unit 3: Post-Structuralism/Deconstruction	
Tuesday – 02/14	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catherine Belsey – selection from <i>Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction</i> • Catherine Belsey – "Deconstructing the Text" • Lois Tyson – "Deconstructive Criticism"
Thursday – 02/16	Continue Discussion
Friday – 02/17	Optional Submission: Unit 2 – Structuralism Short Analysis Paper to Webcourses by 11:59pm
Tuesday – 02/21	Student Leadership #2: Post-Structuralism/Deconstruction
Unit 4: Psychoanalysis (Freudian and Lacanian)	
Thursday – 02/23	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lois Tyson - "Psychoanalytic Criticism" • Sigmund Freud – selection from <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> • TBA
Tuesday – 02/28	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 03/02	Continue Discussion
Friday – 03/03	Optional Submission: Unit 3 – Post-Structuralist/Deconstructive Short Analysis Paper to Webcourses by 11:59pm
Tuesday – 03/07	Student Leadership #3: Psychoanalysis

Thursday – 03/09	IN-CLASS MIDTERM
Tuesday – 03/14	Spring Break – No Class
Thursday – 03/16	Spring Break – No Class
Monday – 03/20	Optional Submission: Unit 4 – Psychoanalysis Short Analysis Paper to Webcourses by 11:59pm
Unit 5: Structural/Cultural Marxism	
Tuesday – 03/21	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raymond Williams – selection from <i>Marxism and Literature</i> • Louis Althusser – selection from “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” • Catherine Belsey – “Addressing the Subject” • Lois Tyson – “Marxist Criticism”
Thursday – 03/23	Continue Discussion
Tuesday – 03/28	Student Leadership #4: Structural Marxism/Marxist Cultural Theory
Unit 6: Critical Race Theory	
Thursday – 03/30	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Omi and Howard Winant – selection from <i>Racial Formation in the United States</i> • Richard Dyer – “The Matter of Whiteness” • Claire Jean Kim – selection from “Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans” • Lois Tyson – “Postcolonial and African American Criticism”
Tuesday – 04/04	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 04/06	Student Leadership #5: Critical Race Theory
Friday – 04/07	Optional Submission: Unit 5 – Structural Marxism/Marxist Cultural Theory Short Analysis Paper to Webcourses by 11:59pm
Unit 7: Feminist Criticism	
Tuesday – 04/11	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick – selection from <i>Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire</i> • Judith Butler – selection from <i>Gender Trouble</i> • Lois Tyson – “Feminist Criticism”
Thursday – 04/13	Continue Discussion
Friday – 04/14	Optional Submission: Unit 6 – Critical Race Theory Short Analysis Paper to Webcourses by 11:59pm
Tuesday – 04/18	Student Leadership #6: Feminist Criticism
Thursday – 04/20	Reflection on the Course
Monday – 04/24	Optional Submission: Unit 7 – Feminist Criticism Short Analysis Paper to Webcourses by 11:59pm
Thursday – 04/27	Final Exam from 10:00am-12:50pm
Friday – 04/28	Submit Rough Draft of Long Evaluative and Analytical Essay to Webcourses by 11:59pm
Monday – 05/01	Submit Peer Review of Draft of Long Evaluative and Analytical Essay to Webcourses by 11:59pm
Friday – 05/05	Submit Final Draft of Long Evaluative and Analytical Essay to Webcourses by 11:59pm

