

English 338**Contemporary Novel and Narrative Theory****Tues/Thurs 12.30-1.45****Colgate 126****Dr. Ewa Chruściel****Office: Colgate 227****Office Phone: 526 3645****Office Hours** Wed 12-1 pm, Thursday 11– 12 *and by appointment***Course Description:**

This course is dedicated to the exploration of contemporary novel. We will start with two Modernist novels as a segue to experimental and Postmodernist fiction. In this course we will discuss such concepts as closure, genre blend, as well as open and closed texts. We will scrutinize the concept of closure and non-closure in a large historical and cultural context in order to disclose the diachronic division of closural and anti-closural texts and present the theoretical attempts to destabilize the concept of closure. We will engage in discursive conversations with such critics as Frank Kermode, Barbara Herrnstein-Smith, Roland Barthes, Ihab Hassan, Umberto Eco in order to discover what is open and closed text and how various writers complicate this binary. We will finally examine what happens to closure in Postmodernist texts. We will discuss, for example, whether a reader in the face of a nontraditional text, which does not easily reveal any schema of closure, generates his/her own sense of closure or rather gives up the attempt to formulate or substitute any closure.

Finally we will also focus on the concept of genre blend in contemporary novel.

We will have a few shorter and some longer written assignments. I will ask you to keep a journal in which you will write several responses to our readings. We will have two longer written assignments that will be a record of the discoveries you made while reading, discussing and writing about reading. I will also encourage you to perform in this class: present works you like, read aloud your journal entries and papers.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

1. To introduce characteristic features of contemporary writing.
2. To understand and enjoy contemporary writing.
3. To discuss the issues of closure and non-closure and examine how the binary between the two is collapsed.
4. To discuss the notion of epiphany and its relation to closure.
5. To introduce slippery poetics which conflates the genres and challenges our notions of textual coherence.
6. To familiarize ourselves with academic discourse and literary criticism as well as the narrative theory.

Required Texts:

1. Graham Greene The End of the Affair
2. Witold Gombrowicz Ferdydurke
3. Donald Barthelme Snow White
4. Lyn Hejinian My Life
5. Italo Calvino Cosmicomics
5. Postmodern American Fiction. A Norton Anthology.

Suggested Readings:

Frank Kermode. The Sense of an Ending

Paul Ricoeur. Time and Narrative.

Paul Maltby. The Visionary Moment: A Postmodern Critique

Carole Maso. Ava

Pierre Joris A Nomad Poetics: Essays

Grading Standards:

30% - presentations

17% - paper I

18% - paper II

Final Paper- 35 % Grading standards for final papers have been outlined separately and can be found in Course Documents on Blackboard under “Final Papers Grading Standards.”

Journals – additional credit (if you reach 26 pluses)

Class participation – additional credit

Note that the failure to submit required written assignments or carry on a presentation results in failing the course!

Writing Guidelines:

1. All papers must be typewritten and double-spaced on a computer or word processor.
2. Margins will be of standard size: 1 ¼” from the top and bottom of the page and 1” from the left and right margins. Times New Roman size 12 font will be used.
3. Pages should be numbered in the upper, right margin.
4. In the upper, left-hand corner of the 1st page write:

Your name:

English 245

Dr. Ewa Chrusciel

Assignment #

Due date

ATTENDANCE

Your success in this course relies heavily on regular participation in class activities. Missing classes will affect your performance and, consequently, your grade. In-class work will involve DISCUSSIONS, PRESENTATIONS, WRITTEN RESPONSES, JOURNAL ENTRIES, PEER REVISIONS, etc., which are extremely difficult to make up for outside of the class environment. In exceptional cases, when missing class is inevitable, you are responsible for contacting me at least 24 hours in advance and making every possible effort to make up for the class promptly. If you have missed more than **3 classes**, I have a right to assign you additional work. If you happen to miss any class due to some illness or other serious circumstances, I expect you to contact me and your peers in order to catch up with whatever we were working on. I will keep your attendance record. I will not respond to late assignments unless they are justified. If you happen to be late with your paper, you will be responsible for scheduling a conference meeting with me in order to fulfill this requirement. You will lead the discussion at these conferences which basically means that you should come prepared to discuss what you feel are the strengths and weaknesses of your paper, how you see the paper developing, and what ideas you have for further revision. After the meeting, you will send me a brief memo describing what was discussed. I will sign off on that and then you will have fulfilled the requirement. I strongly encourage you to stay on schedule to facilitate your progress throughout the semester.

Technology in Class:

It is important that enroll in this course on Blackboard site. I will provide you with the quick Start Guide and the Tip Sheets. The password to enroll is: closure

Disabilities Policy

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Academic Development Center (3714)

Writing Assistance

Free writing assistance is available from Academic Development Center (3714)
I would advise you to make use of such invaluable assistance.

Classroom Behavior

I am excited to be working with all of you this semester, and I want our classroom environment to be one of acceptance and friendship. To facilitate that, I will expect you to use appropriate, unbiased language and to respect the views and opinions of one another. It also means that I expect you to do your own work and not plagiarize. If you are unsure what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult Blair Handbook (pp 364-368).

I look forward to the coming semester and to getting to know each of you. If you ever have any difficulties or questions at any time during the semester, please feel free to stop by my office and chat.

A Final Note

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus.

Course Schedule:**Week 1*****Sep 12***

Introduction to the course

Assignment:

Enroll in Blackboard and read syllabus again

Discussion and handouts on closure

Two journal entries

Sep 14

Presentations

Modernism and Postmodernism

Assignment:

Finish The End of the Affair

Week 2***Sep 19***

Greene –The narrative techniques

Assignment:

Journal # 1

-What implication does R. Bloy's motto have in the novel? How do you understand it?

Sept 21

Greene

Assignment:

1. Two-pages paper on Greene

2. Read Ferdydurke 1-67

3. Read Umberto Eco in Norton pp 622-624

Week 3***Sep 26***Ferdydurke

Assignment:

Read Ferdydurke: 68-146

Read Ihab Hassan: "Toward a Concept of Postmodernism" Norton pp 586-595

Sept 28Ferdydurke

Assignment:

Finish Ferdydurke:

Article: Barthes: "From Work to Text" handouts

Week 4***Oct 2******Presentation on Ferdydurke

Article: The Postmodern idea of text—discussion

Assignment:

Read Snow White***Oct 5***

Snow White

Assignment:

1. Read handout Ferdinand de Saussure

Finish Snow White

How many texts can you recognize in Snow White?**Week 5*****Oct 10***

*** Presentation—Barthes

Assignment: Baxter "Burning Down The House" – handout
& TBA***Oct 12***

Baxter

Assignment:

Hejinian My Life**Week 6*****Oct 17 No Class******Oct 19***

Hejinian

Assignment:

1. Hejinian "Rejection of Closure"-- handouts

Week 7***Oct 24******Papers due***

Hejinian

Assignment:

1. Journal entry - write down the dream you had without using conjunctions

2. Hejinian “Rejection of Closure”—handouts
3. Read in Norton Trinh T. Minh-ha *Woman, Native, Other* pp 649-654
4. Read H  l  ne Cixous – Norton pp 583-585.

Oct 26

Hejinian – the idea of selfhood in Postmodernism

Hejinian’s article “*Rejection of Closure*”

Assignment:

Journal entry – 2 pages

Read: Deleuze and Guattari “A Thousand Plateaus” handout

Week 8**Oct 31**

Rhizomes—Deleuze and Guattari

Read: Haraway “Cyborg Manifesto” in Norton

Nov 2nd

***Presentation: Cyborg Manifesto

Assignment:

Read Cosmicomics

Week 9**Nov 7**

*****Presentation** Cosmicomics

Nov 9**Cosmicomics**

Assignment:

3-pages paper on Cosmicomics or My Life due Nov 21

Paul Auster City of Glass Norton 443- 449

Week 10**Nov 14**

*** Presentation on Postmodern Detective

Assignment: Read Carole Maso in Norton 111- 115

Nov 16

***Presentation: Carole Maso

Assignment: Read David Foster Wallace in Norton 362-391

Week 11**Nov 21****Papers due**

***Presentation – David Foster Wallace

Assignment: TBA

Nov 23 Thanksgiving**Week 12****Nov 28**

***Presentations: read Theresa Hak Kyung Cha or Tim O’Brien in Norton

Assignment: William Gass: pp 66-84 Norton

Week 13**Nov 30**

***Presentation: William Gass

Assignment: Read Ursula K. Le Guin in Norton 519-526 and “Omelas” (handout)

Dec 5

Ursula Le Guin

A Nomad Poetics -- handouts

Dec 7

Discussion of final projects

Week 14**Dec 12**

Course summary

Dec 14

Final papers due

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus to the benefit of students.