

**Spanish 587: “Stylistic and Literary Criticism”
Spring 2014, Pennsylvania State University**

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Class: Monday & Wednesday, 2:30-3:45 210 Thomas Building
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 4:00-5:00 and by appointment

--“ I believe it is my job as a scholar and a citizen to show how we are surrounded by ‘messages,’ products of political power, of economic power, of the entertainment industry and the revolution industry, and to say that we must know how to analyze and criticize them.” – Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*.

Course description and goals:

SPAN 587 will explore some of the most important theoretical lines of inquiry of the 20th and 21st century informing literary scholarship. By posing, and attempting to answer, such fundamental questions as “What is literature?”, “What is an author?”, “How to read and why?” and even “Is there a text in this class?” these exemplary and foundational works allow us to articulate and to situate historically our own approach to literature. Specifically, this course will examine such methodological approaches as: post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, feminism, post-colonialism, queer theory, eco-criticism, and cultural criticism. As we explore each theoretical approach, we will pay particular attention to the relative emphasis each one places upon text and context, and we will attempt to articulate their (perhaps necessary) blind spots as well as the insights they offer. No previous study of literary theory or philosophy is expected. Conducted in English, the course will have three main goals:

1. To familiarize students with the vocabulary, basic concepts, and outlook of a range of methodological approaches
2. To deploy some of these concepts in our own readings of texts, and
3. To enable students to begin to define their own identity as literary critics and scholars and to open new paths of inquiry

For Spring 2014, SPAN 587 will have several points of intersection with the concurrent graduate course on the Avant-garde. With Dr. Fernández-Medina’s class, we will have a field trip to the Guggenheim in New York to visit the new exhibit on Italian Futurism. The trip will take place on Thursday, March 20. We will also host two guest speakers, each of whom have published recent books on modernism. Dr. John Champagne’s book looks at fascist-period culture through the lens of Queer Theory, and Dr. Gayle Rogers examines the intersections of Spanish and Anglo modernisms through a literary historical approach. These visits will acquaint you with the work of important scholars in the field, and will also give you the opportunity to discuss their work (and yours) in a comfortable setting. Dr. Champagne (on February 24) and Dr. Rogers (on March 3) will each present at the Comparative Literature Luncheon, and then will then participate in our seminar, where we will be joined by Dr. Fernández-Medina and his class.

Please note:

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments, contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at [814-863-1807](tel:814-863-1807)(V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit the Office for Disability Services website at <http://equity.psu.edu/ods/>. In order to receive consideration for course accommodations, you must contact ODS and provide documentation (see the documentation guidelines at <http://equity.psu.edu/ods/guidelines/documentation-guidelines>). If the documentation supports the need for academic adjustments, ODS will provide a letter identifying appropriate academic adjustments. Please share this letter and discuss the adjustments with your instructor as early in the course as possible. You must contact ODS and request academic adjustment letters at the beginning of each semester.

Concerning Academic Integrity: Spanish 587 encourages discussion of course material in and out of the classroom. However, work submitted for a grade must be the result of each student's own effort. Any sources consulted for research, whether in print or electronic, must be cited properly. Noncompliance will be considered a violation of Penn State's standards of academic integrity for which proper measures will be taken.

The final grade is determined following these criteria:

Participation in class discussions: 30%. The seminar requires active participation in all sessions. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, to listen respectfully to their peers' interventions, and to offer constructive questions and comments.

Mid-term project: 20%. Each student will choose a particular work of Hispanic literature of interest to him / her, and then identify two critical pieces on that literary work employing different methodologies. For example, you might find two essays analyzing Galdòs' *Misericordia*, one employing a feminist approach and the other reading the novel through a Marxist lens. The student will prepare a 20-30 minute presentation on the two essays, giving the class a critical review of each and elaborating their respective "blindness and insights." The student will also submit a brief written report on the two essays.

Presentation: 20%. Students will give a conference-style paper in the last week of the class. This presentation will also serve, as conference papers often do, as a work-in-progress with an eye to using peer feedback to revise the presentation into the final paper. The presentation may be "purely" theoretical, taking up issues from the seminar, or may draw on the theoretical approaches studied to undertake a reading of a literary text (and you may define "literary text" according to whatever theoretical approach you choose).

Final research paper: 30%. The student will develop the presentation into a 20-page research paper. Please use MLA format and submit the paper by May 8.

Grade Scale:

A 95.0 - 100	B+ 87.0 - 89.9	C+ 75.0-79.9	D 60 – 69.9
A- 90.0-94.9	B 83.0 - 86.9	C 70.0 – 74.9	F 0.0 – 59.9
	B- 80.0 – 82.9		

Recommended texts:

In addition to the required readings, students may find some of these books useful in understanding the historical developments in critical methodologies and the ways in which various approaches build on and respond to each other:

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2011.
Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. U of Minnesota P, 1983
Fry, Paul. *A Defense of Poetry: Reflections on the Occasion of Writing*. Stanford UP, 1995.
Seldon, Raman. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. The UP of Kentucky, 1985.

Provisional Calendar of readings and topics:

** Please check Angel regularly for potential updates and adjustments **

Week One:

Jan 13: Introduction to the course, Jane Gallop, "Close Reading"
Jan 15: Wimsatt & Beardsley "The Intentional Fallacy"; Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer"

Week Two: Authors and authority

Jan 20 – no class
Jan 22: Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author"; Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?"

Week Three: Heteroglossia and Open works: literature and polyvocality

Jan 27: Mikhail Bakhtin, Introduction to *Rabelais and His World*
Jan 29: Umberto Eco, from *The Open Work*

Week Four: Psychoanalysis: Literature as "symptom?"

Feb. 3: Sigmund Freud: "Mourning and Melancholia," "The Theme of the Three Caskets," "Medusa"
Feb. 5: Jacques Lacan: "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'"; "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experiences"

Week Five: Deconstruction: language as difference and deferred meaning

Feb. 10: Paul de Man, from *The Resistance to Theory*
Feb. 12: Jacques Derrida, "'Signature, Event, Context'"

Week Six: Feminist approaches: Phallogocentrism and its Discontents

Fed. 17: Toril Moi, from *Sexual/Textual Politics*; Adriana Cavarero, "Who Engenders Politics?"
Feb. 19: Julia Kristeva, "Stabat Mater"; Helène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa"

Week Seven: Queer theory and fascism: manliness / masculinity / virility

*Be sure to view Bassani's *Garden of the Finzi Contini* before Monday's activities.

Feb. 24: John Champagne talk at Comparative Literature Luncheon.

Class: visit from Dr. Champagne. Read Champagne, "Bassani and Italian Queers of the 1930s"

Feb. 26: Judith Butler, from *Gender Trouble*.

Week Eight: Border Crossings and Comparatives Approaches

Mar. 3: Gayle Rogers talk at Comparative Literature Luncheon.

Class: Visit from Dr. Rogers. Read Rogers, "Jiménez, Modernism/o, and the Languages of Comparative Modernist Studies"

Mar. 5. Gayle Rogers, from *Modernism and the New Spain*.

Break!

Week Nine: "Italian Futurism 1909-1940: Reconstructing the Universe"

Mar. 17: Lawrence Rainey, Introduction from *Futurism: An Anthology*

Mar. 19: Hal Foster, "Prosthetic Gods"

Mar. 20: trip to New York City for Guggenheim Museum tour.

Week Ten: Mid-term presentations

Mar. 24: presentations and Q &A

Mar. 26: presentations and Q &A

Week Eleven: Discourse and Power

Mar. 31: Antonio Gramsci: "Art and the Struggle for a New Civilization"

Apr. 2: Theodor Adorno: "Cultural Criticism and Society"

Week Twelve: Art and Society

Apr. 7: Walter Benjamin: "The Storyteller"

Apr. 9: Fredric Jameson: "Criticism in History" from *The Ideologies of Theory*

Week Thirteen: Who gets to speak? Foundations of Post-colonial theory

Apr. 14: Edward Said, from *Orientalism*

Apr. 16: Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Sub-altern speak?"

Week Fourteen: Taking the human out of the humanities? Eco-criticism and ecofeminism

Apr. 21: Serenella Iovino & Serpil Oppermann, "Theorizing Material Ecocriticism"

Apr. 23: Oppermann, "Ecocriticism's Theoretical Discontents"; Janis Birkeland, "Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice"

Week Fifteen:

Apr. 28: Final presentations with Q & A

Apr. 30: Final presentations with Q &A

Final papers due May 8