

English 614 ~ Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory

Winter 2014

Prof. Gordon Sayre

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Wednesdays 9-noon in 253 PLC

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Hours: 10:00 - noon Tues., 1:00 - 2:00 Wed.

This seminar is an introduction to literary criticism and scholarship, designed for Masters and Doctoral students in the UO English department. Our goal is to learn how to better use and analyze scholarly sources, and ultimately to write and publish our own scholarly articles. Consistent with this practical goal, the course takes a case-study approach. The critical articles and chapters we will read are nearly all analyses of one of the following six works of literature: "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "The Yellow Wallpaper," *Benito Cereno*, *The Tempest*, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, and "The Purloined Letter." These six works have been chosen because they:

- Represent various periods, genres, styles, and authors both British and American
- Are widely read and intensively interpreted, and have generated a large corpus of criticism
- Are short enough to read quickly, leaving us more time to read the scholarship
- Were written by scholars of various profiles, from famous names to working faculty teachers
- Have inspired various methodologies, from New Criticism to Post-Colonial to Deconstruction
- Can demonstrate an evolution in arguments and approaches across the last fifty years or more

The assignments for the course include short weekly essays (beginning week 2, January 15th), and two class presentations, one on the assigned reading for that week, and another on the end-of-term project. The term project will be individually designed to suit students' needs. Some of you may write about one of the case-study texts or the scholarship based on it, while others may pursue projects they have begun working on in previous terms, with the goal of submitting an article for publication review. I plan to meet with each of you to plan topics for the class presentation (which we will schedule during week 1), and for the term project.

### **Grading:**

The nine weekly essays will account for 60% of the final grade.

The end-of-term project and presentation for 30%

The in-class presentation for 10%

### **Books available at the UO Book and Duck store:**

Donald Keeseey, ed., *Contexts for Criticism*, 4th edition

John P. Muller and Williams J. Richardson, eds., *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading* (Johns Hopkins UP)

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman

*Contexts for Criticism* is designed around the first four of our six case-study texts, and reprints the first three as appendices. You will each need to get a copy of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, for which I suggest Smith Family bookstore. I also recommend a handbooks of literary terms, such as many of you acquired for ENG 690 last term or in Fall 2011.

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List of articles and chapters (not found in *Contexts for Criticism* nor in the Norton Critical *Tempest*) available as pdfs on the blackboard course site:

“The Yellow Wallpaper”:

Julie Bates Dock, et. al., “But One Expects That’: Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ and the shifting light of scholarship,” *PMLA* 111:1 (Jan. 1996), 52-65.

Susan Lanser “Feminist Criticism, ‘The Yellow Wallpaper,’ and the Politics of Color in America” *Feminist Studies* 15 (1989), 415-441;

Tristan Siple, “Capitalism and Environmental Dystopia” unpublished manuscript, 2006/2012

Paula Treichler, “Escaping the Sentence: Diagnosis and Discourse in ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* 1984

*The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*:

Robert E. Fleming, “Irony as a Key to Johnson’s *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*.” *American Literature* 43:1 (March 1971), 83-96.

Donald Goellnicht, “Passing as Autobiography: James Weldon Johnson’s *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*” *African American Review* 30:1 (Spring 1996), 17-33.

Kathleen Pfeiffer, “Individualism, Success, and American Identity in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*.” *African American Review* 30: 3 (Autumn 1996), 403-419.

Cristina L. Ruotolo, “James Weldon Johnson and the Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Musician” *American Literature* 72:2 (June 2000), 249-274

Jennifer L. Schulz, “Restaging the Racial Contract: James Weldon Johnson’s Signatory Strategies” *American Literature* 74:1 (March 2002), 31-58

Joseph T. Skerrett, Jr. “Irony and Symbolic Action in James Weldon Johnson’s *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*.” *American Quarterly* 32:5 (Winter 1980), 540-558.

*The Tempest*

Stephen J. Greenblatt, “Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century.” chapter 2, pp. 22-51 of *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture*, 1990.

Peter Hulme, “George Lamming and the Paradox of Exile,” in *The Tempest and its Travels* ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman (London: Reaktion, 2000), 220-235

Octave Mannoni, “Crusoe and Prospero” from *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* trans. Pamela Powesland (London, Methuen, 1950), 97-109.

Rob Nixon, “Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest*” *Critical Inquiry* 13:3 (Spring 1987), 557-578.

Roberto Fernandez Retamar, “Caliban: Notes towards a discussion of Culture in Our America” [excerpt from *Postcolonialisms: An anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*, ed. Desai and Nair, 65-69. Full version is in *Massachusetts Review* 1974 but is very long]

Patricia Seed, “‘This Island’s Mine’: Caliban and Native Sovereignty,” in *The Tempest and its Travels*, 202-211.

*Benito Cereno*:

Sidney Kaplan, “Melville and the American National Sin: The Meaning of Benito Cereno.” *Journal of Negro History* 41:4 (Oct. 1956), 311-338; 42:1 (Jan. 1957), 11-37

Sterling Stuckey and Joshua Leslie, “Aftermath: Captain Delano’s Claim against Benito Cereno,” *Modern Philology* 85:3 (Feb. 1988), 265-287.

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**Schedule of Reading Assignments:**

A name and page numbers indicates the author of an article in Keeseey's anthology, or for *The Tempest*, in the Norton Critical edition; pdfs as listed above are on blackboard.

Week 1 ~ Jan. 8: "Ode on a Grecian Urn" Focus: New Criticism and Formalism  
Keeseey, "General Introduction" 1-8; Hirsch 17-28; Ellis 92-97; Frye 279-287 theory  
Kent 112-115; Wilson 172-184; Brann 244-248; Garson 451-461 on Keats' poem

Week 2 ~ Jan. 15: "The Yellow Wallpaper" Focus: Feminism and textual criticism  
Keeseey, "Mimetic Criticism" 205-214; Knight 66-73; Kolodny 194-204; Donovan 224-234; Gilbert  
& Gubar 259-263; Dock, et. al., pdf

Week 3 ~ Jan. 22: "The Yellow Wallpaper" Focus: Eco-criticism and ethnic studies  
Kennard 327-339; Feldstein 401-407; Lanser pdf; Treichler pdf; Siple pdf  
And, to get started on *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*: Fleming pdf

Week 4 ~ Jan. 29: *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* Focus: Afro-Am Criticism  
Skerrett, Ruotolo, Goellnicht, Pfeiffer, and Schulz, all pdfs

Week 5 ~ Feb. 5: *The Tempest* Focus on New Historicism  
Yachnin 34-46; McDonald 99-111; Paris 235-243; Frye 298-301; Eagleton 419-426; Barker & Hulme  
442-451; Greenblatt, "Learning to Curse" pdf

Week 6 ~ Feb. 12: *The Tempest* Focus on Post-Colonial theory and criticism  
Lamming and Fuchs in Norton Critical ed., 248-285; Mannoni, Retamar, Nixon, Seed, Hulme, all  
pdfs

Week 7 ~ Feb. 19: *Benito Cereno* Focus on Historicism and Psychoanalysis  
Kaplan pdf; Stuckey and Leslie pdf; Thomas 462-469, Wright 392-400

Week 8 ~ Feb. 26: *Benito Cereno* Focus on Reader-Response and Genre theory  
O'Connell 185-193, Swann 310-326; and I may add Eric Sundquist or Toni Morrison or Dana  
Luciano

Week 9 ~ Mar. 5: "The Purloined Letter" Focus on Psychoanalysis and Structuralism  
Culler 288-297; Derrida 353-363; de Man 364-373  
Lacan in *Purloined Poe* 28-98

Week 10 ~ Mar. 12: "The Purloined Letter" Focus on Deconstruction  
Derrida and Johnson in *Purloined Poe* 159-251; Holland in *Purloined Poe* 207-222