

ENG 615

Theory of the Novel

(Tuesday 14:00-16:50 Fall 2016)

Professor David Li
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PLC 275; Tel 6-3940
O hrs: T 9-12:00 & appointments

Description:

The seminar bases itself on Michael McKeon's anthology of the same title, *Theory of the Novel*, and follows as well the spirit of its subtitle, *A Historical Approach*. We will closely read from this wide-ranging collection representative essays the way we scrutinize literary works. The objective is to analyze the writings on the novel form and its transformations. Immediate application of theory to primary works of fiction is not something that the seminar intends to venture into. Appreciation of the novel's social and symbolic roles and an apprehension of the discourse that enables such appreciation are what the seminar shall hopefully develop.

Policy Statement:

All are expected to complete the assigned readings by the time of the seminar meeting on Tuesday. The only required text is McKeon ed., *Theory of the Novel* and all page numbers in the syllabus refer to this edition. Because the seminar is designed primarily to understand the best that has been said on the novel, the best means with which to accomplish optimal comprehension seems to engage the reading material actively. For this reason, I decide not to require a standard research paper. Instead, we shall break the writing into 4 reading response papers. The responses should be approximately 5 double-spaced pp. in length that summarize and address important issues the day's material lead us. I shall not specify particularity of style, but all papers are to provide a synopsis of what you take to be an author's arguments, helping your imaginary reader who has not read what you have to grasp the arguments your authors have presented. Broadly speaking, you would offer your comments and critique of the material only after you have adequately accounted for the original texts, and it is also advisable, in case you are called upon to address 2-3 related pieces, that you generate your synthesis with an argumentative or thematic trajectory of your own. All writing must be submitted in hard copies and they are due at the beginning of the seminar hour. On the days when your response paper is due, you should also prepare a question or two to inaugurate the seminar discussion. No late papers will be accepted except in cases of serious medical incapacity or unfortunate accidents. Your semester grade will be a scaled numerical sum of 1. your classroom participation and attendance (20%) and 2. your reading responses (4x 20%=80%).

Accommodations for Disability: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this class, please provide me with a letter from Disability Services, verifying your disability and stating needed accommodations. The professor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus when necessary.

Syllabus

- 09-27 Preambles
- 10-04 Benjamin, "The Story Teller" 77—93
Frye, "Anatomy" 122—30 & "Secular Scripture" 139-43.
- 10-11 Freud, "Interpretation" & "Family Romance" 149—59
Bakhtin, "The Dialogic Imagination" 321—54
- 10-18 Lukacs, "The Theory of the Novel" 185—218
"The Historical Novel" 219—64
- 10-25 Watt, "The Rise of the Novel" 363—81
Jameson, "The Political Unconscious" 400—13
Anderson, "Imagined Communities" 414—34
- 11-01 Watt, "The Rise of the Novel" 441—66
Armstrong, "Desire and Domestic Fiction" 467—75
Brown, "Domestic Individualism" 476—84
- 11-08 Cohn, "Transparent Minds" 493—514
Banfield, "Unspeakable Sentences" 515—36
Moretti, "The Way of the World" 554—65
- 11-15 Coward and Ellis, "Language and Materialism" 593—99
Levine, "The Realist Imagination" 613—31
Benjamin, "Work of Art" 673—95
Cohen, "Film and Fiction" 696—18
- 11-22 Woolf, "Modern Fiction" 739—44
Lukacs, "Realism in Our Time" 759—83
Hutcheon, "Historiographic Metafiction" 830—50
- 11-29 Sommer and Yudice, "Latin American" 859—81
Appiah, "The Post" 882—89
Sangari, "Politics of the Possible" 900—22