This course provides training in reading and analyzing literary criticism. We will read a large number of articles and essays, most published from the 1960s to 2000, about five case study texts: John Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” Herman Melville’s *Benito Cereno*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper,” William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, and James Weldon Johnson’s *Autobiography of an Ex-coloured Man*. These five have been chosen because they:

- Represent various periods, genres, styles, and both British and American authors
- Are widely read and intensively interpreted, and so have generated a large corpus of criticism
- Are short enough to read quickly, leaving us more time to read the critical heritage
- Have inspired various methodologies, from New Criticism to Post-Colonial to Deconstruction
- Demonstrate an evolution in arguments and approaches across the last fifty years

The first three primary texts are printed as appendices in the anthology *Contexts for Criticism*, edited by Donald Keesey. Using Keesey’s anthology, we will acquaint ourselves with several of the major strains of literary criticism, including feminist, reader response, psychoanalytic, structuralist, deconstructionist, post-colonial. A few days’ readings, labelled as “interludes” on the schedule below, are devoted theoretical essays not directly related to the five case study texts. Our goal for the course is to learn how to understand and recognize important schools of literary criticism, and to improve our own skills as literary scholars, for application in other English and literature courses.

**Coursetexts** have been ordered at University Bookstore:
You can use any edition of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*

**Attendance and Participation:**
Attendance is required in this course. Completing all the reading assignments, attending class and participating in discussion in class and on Canvas are all vital to your success. I expect that many of you will need to work hard to build your skills and confidence in understanding this material.

You are permitted to miss three classes for whatever reason, but your grade will be reduced for each absence beyond three. I will distribute an attendance list at the beginning of each class period. Leaving class early will also constitute an unexcused absence. If you need to leave early, please notify me ahead of time.

**Reading Questions:**
These are an important part of the course assignments, amounting to 15% of the grade. The purpose is to respond to the day’s reading assignment by posting on the Canvas discussion board a question or comment about one of the articles we read. Pose a
question that arises from the readings, or respond to another student’s post. Each student is responsible for submitting fifteen posts on separate daily reading assignments, before 9:30 a.m. on the day of the assignment. You may choose which days to generate questions, but fifteen are required during the term. I will try to respond to many of these posts in class, or may use them as prompts for small-group discussions.

Writing Assignments:
There are four short essays required. Each essay should be 1500 - 2000 words (four to six pages double spaced) and should take the form of an interpretation and analysis of one or more of the critical articles we have read for that unit. You may submit the assignments on Canvas, or on paper in class. I will post suggested topics later in the term. Your essay might refute the interpretation of the work, or simply analyze the critical tools, schools or approaches that author is using in the article. For the fourth essay, I may ask you to find your own article, using the Knight library databases.

Accessibility:
Please notify me at the beginning of the term if this course will create disability-related barriers to your participation, and if you have a documented disability and an accessibility plan designed through the Accessible Education Center. If you need assistance contact the center in 164 Oregon Hall for a consultation: aec.uoregon.edu

Retaining Copies of Coursework:
Please retain copies of the papers, quizzes, and exams you have completed after they are graded and returned to you. If a question arises concerning the points earned on an assignment, it is your responsibility to provide these copies as documentation.

Deadlines, Extensions, Incompletes:
Papers and other assignments are due on or before the dates specified in this syllabus. Extensions or incompletes will be given only in the event of documented emergencies. You must notify me as soon as possible if you have an emergency that prevents completing an assignment on time.

Electronic Equipment:
Please turn off your cellphones when you enter the classroom. Reading assignments in pdf form should not be read on a smartphone, but you may consult copies on a laptop or tablet. I encourage note-taking, and it is difficult to take notes on the same device where you are reading the course assignments.

Academic Dishonesty: All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources. See also the Academic Misconduct on the website of the Office of the Dean of Students at http://dos.uoregon.edu/academic-misconduct

Grades:
15% for the reading questions, 1 point each
60% for the four essays, 15 points each
10% for the midterm
15% for the final

**Schedule of class meetings and reading assignments:**

**April 3**  
Introduction and reading of “Ode on a Grecian Urn”

**April 5**  
“Grecian Urn” Criticism  
Keesey: General Introduction 1-8; Kent 112-115; Brann 244-248

**April 7**  
New Criticism and Formalism  
Keesey: Chapter 2 intro 75-83; Hirsch 17-28; Ellis 92-97

**April 10**  
“Grecian Urn” criticism continued  
Keesey: Wilson 172-184; Garson 452-461

**April 12**  
“Yellow Wallpaper” (Keesey Appendix C, 531-538)  
Keesey: Shoemaker 121-127

**April 14**  
“Yellow Wallpaper” and feminism  
Keesey: Knight 66-73; Gilbert and Gubar 259-263; Kennard 327-339

**April 17**  
“Yellow Wallpaper” criticism continued  
Keesey: Kolodny 194-204; Chapter 4 intro. 205-214

**April 19**  
“Yellow Wallpaper” eco-critical and feminist readings  
Donovan 224-234; Sipley (pdf)

**April 21**  
“Yellow Wallpaper” textual criticism and responses to feminism  
Keesey: Feldstein, 401-408; Dock 470-483  
**Essay #1**

**April 24**  
Interlude: Structuralism  
Keesey, Chapter 5 intro. 265-273 (stop halfway through); Frye 279-287; Culler 288-296

**April 26**  
*Benito Cereno* (first half; Keesey Appendix B, 489 - @509)

**April 28**  
remainder of *Benito Cereno* to p529  
Keesey: Kaplan 58-65

**May 1**  
*Benito Cereno* criticism  
Keesey: Swann 310-326; O’Connell 185-193

**May 3**  
*Benito Cereno* law and the archives  
Keesey: Thomas 461-469; Stuckey and Leslie (pdf)

**May 5**  
*Benito Cereno* criticism and psychoanalysis  
Wright 392-400; Paris 215-222
May 8  
Interlude: Deconstruction
Keesey: Chapter 6 intro. 341-352; Derrida 353-363 Essay #2

May 10  
Midterm Exam

May 12  
The Tempest Acts 1 and 2; Keesey: Frye 298-305

May 15  
The Tempest Acts 3, 4 and 5; Keesey: Paris 235-243

May 17  
The Tempest criticism
Orgel, “Prospero’s Wife” in Norton Tempest 201-215; Keesey: Barker and Hulme, 442-451

May 19  
The Tempest and Colonialism
Fuchs, “Conquering Islands: Contextualizing The Tempest” from Norton Critical Edition The Tempest 265-285 (pdf); Hulme on Lamming, from The Tempest and its Travels (pdf)

May 22  
Post-Colonial Theory and Criticism
Gordon Sayre, “The Beaver as Native and as Colonist”; George Lamming, “A Monster, a Child, a Slave” in Norton Tempest 248-268

May 24  
Interlude: Marxist and Cultural Studies criticism  
Essay #3
Keesey, Chapter 7 intro; Eagleton 419-426

May 26  
The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man Gates’ intro. and chapters 1-7

May 29  
Memorial Day

May 31  

June 2  
Ex-Coloured Man criticism: ethnic studies

June 5  
Ex-Coloured Man criticism: cultural studies

June 7  
Ex-Coloured Man criticism: a critical legal studies approach

June 9    review for final exam
June 12   Final Exam 10:15 am  Essay #4 due Thursday, June 15th