

1. Course overview

Content and scope: The purpose of this course is to increase the student's knowledge of the history and current status of dominant theories related to literary and cultural studies. The course emphasizes major contemporary trends, such as feminist and queer theory, postcolonial and critical race studies, psychoanalytic and Marxist theory, as well as the historical progression from new criticism to structuralism, deconstruction, new historicism, and various forms of poststructuralist literary and cultural studies. It is a required course for MA students in the Literature in English program.

Teaching: Seminar, two hours per week for ten weeks, 20 hours total. Attendance is obligatory in at least 8 out of 10 seminars.

Examination: Portfolio: The grade for the course is based upon a 7-page semester paper in combination with a 2-hour classroom exam. Students are given the opportunity to submit an optional draft of the paper for feedback before final submission.

2. Course objectives

I believe the learning outcomes adequately describe the knowledge that students should have acquired after finishing the course.

Learning outcomes:

After completing this course you:

- know key theoretical approaches and methodologies within critical studies of literature in English;
- know how literary and cultural studies have developed historically, particularly within the past century;
- understand how literary and cultural theory can be applied to texts of various kinds, preparing you for papers you will write for other courses as well as your MA thesis;
- are familiar with some of the central questions and debates that are essential to literary and cultural studies today.

3. Assessment

Grades, dropouts, complaints: 28 registered, 4 ikke møtt, 3 legeattest;
grade distribution: 5 A (24%), 9 B (43%), 5 C (24%), 2 D (10%), 0 E, 0 F

Appropriate content, level, prerequisites: yes

Student evaluations (mid-term): (26 responses out of 28 [93%])

Professor rating (1-5, 5=highest): avg.= 4.7

Course rating (1-5, 5=highest): avg.= 4.3

Student responses were generally very positive at the mid-point of the course, while also citing the difficulty of course content and the challenge of attempting to cover a wide range of theoretical fields in only 10 seminars. Some suggested adding more seminars and possibly requiring the course (or something similar) at the undergraduate level. The textbook by Robert Dale Parker was generally praised for its accessibility and effectiveness at explaining difficult theoretical concepts. The professor was praised for similar skills, along with his ability to be both demanding and friendly, knowledgeable and accessible, creating a safe space for discussion and engagement with students. One suggestion that a few students mentioned was to expand further upon the examples given in Parker's book that apply various theories to literary texts. Several comments indicated that the professor was one of the best

the students have ever had and that the course provided an essential introduction to theories and theorists that MA students need to know.

Student evaluations (end of course): (16 responses out of 28 invitations [57% response rate]; not very representative). While not enough students responded to allow for definitive conclusions, a few reflections might be useful based upon those who did respond. On the one hand, a few students indicated that the expectations for the course were not as clear as they could have been (particularly online before the course began) and that too much material was covered too fast, making the course very difficult. At the same time, though, a few students indicated that they only spent 0-5 hours per week on the course, including time spent in class. Also, on the other hand, several comments indicated very strong satisfaction with the teaching of the course, including: "Mike is a great teacher"; and "Probably one of the best courses I have ever taken at UiO. The teacher was immensely knowledgeable and approachable. I have learnt so much from this course, and would really like to see it being offered to undergraduate students as well."

4. Changes since the last periodic evaluation

This is the first time this course has been taught. The previous requirement for MA students was a 5-credit pass/fail course, ENG4310. With the new 10-credit format, ENG4301 now covers more theoretical approaches, while also adding primary readings from theorists representing various theoretical fields.

5. Suggestions for improvement

ENG4301 is a difficult course that is required for all MA students in Literature in English. The nature of the course is to introduce students to a wide range of theoretical fields, as well as the history of literary criticism, particularly in the twentieth century. It will thus always feel like there is not enough time, if only because the goal is to show students how much more they can and should explore on their own. But finding the right balance and pace for a course of this length is something with which future professors can experiment. It might be possible to add more emphasis on applying theories to literature, without taking too much time away from learning the theories themselves. Now that the course has been taught once, there will be an example of the examination available to students prior to the beginning of the course, which will address some concerns in that regard. Finally, as several students have suggested, increasing the amount of theory being taught at the undergraduate level would also be a good idea.