

**Humanities 6148**  
**Narrative: Theory and Interpretation**

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Fridays, Fall Term 2017, 11:30-2:30, MC 101A

**General Course Description:** Narrative Theory is one of the most interesting and dynamic areas of current research in the Humanities. Narrative is a fundamental human characteristic – perhaps as fundamental as language. This course investigates narrative theory and interpretation in literature, but also with some attention to narrative in history, philosophy, social science, and even in natural science. Topics may include rhetorical, ideological, and cognitive narratology, mimesis, the role of character in narrative, point of view, and plot grammars. Scholars whose work may be studied include Wayne Booth, Erich Auerbach, Kenneth Burke, Dorrit Cohn, Mieke Bal, Peter Rabinowitz, Monika Fludernik, and James Phelan.

**Specific Course Description:** This year the course will be organized around topics in *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts & Critical Debates*, including the mimetic, thematic, and synthetic components of narrative; in addition the course will examine the mimetic illusion, narrative positions and audiences, unnatural narratology, feminist narratology, and any other topics of narrative theory relevant to the reading list and of interest to the class. Topics could include characterization, style, point of view, plot grammars, ethical criticism, reader response, etc.

Students will be expected to keep up with the reading. The books will be read in the order listed on the Schedule of Readings, except that the secondary texts (Clark; Herman et al.) will be read gradually throughout the course.

Students will be required to write a review of some secondary source in narrative theory. Students will also be required to present a topic (different from the topic of the book review) on some aspect of narrative theory; class presentations will be strictly limited to twenty minutes. In addition, students will be required to write a final essay on some topic in narrative theory; these essays should be about twenty-five pages.

**Evaluation:**

One book review: 25%

One class presentation: 25%

One final essay: 50%

**Required Texts (all available at the bookstore):**

- Austen, Jane. 2012 [1816]. *Emma*. A Norton Critical Edition; fourth edition. New York: W. W. Norton
- Burgess, Anthony. 1986. *A Clockwork Orange*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Clark, Matthew. 2010. *Narrative Structures and the Language of the Self*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press.
- Dick, Philip K. 1992. *Confessions of a Crap Artist*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Eliot, George. 1985 [1861]. *Silas Marner*. London: Penguin Books.
- Ford, Madox Ford. 2002. *The Good Soldier*. London: Penguin Books.
- Herman, David, et al. *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts & Critical Debates*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press.
- Highsmith, Patricia. 1999. *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Nguyen, Viet Thanh. 2015. *The Sympathizer*. New York: Grove Press.
- Robbe-Grillet. *Two Novels: Jealousy and In the Labyrinth*. 1965 [1957; 1959];  
Translated from the French by Richard Howard. New York: Grove Press.
- Stein, Gertrude. *Three Lives*. 1990 [1909]. London: Penguin Classics.
- Walcott, Derek. *Omeros. Omeros*. 1992. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

**Important Dates 2017-2018**

Fall Term Starts Sept 7  
Thanksgiving Day, University Closed Oct 9  
Fall Reading Days Oct 26-29

Fall Classes End Dec 4

Fall Examinations Dec 6-21

Winter Term Starts Jan 4

Winter Reading Week Feb 17-23  
Family Day, University Closed Feb 19  
Good Friday, University Closed March 30  
Winter Classes End April 6

Winter Examinations April 9-23

Last Date to Add a Course without permission of instructor (Fall) Sept 20  
Last Date to Add a Course with permission of instructor (Fall) Oct 4  
Drop Deadline (Fall Term) Nov 10  
Drop Deadline (Year) Feb 9  
Course Withdrawal Period (Fall Term) Nov 11-Dec 4  
Course Withdrawal Period (Year) (Feb 10-April 6)

## Schedule of Readings:

Sept 8: Introduction

Sept 15: Eliot, George. *Silas Marner*.

Herman, David. *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts & Critical Debates*. Chapters 1 and 2.

Sept 22: Burgess, Anthony. *A Clockwork Orange*.

Herman, David. *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts & Critical Debates*. Chapters 3 and 4.

Sept 29: Ford, Madox Ford. *The Good Soldier*.

Herman, David. *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts & Critical Debates*. Chapters 5 and 6.

Oct 6: Stein, Gertrude. *Three Lives*.

Herman, David. *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts & Critical Debates*, Chapter 7 and Responses.

Oct 13: Highsmith, Patricia. *The Talented Mr. Ripley*.

Oct 20: Robbe-Grillet. *Jealousy and In the Labyrinth*.

Oct 27 Reading Days

Nov 3: Clark, Matthew. *Narrative Structures and the Language of the Self*.

Nov 10: Dick, Philip K. *Confessions of a Crap Artist*.

Nov 17: Nguyen, Viet Thanh. *The Sympathizer*.

Nov 24: Austen, Jane. *Emma*.

Dec 1: Walcott, Derek. *Omeros*.