

## Department of English &amp; Writing Studies

**English 2201G (001)**  
**Contemporary Theory and Criticism**  
Winter 2026

**Instructor:** Jonathan Boulter  
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**Office Hours:** Tuesday, Thursday, 2:30-3:30

**Prerequisites:** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Course Objectives**

Successful students who complete the course will be able to explain the various theoretical and rhetorical approaches to literature, with specific attention both to their concepts, their historical, cultural and intellectual contexts, and their application to different texts.

Develop further their ability to analyze texts critically, and formulate and produce essays which have an effective thesis with a clear, well-articulated intent, and a logical argument supported by adequate evidence from the text(s) under discussion.

**Course Materials**

Required Text: *[The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, Third Edition](#)*. Leitch, General Editor. (\$156.60)

**Methods of Evaluation**

**Test: February 26, 2026: 15%**

**Essay: March 19, 2026: 35%**

**Attendance/Participation: 15%**

**Final Exam: 35%**

**Extensions and Late Penalties**

Extensions will not be granted. Late essays will be penalized 2% per day including weekends. After seven days the essay will be given a grade of zero.

**General information about missed coursework**

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar [here](#).

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the [Registrar's webpage](#). **All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.**

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make **one** Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

- **The Final Exam. (By policy, Examinations scheduled during official examination always require documentation.)**

### **Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, [here](#).

### **Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Use of AI is strictly prohibited. If there is a suspicion that AI has been used, research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments will be requested. You are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, you may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

### **Plagiarism**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

### **Plagiarism Checking**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

### **Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays**

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

### **Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education**

**Academic Accommodation** is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program” ([Academic Policies](#)). Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western’s efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students” ([Accessible Education](#)).

### **Gender-based and sexual violence**

Western University is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

### **Support Services**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

January

- 6 Introduction
- 8 Introduction. Nietzsche "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" (752-762)
- 13 Nietzsche
- 15 Freud "The Uncanny" (799-816); "Mourning and Melancholia" (OWL)
- 20 Freud
- 22 Freud. Saussure *Course in General Linguistics*. (820-840)
- 27 Saussure
- 29 Heidegger "Language" (912-927)

February

- 3 Heidegger
- 5 Lacan. "The Mirror Stage" (1105-1117)
- 10 Lacan
- 12 Levi-Strauss. *Tristes Tropiques*. (1222-1233)
- 24 Levi-Strauss
- 26 **Test**

March

- 3 Barthes. "The Death of the Author" (1268-1272); Deleuze and Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus. Introduction: Rhizome* (1374-1382)
- 5 Deleuze and Guattari
- 10 Foucault. "What is an Author?"
- 12 Derrida. *Dissemination* (1609-1636); Plato, *Phaedrus* (89-95)
- 17 Derrida
- 19 Derrida (**Essay Due**)
- 24 Braidotti. *The Posthuman* (2329-2352)
- 26 Haraway. *A Manifesto for Cyborgs* (2040-2065)
- 31 Haraway

April

- 2 Bennett *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (2431-2450)
- 7 Bennett
- 9 Review