

**University of Puerto Rico
Rio Piedras Campus
College of Humanities
English Department**

English 3291: Writing About Literature I
Professor: Nemesio Gil, Ph.D.
Credit Hours: 45 hours/3 credits

Time: Mon./Wed. 2:30 p.m.- 3:50 p.m.
Email: nemesio.gil@upr.edu
Office Hrs.: By appointment

Catalogue course description: Introduction to literary analysis, critical theory and critical writing. Students will write a series of critical essays [or perform a series of writing exercises]. This course will also prepare you to do research using Internet sources and the library in order to write an effective literary paper [or prepare for a theoretical thought final exam].

Objectives: At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Identify meaning, social, and historical pertinence of both written and visual texts as works of literary significance.
2. Deepen knowledge of literary theory and criticism as applied to a variety of written and visual texts.
3. Develop concise, precise, and direct analytical writing skills in short, practical, and on-site weekly or biweekly theoretical written exercises.
4. Engage in active oral argumentation and critique of a selection of representative visual texts (works of film/TV) as adaptations of written texts (scripts).
5. Establish an organic connection between a corpus of theoretical frameworks (e.g., Marxism, postcolonialism, feminism, etc.) and visual texts (film/TV works), as contemporary fusion for academic debate.

Textbooks: *The Norton of Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 2010)
The Prentice Hall Pocket Guide to Writing About Literature (Prentice Hall, 2002)
Film Theory and Criticism (Oxford UP, 2004)

Methods of Evaluation Table

DAILY READINGS AND DISCUSSION	40 pts.
WRITING EXERCISES	40 pts.
FINAL EXAM	20 pts.
TOTAL FINAL GRADE POINTS:	100 pts.

Grading System: A, B, C, D, F.

Methods of Evaluation Summary

DAILY CLASS PARTICIPATION (READINGS AND DISCUSSION) (40 pts.)

Please be ready to discuss your homework readings, individual research, and participate in active discussion **every day**. This is not a lecture hall course. It is imperative students verbalize their analysis of texts and share their findings with their classmates. The professor keeps a table with check marks every time a student participates in daily class debates and discussions, as proof of a student's active involvement in the course.

WRITING CLASSWORK (40 pts.)

All writing exercises (8 in total) will be performed LIVE in the English lab. to ensure the development of your critical and organization skills. Students will have the opportunity to re-write your classwork following the professor's corrections. Afterwards, they will hand in both copies of the written work on the following week.

FINAL EXAM (20 pts.)

A final exam comprehending ALL theories studied during the semester will conclude the course. Details and procedure in class.

*Students that have 0 absences during the whole semester will receive **an additional 5 pts.** in the **TOTAL FINAL GRADE. This means staying in class during its regular time length. Early deserters or regular latecomers are not included!**

Rules of the Game

The syllabus is a contract between professor and students. The following rules are firm and emphatic in order to safeguard daily responsible and hardworking attitude.

1. **ABSOLUTELY NO** electronic devices (cellular, laptop, tablet, etc.) will be allowed during class. They must be **TURNED OFF** and at eyesight your desk **AT ALL TIMES**. **A deduction of 10 pts.** off your **TOTAL FINAL GRADE POINTS** will apply each time you are caught sending messages. Do not take it to the restroom to answer calls, send texts or do business, please.
2. **BE ON TIME.** Tardies have a **deduction of 5 pts.** off your **TOTAL FINAL GRADE POINTS**. Putting your backpack in the classroom early, leaving for the restroom, and coming back 15 minutes later will be marked as LATE. Waiting for the professor to call the roll, leaving for the restroom, and coming back 15 minutes later will **ALSO** be marked as LATE.

NOTE: In case of taking a Chemistry laboratory or Science course during the semester, please be advised that arriving to English class 15, 20, 25 minutes after the hour due to "laboratory exercises" nor leaving 15, 20, 25 minutes earlier to take "departamentales" is **NOT ALLOWED**. This course is not part of the Natural Sciences academic curriculum! Make the arrangements to be on time and leave at the end of the course. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

3. **NO MAKE-UP CLASSWORK ("NO REPOSICIONES").** The schedule requires for students to sit in front of the computer and do a 20-minute writing exercise, print in class, and hand in. The following week, the student will make corrections and hand in the last copy of her work. Therefore, you must be in class the assigned days of exercises, as it will not be repeated afterwards. Make the arrangements to be there.

4. An “A” is “sobresaliente”. Students who obtain this final grade have worked with as much effort as *possible* in order to shine above the rest. Please, be advised you cannot just “breeze” through a course that requires attention to reading, critical analysis, and oral debate. Be ready to excel!

5. **RESPECT** your classmates and the university’s personnel and property. Purposeful inappropriate language, sexism, racism, bullying, etc. will not be allowed in class. Each student has the opportunity of voicing his or her opinion, again, with respect and academic purpose.

6. An alternative study modality of 11.25 hours may be employed during the semester and completed online in case any unexpected situation might affect the semester’s schedule (i.e. university strikes or electrical power failure, weather, etc.), EXCEPT for in-class writing exercises or exams which are to be taken **in person as described above**.

7. **PLAGIARISM** (taking others’ information or work or ideas and presenting them as your own) is a dishonest practice. Always give credit to sources’ authors. **INTEGRITY** is the ingredient of a fruitful life.

COURSE SCHEDULE
(subject to change depending on semester’s needs)

Cross out weeks as semester develops

WEEK 1

1. Class introduction and syllabus
2. Theory: “Psychoanalysis” (pp. 15-17, Norton)

WEEK 2 (NO CLASS ON MON. JAN. 21, 2019: HOLIDAY)

1. “Introduction” to Theory and Criticism (pp. 1-7, Norton)

WEEK 3

1. Jean Paul Sartre’s “What is Literature? Why Write?” (pp. 1199-1209, Norton)
2. Professor’s live readings from a selection of short stories and/or poems
3. Writing exercise #1 on theory and criticism

WEEK 4 (NO CLASS WED. FEB 6, 2019: ASSEMBLY-UPR)

4. Edward A. Shannon’s *Writing About Literature* (Overview)

WEEK 5

5. Theory: Roland Barthes’ “The Death of the Author” (pp. 1322-1331, Norton)
6. Writing exercise #2 on Barthes

WEEK 6 (NO CLASS ON MON. FEB. 18, 2019: HOLIDAY)

7. Short Story: “The Lottery” (PDF)
8. Writing exercise #3 on “Marxism” (pp. 13-15, Norton) and short story selection

WEEK 7

9. Theory: “Marxism” (pp. 13-15, Norton)
10. Theory: “Postcolonial Studies and Race and Ethnicity Studies” (pp. 27-29, Norton)

WEEK 8

11. Edward Said's biography (PDF)
12. Theory: Edward Said's Introduction to "Orientalism" Part 1 (pp. 1-15, Googlebooks)

WEEK 9

13. Poem: "African and Creole Slave Contrasted" (PDF)
14. Writing exercise #5 on postcolonialism, Said, and poem selection

WEEK 10

15. Theory: "New Historicisms" (pp. 29-30, Norton)
16. Lecture: "Sacred Texts as Historical literature"
17. Reading discussion: "2 Kings, Chapter 11" (Weblink)

WEEK 11

18. *Game of Thrones* (Cersei Clips on Youtube)
19. Written exercise #6 on Athaliah and Cersei

WEEK 12

20. "Feminism Summary" (pp. 24-26, Norton)
21. Susan Bordo: "Body-as-Text" (pp. 2240-2247, Norton)

WEEK 13

22. Susan Bordo: *Unbearable Weight* (pp. 165-177, PDF file)
23. Excerpt: Claude McKay's *Banana Bottom*
24. Writing Exercise #6 on "Feminism"

WEEK 14

25. Yann Roblou: "Complex Masculinities: The Superhero in Modern American Movies" (PDF file)

WEEK 15

26. Writing Exercise #7 on "Masculinities"
27. Clips from: *The Avengers*, *Hulk*, *Aliens*, *Bridesmaids*, etc.

WEEK 16

28. Final Written Exam on Theory Review: Part 1
29. Final Written Exam on Theory Review: Part 2

WEEK 17

30. FINAL WRITTEN EXAM ON THEORY

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!