

**ENGL 6320**  
**Advanced Critical Theory**  
**Spring 2015**  
**CRN 26381**

Instructor: Dr. Kate Mangelsdorf  
Office: Huds 315 Phone: 747-5543  
Email (preferred): [kmangels@utep.edu](mailto:kmangels@utep.edu)  
Office hours: T & W 1:00-3:00; Th 11:00-1:00; and by appt.

*Critical theory is a social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing society as a whole* – Max Horkheimer

**Required Textbooks:**

Grenfell, Michael (Ed.). *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Acumen, 2008.

Mills, Sara. *Michel Foucault*. Routledge, 2003.

Pennycook, Alastair. *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*. Routledge, 2007.

Villanueva, Victor Jr. *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*. NCTE, 1993.

**Course Objectives**

This course focuses on some of the critical theory that has informed Rhetoric and Writing Studies since the 1980s. This critical theory, which originates from disciplines such as anthropology, legal studies, philosophy, literature, gender studies, and sociolinguistics, is the underlying basis of much of our current work in the field. As a result, many of the texts that we'll be reading won't be particularly recent—but they are part of the common knowledge of the field, the theoretical assumptions that most people understand. Many of these texts also offer us analytical tools to investigate other topics. This isn't to say that some of this theory hasn't been critiqued, or that critical theory in and of itself hasn't been critiqued. In general, however, even scholars who work against some part of critical theory bring their knowledge of critical theory to their projects.

Some key concepts that this class will cover:

Hegemony, ideology, organic intellectual, capital, habitus, symbolic violence, doxa, discourse, discursive processes, discipline, regime, governmentality, episteme, orientalism, mimicry, hybridity, subaltern, racial formations, microaggressions, performativity, language flows, and much much more . . .

In your final project for the course, you will be able to draw on current scholarship to explore a topic that interests you and that will contribute to your success in the program and your future career.

Finally, you will have three opportunities throughout the semester to respond to questions that are very similar to those on the qualifying exam for this program. This practice will help you prepare for the exam, as well as consolidate some of the ideas in this course.

To summarize, the course objectives are

- To focus on key theoretical concepts informing RWS
- To strengthen your analytical skills, both in discussions and in writing
- To produce a substantial final project focusing on a topic relevant to critical theory
- To practice for the qualifying exam by responding in writing to practice exam questions.

### **Course Policies**

- This is a course with an intensive and challenging reading list. You are expected to complete all reading assignments and be prepared to discuss key ideas in class.
- Attendance is critical. Come to class prepared and ready to discuss. If possible, bring your laptop or tablet. If you miss more than two classes you should not expect to receive an A..
- Late papers (including qualifying exam practices) will be accepted without penalty only if you arrange with me (at least a day ahead of time) an alternative due date. Otherwise late papers will be penalized with a lower grade.
- Any instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Student's office.

### **Class Discussions**

It is important in our discussions that we keep in mind that each of us has a different positionality that will affect the way that we perceive these readings. In our discussions, we need to maintain an openness to other people's ideas. At the same time, meaningful, extended, and even heated debate is important. Basically, respect boundaries and listen carefully. Also, avoid dominating a discussion or sitting back and not saying anything. We want to hear what everyone has to say.

### **Course Assignments**

**Blackboard postings.** There will be two Blackboard discussion postings in preparation for the readings each class day. The first posting will consist of a close analysis of a passage from one part of the reading assignment (about a paragraph). The second post will consist of a response to one or more of your classmates' postings. (You're welcome to respond more if you wish.) These responses can be shorter and more freewheeling than the initial close analyses. We will refer to these in our class discussions.

To ensure that you don't wait until the last minute to do these postings, they will be due at specific times before class.

Here are the due dates:

Class date	Deadline for 1 <sup>st</sup> post (analysis)	Deadline for 2 <sup>nd</sup> post (response)
Jan. 27	Fri Jan 23, midnight	Mon Jan 26, midnight
Feb 3	Fri Jan 30	Mon Feb 2
Feb 17	Fri Feb 13	Mon Feb 16
Feb 24	Fri Feb 20	Mon Feb 23
Mar 17	Fri Mar 13	Mon Mar 16
Mar 24	Fri Mar 20	Mon Mar 23
Apr 7	Fri Apr 3	Mon Apr 6
Apr 14	Fri Apr 10	Mon Apr 13
Apr 21	Fri Apr 17	Mon Apr 20
Apr 28	Fri Apr 24	Mon Apr 27

**Facilitation of Class Discussions.** Twice during the semester you and a partner will facilitate the discussion of the class readings. Focus the activity with a handout that lists key terms from that day's readings. *This is not a teaching demonstration; it's a discussion.* Only after you're confident that the class understands the key terms and the major concepts of the readings should you open up the discussion to related views and perspectives. Since this is a theory course, avoid making connections to the teaching of writing until the theory has been thoroughly analyzed. Do not be alarmed if I jump in during your facilitation and steer the discussion for a bit.

**Qualifying Exam Practice.** Three times during the semester you and the class will write questions similar to those that appear on the qualifying exam; you will select one of these questions and respond to it in 5-6 pages as if you were taking the qualifying exam. We will discuss your responses in class, and you'll get my feedback as well.

**Final Project.** This is your opportunity to explore in depth one topic or issue discussed during the course. The form/genre of this project will be individualized.

**Points:**

Blackboard postings	20 pts.
Class facilitations	10 pts.
Class discussions	5 pts.
Qualifying exam practices	30 pts.
Final project	35 pts.
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100 pts.</b>