

HUM 3805-0001: CRITICAL THEORY IN THE HUMANITIES

T&TH: 10:30-11:45PM

Location: HEC 0118

Spring 2022

Instructor: Christian Ravela

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Zoom Link: <https://ucf.zoom.us/j/96224145775?pwd=QXJwZm56OUVWQlZjVG11NDFxRkZYdz09>

Virtual Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00-12:00pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides a general introduction to Critical Theory. As a term, Critical Theory narrowly designates a philosophical tradition formed out of Western European Marxism, which is more often called the Frankfurt School. However, this course approaches Critical Theory more broadly from a Cultural Studies tradition, surveying a suite of theoretical traditions that are now understood to be in line with the project of Critical Theory. These formations will include: Marxist Cultural Theory, Psychoanalysis, Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Critical Race Theory, and Feminist Criticism. As such, the course pursues three broad aims:

- It will situate and outline the general project of Critical Theory in the Humanities
- It will frame these various non-Marxist theoretical traditions in terms of the general project of Critical Theory
- It will draw from these various theoretical traditions interpretive methods for social and cultural analysis.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Understand the general project of Critical Theory as it relates to the intellectual tradition of Cultural Studies
- Understand main theoretical concepts from each tradition of Critical Theory
- Understand how different theoretical traditions align with the project of Critical Theory
- Apply different interpretive methods from each tradition of Critical Theory
- Evaluate the affordances and limits of the different traditions of Critical Theory

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIAL:

- Course Reading (online)
- Maurice Sendack's *Where The Wild Things Are* (online)
- Margret & H.A. Rey's *Curious George* (online)
- *The Monster at the End of the Book* (online)
- *Rumpelstiltskin* (online)
- Disney's *Tarzan* (in-class)

REQUIRED WORK & GRADING

University Required Work – (0%)

- **Syllabus Quiz:** In order to make sure that financial aid is distributed in a timely manner, UCF requires documentation of student engagement in the first week of class. This syllabus quiz serves as that documentation. This quiz will not be graded instead you will just need to complete the quiz on time to receive credit.

Participation – (15%)

Participation consists of several factors:

- **Engagement:** At the most basic level, you should be present in class in order to participate. Not being present means that you cannot engage with the texts, lectures, discussions, group activities, free-writes, and workshops. But showing up every day is certainly not enough; you must be contributing to the overall productive dynamic of the classroom. What this means then is:
 - When we have group work days, I will be observing and walking around to see how your general involvement with that activity is while you are working, and what contributions you make in the ensuing discussion or group presentation.
 - When we have class discussions, you actively engage in the ensuing discussion. This means that you bring up topics to discuss, attentively listen to others, and thoughtfully respond to other people's comments.
- **In-class Free-Write:** When we have free-writes, you use the allotted time to thoroughly engage with the writing prompt whether it asks you to jot initial impressions of a text or develop a discussion question for the class. Afterwards, I expect you to share your insights to begin a class discussion.
- **Homework:** Occasionally in the semester, I will assign you homework. This is done in service of prompting or enabling class discussion. These homework assignments can range from a free-write to finding a cultural object to discuss. Completion of the homework is all that is need to receive full credit.

Student Group Course Leadership – (10%)

Students will sign up for a group to lead seminar. These class periods will mainly focus on prompting and guiding class discussion on cultural objects in relation to a tradition of Critical Theory. This entails a brief summary of the key points of the tradition, identification of particular concepts, and a series of questions about the cultural object (three to four) as well as the identification of parts/sections/aspects of cultural objects that are of interest.

Written portion: On the day of the seminar, groups must submit a short summary of key points of the tradition, short discussion of key themes/concepts addressed in the tradition, and a list of questions for the class. This will ensure preparedness.

In-Class Midterm Exam – (10%)

This midterm will be held in-class and cover course material from the first half of the class. The midterm will most likely be composed of multiple choice questions, identifications, short answer responses, and longer in-class essays. You will be given a study guide for preparation.

In-Class Cumulative Final Exam – (15%)

This final will be held in-class during our finals schedule and cover course material from the entire semester. Like the midterm, the final will most likely be composed of multiple choice questions, identifications, short answer responses, and longer in-class essays. You will be given a study guide for preparation.

Short Essay on Critical Theory in the Humanities – (10%)

You are asked to write a brief essay that traces the debate over the determinative role of ideology and culture from Marx's and Engel's critique of Feurbach to Marxist Humanists' critique of orthodox Marxism to Stuart Hall's critique of Marxist Humanism.

Short Analysis Essay – (15%)

For this short analysis essays, you will need to analyze a cultural object of your choice using the interpretive method of a tradition of Critical Theory. These essays must be, at minimum, 700 words and you ought to use the cultural objects discussed in class. (You may use other cultural objects for your analysis; however, it must be approved by me). You will have an opportunity to complete this analysis essays after each unit.

Comparing Critical Theory as Critical Interpretive Practices Essay – (25%)

For the final essay, you will need to write an essay that compares and evaluates the affordances and limits of two different traditions of Critical Theory as they shape critical interpretive practice. This must done by not only comparing and contrasting them theoretically via citation of primary texts but more importantly through a comparative analysis of a single cultural object. In other words, you will need to demonstrate the merits and limitation of specific traditions of Critical Theory by showing how they bear out in analysis. Thus, you are demonstrating how certain traditions illuminates some aspects over other in a cultural object or shuttles in a set of interpretive assumptions in the analysis. For instance, how does (Freudian and/or Lacanian) psychoanalysis and feminist theory compare in their treatment of gender? What kind of gender analytic and interpretive assumptions do psychoanalysis provide? What kind of gender analytic and interpretive assumptions do feminist theory provide? What are the merits and limitations of these gender analytics and interpretive assumptions?

You may use your short analysis essays as the starting point for the longer essay and you may use the cultural objects discussed in class. At minimum, the essay must be 1750.

In preparation for the essay, you will need to submit an initial draft for peer review. The peer review will be guided and will require you to write a letter to your peer about their draft. This letter will be both submitted to me on webcourses and emailed directly to your peer. You must complete this task for me to accept the essay.

GRADING SCALE

A	100-90%	C	76-70%
B+	89-87%	D+	69-67%
B	86-80%	D	66-60%
C+	79-77%	F	59-0%

* This grading scale does not apply if I round up your grade. In this circumstance, you will receive a minus grade rather than a non-minus grade. For example, if you receive a final grade of 79.6%, then, after rounding up the grade to 80%, you will be assigned a B- rather than a B.

ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

Paper Format:

All submitted papers must be written in a .docx or .pdf format. The body of the papers must be double-spaced and in Times New Roman, Size 12 font. Place your name, my name, the date, and the assignment type (e.g. short analysis essay) in the upper right-hand corner of the first page (single spaced, please).

Late Work Policy:

All late assignments will be docked a full letter grade for every day it is late. Furthermore, after the fifth day (including weekends) that an assignment is late, I will no longer accept it. Also, all late assignments will not be given any feedback. However, you may come to my office hours for feedback.

Revision Policy:

For this class, you are given the option to revise your short papers (e.g. Short Analysis Paper). These revised papers may be submitted to me at any time until the final day of instruction (04/25). If you do not submit a revised short paper(s) at that point, you forfeit your right to do so.

In order to submit a revised paper, you will also need to perform two other tasks on top of revisions. First, your revised draft must highlight all parts of the paper that have been changed from the previous one. You will also need to include the unrevised paper as well. Second, and most important, you will also need to draft a letter addressed to me that both identifies the revisions that you have made and explains how these revisions redresses the issues that I raise in my comments to your original paper. Without accomplishing these other tasks, I will not accept any revised submissions.

Academic Integrity:

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at <https://scai.sdes.ucf.edu/student-rules-of-conduct/>. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in

- Unauthorized assistance: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise unless specifically authorized by the instructor of record. The unauthorized possession of examination or course-related material also constitutes cheating.
- Communication to another through written, visual, electronic, or oral means: The presentation of material which has not been studied or learned, but rather was obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment, or project.
- Commercial Use of Academic Material: Selling of course material to another person, student, and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the university and the instructor. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, Instructor's PowerPoints, course syllabi, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, handouts, etc.
- Falsifying or misrepresenting the student's own academic work.
- Plagiarism: Using or appropriating another's work without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.
- Multiple Submissions: Submitting the same academic work for credit more than once without the express written permission of the instructor.
- Helping another violate academic behavior standards.
- Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements.

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule* <<https://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>>. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the

University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a “Z” designation on one’s transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let’s avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Turnitin:

In this course we will utilize turnitin.com, an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit all assignments in electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as an instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author’s work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process, visit www.turnitin.com.

COURSE POLICIES

Communication:

In this class, our official mode of communication is through email. All communication between student and instructor and between student and student should be respectful and professional. At minimum, this means that you need some sort of salutation with my name (e.g. Dear Dr. Ravela) and a valediction with your name (e.g. Sincerely, Dr. Ravela). As of 2009, Knightsmail is the only official student email at UCF. Class rosters list Knightsmail addresses rather than external email addresses, and all official class communications will be sent only to the Knightsmail addresses. Students are responsible for checking their Knightsmail accounts regularly

Email:

I check my email only once a day and I do not check my email on the weekend. Thus, depending on when you email me, I may take up to two to four days to respond. If you have a question that needs to be addressed immediately, I recommend that you speak to me during office hours or right before or after class.

Being Prepared for Class:

You need to have the assigned readings done before class so that you are prepared to participate in discussions and activities. Also, you need to bring your textbook and other assigned readings to class with you every day.

Punctuality and Attendance:

I do believe attendance and punctuality is essential to your success in the course, especially in processing the information from each chapter. Hence, I do take attendance every day, which will indirectly impact your engagement score in your participation grade for the class. Along the same lines, punctuality will be equally important to your success. I understand that arriving on time can be difficult with such a large campus and short break in-between each session. Therefore, I provide a 15 minute grace period after the class has begun. However, if you arrive after this grace period, you will be marked late.

Due to the current state of the COVID pandemic, I do not want this punctuality and attendance policy to

encourage you to attend class when you are not feeling well. Thus, if you are not feeling well, you simply need to inform me (even without documentation) and I will excuse your absence. You must send this email the day before, the day of, or the day after your absence. If you do not send it within these parameters, I will not excuse your absence.

Panopto:

Due to the current state of the COVID pandemic, I will be recording/livestreaming class for the entire month of January so that students can keep up in class if they are unable to attend. According to current projections, our current Omicron wave should subside by then. If conditions do not abate, I will continue to recording/livestreaming class. I will make an announcement if and when I stop recording/livestreaming class.

Classroom Culture:

I want all of you to feel welcomed *and* challenged in this class – by me and by each other. This necessitates that you enter the classroom with an understanding that all of us bring something different to discussion (backgrounds, viewpoints, experiences and identities) and that those “somethings” can potentially rub other people the wrong way. While I encourage academic debate, it can only occur productively in an environment that not only puts respect for all viewpoints first and foremost rather than relying on rudeness or antagonism. We are here to learn from each other. As I have iterated elsewhere in this syllabus, open communication will be an important part of this class and if at any time you feel uncomfortable, I encourage you to speak to me about it so that the issue can be addressed appropriately.

COVID POLICIES

General Statement on COVID

I recognize and understand the difficult times we are all in. The COVID-19 pandemic impacts us all in many ways, including physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, academically, and professionally. I will work with you on challenges you may be encountering and to provide support to help you succeed. However, please keep in mind that I will hold you accountable, especially in terms of class attendance, participation, and contributions.

University-Wide Face Covering Policy for Common Spaces and Face-to-Face Classes

UCF expects that all members of our campus community who are able to do so get vaccinated, and we expect all members of our campus community to wear masks indoors, [in line with the latest CDC guidelines](#). Masks are required in approved clinical or health care settings.

Notifications in Case of Changes to Course Modality

Depending on the course of the pandemic during the semester, the university may make changes to the way classes are offered. If that happens, please look for announcements or messages in Webcourses@UCF or Knights email about changes specific to this course.

COVID-19 and Illness Notification

Students who believe they may have a COVID-19 diagnosis should contact UCF Student Health Services (407-823-2509) so proper contact tracing procedures can take place.

Students should not come to campus if they are ill, are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID, or if anyone living in their residence has tested positive or is sick with COVID-19 symptoms. CDC guidance for COVID-19 symptoms is located here:

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)

Students should contact their instructor(s) as soon as possible if they miss class for any illness reason to discuss reasonable adjustments that might need to be made. When possible, students should contact their instructor(s) before missing class.

In Case of Faculty Illness

If the instructor falls ill during the semester, there may be changes to this course, including having a backup instructor take over the course. Please look for announcements or mail in Webcourses@UCF or Knights email for any alterations to this course.

Course Accessibility and Disability COVID-19 Supplemental Statement

Accommodations may need to be added or adjusted should this course shift from an on-campus to a remote format. Students with disabilities should speak with their instructor and should contact sas@ucf.edu to discuss specific accommodations for this or other courses.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accessibility Accommodations, Ferrell Commons 185, 407-823-2371, sas@ucf.edu

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) <<http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/>> For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Make-Up Assignments for Authorized University Events or Co-curricular Activities

Students who represent the university in an authorized event or activity (for example, student-athletes) and who are unable to meet a course deadline due to a conflict with that event must provide the instructor with documentation in advance to arrange a make-up. No penalty will be applied. For more information, see the UCF policy at <<http://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4401.2MakeUpAssignmentsorAuthUnivEven>

Deployed Active Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Religious Observances

Students must notify their instructor in advance if they intend to miss class for a religious observance. For more information, see the UCF policy at <<http://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/docu>

RESOURCES

University Writing Center, Colbourn Hall 105, 407-823-2197

The University Writing Center (UWC) offers writing support to students from first-year to graduate in every discipline. Tutors provide help at every stage of the writing process, including understanding assignments, researching, drafting, revising, incorporating sources, and learning to proofread and edit. The UWC's purpose is not merely to fix or edit papers, but to teach writing strategies that can be applied to any writing situation. Consultations are available for individuals and small groups. You may schedule a 45-minute appointment by clicking the *Success Resources* tab on Webcourses, calling the UWC at 407-823-2197, or through <http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/>.

The UWC seeks graduate and undergraduate tutors from all majors. To learn more about becoming a writing tutor, please contact us.

Student Academic Resource Center, Howard Phillips Hall 113, 407-823-5130

Our mission is to strengthen comprehensive learning, enhance retention, and promote student success by providing academic support services to University of Central Florida (UCF) students.

We offer free programs and services to UCF students such as peer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI), workshops and seminars, learning skills consultations, and first-year transition programs. Many of our services are offered across campus, and peer tutoring is conveniently located at three facilities, including Howard Phillips Hall, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, and the Veterans Academic Resource Center. Our services are delivered in a variety of formats, including peer-led group tutoring and study sessions, workshops, and individual consultations. Additionally, SARC Online is available on demand to offer a variety of tools, resources, and materials designed to help students be successful, whether they are taking online classes or simply seeking online academic support.

Additionally, SARC is proud to be part of the Knights Academic Resource Services (KARS) coalition. KARS provides a virtual one-stop shop to connect students with up-to-date information about resources and helpful academic services available at the University of Central Florida.

CALENDAR

This calendar is subject to revisions, additions, and removal at my discretion

Date	Reading & Work Due
Tuesday – 01/11	Introductions & Syllabus
Unit 1 - Critical Theory in the Humanities: From Ideology to Culture	
Thursday – 01/13	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selection from <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> “Critical Theory” Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical Theory• On Analysis• On Theory and Practice• Basic Primer on Marxism
Tuesday – 01/18	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selection from Marx’s <i>The German Ideology</i>
Thursday – 01/20	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stuart Hall - “Culturalism”
Tuesday – 01/25	Complete Discussion
Cultural Archive	
Thursday – 01/27	Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disney’s <i>Tarzan</i> Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maurice Sendack’s <i>Where the Wild Things Are</i>• H.A. Rey’s <i>Curious George</i>• <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i>• <i>The Monster at the End of this Book</i>
Unit 2 - Structuralism	
Tuesday – 02/01	Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disney’s <i>Tarzan</i>

	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ferdinand de Saussure – selection from <i>Course in General Linguistics</i> • Claude Lévi-Strauss – selection from “The Structural Study of Myth” • Lois Tyson – “Structuralist Criticism” • Catherine Belsey – “Criticism and Meaning” • Daniel Chandler – “Syntagmatic Analysis” • Daniel Chandler – “Paradigmatic Analysis”
Thursday – 02/03	Continue Discussion
Friday – 02/04	Submit: Short Essay on Critical Theory to Webcourses by 11:59pm
Tuesday – 02/08	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 02/10	Student Leadership #1: Structuralism
Unit 3 - Post-Structuralism/Deconstruction	
Tuesday – 02/15	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catherine Belsey – selection from <i>Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction</i> • Catherine Belsey – “Deconstructing the Text” • Lois Tyson – “Deconstructive Criticism”
Thursday – 02/17	Continue Discussion
Tuesday – 02/22	Student Leadership #2: Post-Structuralism/Deconstruction
Unit 4 - Psychoanalysis (Freudian and Lacanian)	
Thursday – 02/24	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lois Tyson - “Psychoanalytic Criticism” • selection from <i>Psychoanalysis: A Very Short Introduction</i> • https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/lacandvelop.html • https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/lacanstructure.html • https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/lacandesire.html • https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/lacangaze.html
Tuesday – 03/01	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 03/03	Continue Discussion
Tuesday – 03/08	Spring Break – No Class
Thursday – 03/10	Spring Break – No Class
Tuesday – 03/15	Student Leadership #3: Psychoanalysis
Thursday – 03/17	IN-CLASS MIDTERM
Unit 5 – Structural & Gramscian Marxism	
Tuesday – 03/22	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louis Althusser – selection from “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” • Catherine Belsey – “Addressing the Subject” • Stuart Hall – “Domination and Hegemony” • Lois Tyson – “Marxist Criticism”
Thursday – 03/24	Continue Discussion

Friday – 03/25	
Tuesday – 03/29	Student Leadership #4: Structural Marxism/Marxist Cultural Theory
Unit 6: Critical Race Theory	
Thursday – 03/31	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Omi and Howard Winant – selection from <i>Racial Formation in the United States</i> • <i>To Be Decided</i> • Lois Tyson – “Postcolonial and African American Criticism”
Tuesday – 04/05	Continue Discussion
Thursday – 04/07	Student Leadership #5: Critical Race Theory
Unit 7: Feminist Criticism	
Tuesday – 04/12	Read and Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick – selection from <i>Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire</i> • Judith Butler – selection from <i>Gender Trouble</i> • Lois Tyson – “Feminist Criticism” • Nancy Fraser – “Capitalism’s Crisis of Care”
Thursday – 04/14	NO IN-PERSON CLASS – Online Lecture will be provided
Tuesday – 04/19	Student Leadership #6: Feminist Criticism
Thursday – 04/21	Reflection on the Course
Finals Week	
Tuesday – 05/03	Submit Final Draft of Long Evaluative and Analytical Essay to Webcourses by 11:59pm Final Exam from 10:00am-12:50pm