

# LITERARY THEORY

Instructor: Chien-heng Wu

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to major theoretical approaches as well as key contemporary issues. The overall aim is to help student develop critical strategies for engaging with literary and cultural texts, paying to both literary and extra-literary dimensions of these texts. This course is organized around specific ideas and concepts that have shaped literary studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That is to say, instead of organizing the course either chronologically or into different “-isms,” this course engages with a set of related theoretical issues concerning the individual and the collective, the particular and the universal, power and resistance, difference and relationality, human and nonhuman, subject and object, etc. In general, we will work through these topics and see how they shatter the received knowledge and open up different ways of interpreting the world and the text. Rather than attempting to settle the debate among different theoretical paradigms, the aim is to help students understand core issues involved in the different permutations of a given topic. Throughout the course of our investigation, we will maintain a constant vigilance regarding the ethico-political implications of these important issues—asking not only speculative questions concerning its metaphysical underpinning but also political questions that will force us to negotiate a way between the speculative and the actual.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will gain a better grasp of contemporary cultural and critical theories.
2. Students will be able to think critically and creatively.
3. Students will demonstrate their ability to apply relevant theoretical perspectives to literary and cultural texts.

## GRADING

- Participation: 35%
- Presentation: 20%
- Midterm: 15%

- Final: 30%

\* Please apply for a free Office365 account at <http://learning.cc.nthu.edu.tw/p/412-1319-12292.php?Lang=zh-tw>. After registration, please download the application Teams. I will set up a forum for online discussion and communication.

## SCHEDULE

Week	Schedule
01	General Introduction
02	Jonathan Culler, <i>Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction</i>
03	Karl Marx, "The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" Karl Marx, <i>Capital Vol. 1</i> (Chap. 1 Part I, II, IV)
04	Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, <i>Multitude</i>
05	Frantz Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i>
06	Frantz Fanon, <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i>
07	Review Session
08	Mid-Term
09	Michel Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i>
10	Shoshana Zuboff, <i>The Age of Surveillance Capitalism</i>
11	Yuk Hui, <i>Recursivity and Contingency</i>
12	Catherine Malabou, <i>What Should We Do with Our Brain?</i>
13	Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" Michel Foucault, "What Is Critique?"
14	Covid-19: Theoretical Perspectives
15	Conclusion
16	Final