

CRITICAL THEORY

Dr. Robin Shochat Bagon

Spring semester

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Office Hours: by request

Short description:

Critical theory combines ideas and techniques from philosophy, sociology, political science and psychology in order to fashion a set of tools which allow us to read texts in a nuanced, sophisticated and sometimes surprising manner. These texts are not limited to traditional print-based language, but include almost everything including novels, films, adverts, fashion, dreams, bodies and nonhumans. This course introduces students to the major areas of modern theory including semiology, Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, queer theory, eco criticism, poststructuralism and posthumanism. Along the way, we address questions such as: How does language create meaning? What are we missing when we look at a table? Is God really dead? Why are people doomed to misery? What do drag queens tell us about the way we behave? What happens when we return the gaze of a cat?

Assessment:

Minor assignments:

Students are required to demonstrate active engagement with the readings on the Perusall platform (10%)

Midterm:

Short paper (1000 words) (30%)

Final requirement:

Final paper (2000 words) (60%)

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

Academic conduct:

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.

Additional requirements:

While use of laptops is permitted, phones must be kept in bags and use of email, social media etc. is deemed extremely disrespectful to the professor and students and is strictly forbidden.