**New York University**

**Fall 2016**

**COLIT-UA 200 Junior Theory Seminar: Theory of Narrative**

**Instructor: Mark Sanders**

**Class meets Mon. 11:00-1:45, 19 University Place, #100D**

**Office Hours Mon 2:00-3:00, 19 University Place, #314 (you must call the Comp Lit front desk at 212-998-8790 to make an appointment)**

**E-mail:** [**ms130@nyu.edu**](mailto:ms130@nyu.edu)

Have you wondered how a novel or short story guides you as a reader toward a particular interpretation? How is the meaning of a given work generated by the way in which the work is constructed? This is the central question posed by the theory of narrative. Addressing key narratological topics such as point of view, levels of narration, character and plot, and narrative time, we will read selected realist, modernist, and postmodernist works of growing narrative complexity from across the globe. With works by Balzac, Conrad, Robbe-Grillet, Coetzee, Davis, and Wallace as our primary texts, we will explore how the theory of narrative may usefully complement deconstructive, psychoanalytic, feminist, and postcolonial approaches to reading fictional (and non-fictional) narrative texts. We shall also explore issues of filmic narrative as arise in the adaptation of novels for the screen. Our theoretical works will include writings by Mieke Bal, Roland Barthes, Fredric Jameson, and others.

**Books and Readings**:

The following texts have been ordered at the NYU Bookstore:

Bal, Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative, 3rd Ed. (U of Toronto P)

Balzac, Père Goriot (Oxford)

Coetzee, In the Heart of the Country (Penguin)

Conrad, Lord Jim (Penguin)

Robbe-Grillet, Two Novels: Jealousy and In the Labyrinth (Grove)

Other readings will be made available through NYU Classes (indicated by “NYUC”).

**Grading**:

Midterm paper (5-7 pages) 30%

In-class presentation 20%

Final paper (8-10 pages) 40%

Class participation 10%

**No incompletes will be given in this class.**

**Attendance**:

You are expected to attend class every week, and to arrive on time. Excessive lapses in attendance and punctuality not explicitly excused by me will be penalized.

**Academic Honesty**:

All work submitted for this class must be your own. Proper acknowledgement in your written work, by means of in-text citation and a works cited, of all published and unpublished sources is required. Submitting somebody else’s work as your own or not properly acknowledging your sources may result in your failing the class as well as additional disciplinary measures by the University.

**Disability**:

If you have a documented disability and require an accommodation, please inform me immediately.

**Schedule**

Week 1

Mon., Sept. 12

Introduction

Week 2

Mon., Sept. 19

The Narrator & Other Basic Concepts

Reading:

Balzac, Père Goriot, pp. 1-82

Bal, Narratology, pp. 3-31, 206-208

Week 3

Mon., Sept. 26

Narrative or Description?

Reading:

Balzac, Père Goriot, pp. 83-206

Bal, Narratology, pp. 31-48

Week 4

Mon., Oct. 3

[Instructor away -- class to be rescheduled]

Week 5

Mon., Oct. 10

[Columbus Day/ Fall Recess – no class]

Week 6

Mon., Oct. 17

Applying Theory of Narrative I

Reading:

Balzac, Père Goriot, pp. 207-263

Prince, “A Narratological Approach: The Narrator in Le Père Goriot” (NYUC)

Due: Midterm paper

Week 7

Mon., Oct. 24

Levels of Narration & Focalization

Reading:

Conrad, Lord Jim, pp. 43-186 (Author’s Note & Chapters 1-18)

Bal, Narratology, pp. 48-64, 145-165

Week 8

Mon., Oct. 31

Narrative Time I

Reading:

Conrad, Lord Jim, pp. 187-291 (Chapters 19-35)

Bal, Narratology, pp. 75-118

Week 9

Mon., Nov. 7

Applying Theory of Narrative II

Reading:

Conrad, Lord Jim, pp. 291-352 (Chapters 36-45)

Jameson, The Political Unconscious, pp. 198-275 (NYUC)

Week 10

Mon., Nov. 14

Narrative Time II

Reading:

Proust, Swann’s Way, pp. 1-48 (NYUC)

Genette, Narrative Discourse, pp. 113-160 (NYUC)

Week 11

Mon., Nov. 21

A Twentieth-Century Polemic on the Novel

Reading:

Robbe-Grillet, Jealousy

---, For a New Novel (excerpts) (NYUC)

Week 12

Mon., Nov. 28

Characters, Actors, Fabula

Reading:

Coetzee, In the Heart of the Country

Bal, Narratology, pp. 112-133, 181-214

Week 13

Mon., Dec. 5

Units of Action, Narrative Time Revisited

Reading:

Coetzee, In the Heart of the Country

Barthes, “Introduction to the Structural Study of Narrative” (NYUC)

Week 14

Mon., Dec. 12

Narrative in Film: A Brief Glance at an Adaptation

Viewing (in-class):

Dust (filmic adaptation of In the Heart of the Country)

Reading:

Verstraten, Film Narratology, Ch. 6 (NYUC)

Tues., Dec. 13 [class on Monday schedule]

We Apply Ourselves, Applying Theory of Narrative

Reading:

Wallace, The Pale King, Ch. 46.

Due: Final paper