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**LMC 4200G: SEMINAR IN LITERARY AND CULTURAL THEORY**

**Course prerequisites:** LCC 2100 or LCC 2700 or LMC 2700 or LMC 2850

**Course description:**

Students in this course will become familiar with recent methodological approaches in literary studies, particularly narratology and reader-response criticism, that emphasize narrative structures and forms. Texts include Honoré de Balzac's short story *Sarrasine* and Roland Barthes' study of it in *S/Z*; Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* and Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse*; Robyn Warhol's consideration of effeminacy and narrative form in serial fiction and soap operas, *Having a Good Cry*, and David Bordwell's *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, an examination of storytelling in contemporary films. Course requirements include participating in class discussions, writing short essays, and presenting oral reports.

**Learning Outcomes:**

To become familiar with principles of close reading, structuralism, and other methods of literary criticism

To understand European and American narrative theories and to apply these to reading appropriate authors

To develop facility with applying narrative theory to visual media, including television and film

To incorporate theoretical principles in writing literary and film criticism

**Books to buy (at Engineers Bookstore or Barnes and Noble, Tech Square):**

Robert Dale Parker, *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Study* $28

Oxford, ISBN 0195334701

Roland Barthes, *S/Z,* which includes Balzac's *Sarrasine* $16, Hill and Wang—ISBN 0374521670  
Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse* –pbk $19 — Cornell UP, ISBN 0801492599

Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, v.1 (Wordsworth)—pbk $11—ISBN 1840221461

**Required Readings on Georgia Tech Library reserve/electronic reserve (www.library.gatech.edu):**

Tzvetan Todorov, "Structural Analysis of Narrative," *Novel*. 3: 1 (Fall 1969): 70-76.

Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading* [PN212.R33 1987](https://gil.gatech.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?SC=CallNumber&SEQ=20090703151423&PID=Wto0KIB8uj3Iuj9kT2Xs6_LIGLn&SA=PN212+.R33+1987)

Robyn Warhol, "The Climax and the Undertow: Effeminate Intensities in Soap Opera," Chapter 5. *Having a Good Cry: Effeminate Feelings and Pop-Culture Forms* (OSU), pp.102-23

PN 56.5.W64 W375 2003.

David Bordwell, "Subjective Stories and Network Narrations," Chapter 3. *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies*, pp. 72-103. GT (on order)

**Other Readings on Reserve:**

Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The representation of reality in Western literature* PN56.R3 A83 1968

Edmund Wilson, *Axel's Castle* [PN771.W55](https://gil.gatech.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?SC=CallNumber&SEQ=20090703151114&PID=Vy5HF6rHbmz6pum5VtPd6_JnzbI&SA=PN771+.W55)

Wallace Fowlie, *Reading Proust* [PQ2631.R63 A79 1968](https://gil.gatech.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?SC=CallNumber&SEQ=20090703151245&PID=XPdVvPmUor1PW_r3ch6JPud91oD&SA=PQ2631+.R63+A79+1968)

Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* [PN212.M37 1986](https://gil.gatech.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?SC=CallNumber&SEQ=20090703151507&PID=vp0gr7OpyTMzoolsjJ24nzDF-ih&SA=PN212+.M37+1986)

**Reading on the Internet:** Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, Ohio State University Press. [www.ohiostatepress.edu](http://www.ohiostatepress.edu)

**ASSIGNMENTS/FINAL GRADE** UG G

*Oral—*reports related to reading of day (2 per UG/3 per G; see R:) 30% 30%

Class participation 30% 30%

*Written—* On Todorov, Barthes, and Balzac's *Sarrasine* (3 pages) 10% 10%

Listserv posts on Genette and Proust (3 100-word entries per student) 15% 10%

UG Proposal: Rabinowitz, Warhol, Bordwell applied to film or TV show 15%

Grad Paper: Rabinowitz, Warhol, Bordwell applied to film or TV show 20%

**WRITTEN AND ORAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

Due dates for the writing assignments are listed in the syllabus. Your writing assignments will provide opportunities to extend classroom discussions and to meditate more thoughtfully on course topics. Class discussions should encourage your thinking about reading and writing. Please come to class prepared to participate in discussions. Read and think about the texts before class; it is useful to jot down some ideas, notes about the readings, and questions in advance and to bring those notes to class, so that you can bring up your ideas in class discussion.

Each student will help lead us through a reading by sharing a short (5-8 minute) analysis of the text, summarizing the reading’s focus on gender and science/technology and considering its argumentative presentation and effectiveness. Your contribution to class discussion could consider what you learned from the text and its significance for the course topic; you might also evaluate its style, evidence, and persuasiveness in considering how the author’s argument connects with other readings. Consult the instructor if you have questions about your presentations. Remember that your contribution as a presenter should facilitate class conversations as you formulate appropriate questions about the readings, provide a thoughtful way of approaching textual issues, and report on information gleaned from reading critical material. Sign up to be discussion leaders as soon as possible.

**COMMUNICATION CENTER:**

The Communication Center is located in Clough Commons, Suite 447. It is an excellent resource for any student (undergraduate or graduate) who wants help with a communication-related project. You can visit the center for help at any stage of the process for any project in any discipline. The knowledgeable and friendly tutors are available to help you develop and revise your projects. They are not available to “fix” your projects. Please do not ask the tutors to proofread or edit your projects. For information on making an appointment please visit this website: <<http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/content/make-appointment>>.  If you need assistance with the appointment system, you can call 404-385-3612 or stop by the center. All services are free and confidential.

**ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED IN THIS COURSE:** Because class discussion and in-class assignments make up 30% of the final grade, excessive absences could result in an unsatisfactory mark. Submit the appropriate documents for medical, athletic, or other justified absences. Extended (one-week or more) absences away from campus for family, medical, or legal reasons should be reported to the Dean of Students’ office so that your instructors can be appropriately informed; see [http://www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/#](http://www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/) for more information concerning Institute Approved Absences.

**ADAPTS:** The Office of -Disability Services assists students self-identifying as having a disability to obtain reasonable accommodations.   Documentation of disability is required to determine appropriate accommodations or modifications that may be helpful on campus. See http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** If you quote, paraphrase, or summarize information in your written assignment that you originally obtained from a written or a verbal source, this source reference should be cited in your text. You should use a modified MLA style in your papers for this course; page references to course texts should be parenthetically made within your essay. Questions about appropriate forms of citation can be asked of the course instructor or the reference staff at the library. You should become familiar with the provisions of the Georgia Tech academic honor code and the policies governing violations of the honor code, both published in the Georgia Tech course catalog. For more information, see http://[www.honor.gatech.edu](http://www.honor.gatech.edu).

**SYLLABUS**

Weeks 1-2: Introduction: Todorov, "Structural Analysis of Narrative." *Novel* 3.1 (Fall 1969): 70-76.

Parker, *How to Interpret Literature*

Weeks 3-5 Barthes' S/Z, including Balzac's story *Sarrasine*

Paper on structuralism (readings by Todorov, Barthes, and Parker) due

Weeks 6-10: Proust Bazaar: bring in any references to Proust; discuss Proust, *Swann’s Way*, first volume of *Remembrance of Things Past*

Weeks 11- 13 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*

Week 14: Rabinowitz, Warhol, Bordwell on reading and narrative strategies in fiction, television, film

Week 15: IN-CLASS CONFERENCES on final assignment