The aim of this course is to bridge your training in ENG220 and the 300-level seminars with the expectations of your senior capstone experience: a 35-50 page original, substantive, and critically informed work of literary scholarship. To do so, we’ll revisit some of the most frequently invoked terms in literary study—“author,” “text,” “race,” “gender,” “empire,” “culture,” “ideology”—in order to better understand what they might mean and how literary scholarship has invoked, deployed, and transformed their potential meanings. These terms will be approached not as a shared vocabulary among the theorists we study, but rather as sites of contestation and change. Along the way, you’ll be reintroduced to many of the key concepts within literary criticism as well as from other disciplines such as economic theory, psychoanalysis, semiotics, and image-and-text studies that have guided contemporary literary theoretical inquiry. Stories, novels, comics, and film will be read alongside these theoretical works to provide both a testing ground for these ideas and a way to complicate their presuppositions. Along the way we will constantly be querying the literature/theory distinction, determining to what degree we can perceive literary authors as critical thinkers and theorists as creative writers.

In doing so, we’ll constantly be asking what makes a successful work of literary criticism and sharpening our ability to read, interpret, and complicate the ideas developed by scholars of literature. Like any professional language, literary scholarship requires specialized training to analyze, and over the course of the semester my hope is that the articles you find in the MLA database become increasingly approachable and engaging. While neither an in-depth study of a single period of literary history, nor a survey of literary theory, “Literary Controversies, Critical Questions” serves both as a series of provocations to further thought and as preparation to launching into your own research and analysis.
Finally, we'll be talking throughout about strategies to conceive, research, draft, and revise original research, giving over significant class time to small- and large-group peer review and the revision of the thesis prospectus. You'll be responsible each week for selecting a secondary article on our chosen texts to read independently, completing a one-page summary of the article's argument and import. Class presentations will involve a literature review in which you outline major critical debates around your chosen text and help guide the course discussion for that week. By the end of the semester, you'll have a revised and polished thesis prospectus, a 15-20 page independent research paper that may serve as a first step toward your completed thesis, and a community of readers and fellow scholars who will support you throughout the spring as you work toward the completion of your thesis and your academic career at Dickinson.

[B]=text available under the “Readings” tab of the course Blackboard site
[C]=included in David Richter, ed. *The Critical Tradition*
[D]=included in David Macey, ed. *Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory*

**Week 1: Thesis/Theory**
3 Sept
David Richter, “Preface” through “Yet Another Critical Tradition” (pp. v-ix) [C]
Steven Mailloux, “Interpretation” from *Critical Terms for Literary Study* [B]
“Critical Theory, Theory” [D]
Class visit by Chris Gross, ’09

**Week 2: Author [**Paper #1 Due**]**
10 Sept
Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author” [C]
Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” [C]
Paul Auster, *City of Glass*
Paul Auster, David Mazzuchelli and Paul Karasik, *City of Glass: The Graphic Adaptation*
“Barthes, Foucault, Death of the Author, Intentional Fallacy” [D]

**Week 3: Text**
17 Sept
Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text” [C]
Miguel de Cervantes, Prologues to volumes 1 and 2 of *Don Quixote* [B]
Jorge Luis Borges, “Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote” [B]
Barbara Johnson, “Writing” from *Critical Terms for Literary Study* [B]
“Intertextuality, Writerly and Readerly Texts” [D]

**Week 4: Signification [**Prospectus Revision #1 Due**]**
24 Sept
Ferdinand de Saussure, selections from *Course in General Linguistics* [C]
“Langue/Parole, Saussure, Semiology/Semiotics, Sign” [D]

**Week 5: Commodity**
1 Oct
Karl Marx, Chapter 1 from *Capital* [B], “The Alienation of Labor” [C]
Henry James, *The Spoils of Poynton*
“Alienation, Base/Superstructure, Dialectical Materialism, Historical Materialism, Marxism, Marxist Criticism, Reification” [D]
Week 6: Fetish/Gift

8 Oct Karl Marx, “The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret” from *Capital* [B]
   Sigmund Freud, “Fetishism” [B]
   Sigmund Freud, from *Interpretation of Dreams* [C]
   Louis Hyde, from *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* [B]
   Leanne Shapton, *Important Artifacts and Personal Property from the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris, Including Books, Street Fashion, and Jewelry*
   “Affect, Cathexis, Commodity Fetishism, Complex, Condensation, Displacement, Dream-Work, Drive, Fetishism, (Sigmund) Freud, Psychoanalysis, Psychoanalytic Criticism” [D]

Week 7: Culture

15 Oct The Harlequin© Romance of your choosing
   Janice Radway, selections from *Reading the Romance* [B]
   Raymond Williams, selections from *Culture and Society* [B]
   Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, from *The Culture Industry* [C]
   Stephen Greenblatt, “Culture” from *Critical Terms for Literary Study* [B]
   John Fiske, “Popular Culture” from *Critical Terms for Literary Study* [B]
   “Cultural Materialism, Cultural Studies, Culture Industry, Genre, Interpretive Community, Reader-Response Theory, Romance, Williams” [D]

Joint Discussion with Professor O’Brien’s AMST401 Seminar

Week 8: Ideology [**Paper #2 Due**]

22 Oct Louis Althusser, from *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* [C]
   Franz Kafka, “Before the Law” and “In the Penal Colony” [B]
   James Kavanaugh, “Ideology” from *Critical Terms for Literary Study* [B]
   “Althusser, Hegemony, Ideological State Apparatus, Ideology, Interpellation” [D]

Week 9: Authenticity/Influence

29 Oct Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility” [C]
   Paul de Man, “Literary History and Literary Modernity” [B]
   Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Quotation and Originality” & “Self-Reliance” [B]
   Jonathan Lethem, “The Ecstasy of Influence” [B]
   “Anxiety of Influence, Aura, Benjamin” [D]

Week 10: Deconstruction/Difference [**Prospectus Revision #2 Due**]

5 Nov J. L. Austin, from *How to Do Things with Words* (both excerpts) [C]
   Jacques Derrida, “Signature Event Context” [B]
   Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson [B]
   “Austin, Deconstruction, De Man, Derrida, Différance, Performative, Poststructuralism, Speech Act” [D]

Week 11: Gender/Sexuality

12 Nov Luce Irigaray, selections from *This Sex which is not One* [B]
   Judith Butler, selections from *Gender Trouble* [B]
   Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*
   Myra Jehlen, “Gender” from *Critical Terms for Literary Study* [B]
Week 12: Race [**Paper #3 drafts due**]
19 Nov Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “Race, Writing and Difference” [B]
   Toni Morrison, Playing in the Dark
   Toni Morrison, “Recitatif” [B]
   Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Race” from Critical Terms for Literary Study [B]
   “Canon, Eurocentrism, Gates” [D]

***26 Nov—Gobble, gobble***

Week 13: Empire
3 Dec Edward Said, from Orientalism [C]
   Homi Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders” [C]
   “Bhabha, Hybridity, Orientalism, Postcolonial Theory, Said” [D]

Film Screening and Discussion with Prof. Sams’ ENG403 seminar

Week 14: Simulacrum [**Final Prospectus Due**]
10 Dec Jean Baudrillard, “The Precession of Simulacra” [C]
   Ridley Scott (dir.), “Matchstick Men”
   “Baudrillard, Simulacrum” [D]

Final Exam: Thursday, December 17th, 2:00 PM [Paper #3 Revisions Due]
   **No written work will be accepted after 2:00 PM on the 17th**

Requirements:
— Timely and thoughtful completion of reading assignments
— Punctual attendance and engaged class participation, including weekly article reviews
— A significant oral presentation and a five-page written synopsis of that presentation
— A 6- to 8-page comparative essay and a 15- to 20-page research paper
— A completed thesis prospectus
— A short close-reading assignment
— A painless 50-minute exam

Grading: Assignment #1—5%, Assignment #2—15%, Assignment #3—30%, Class Participation—20%, Peer Reviews—10%, Oral Presentation/Report—10%, Final Exam—10%

Late Paper Policy: All papers are due on the date indicated on the syllabus. With the extraordinary and rare exception for medical or emergency reasons, late papers will receive a failing grade. Failure to turn in all writing assignments by the date of the final will result in a failing grade for the course. Exceptions will not be made.
**COURSE ATTENDANCE POLICY:** More than one unexcused absence will result in a failing course participation grade. More than two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Excused absences for illness need to be accompanied by a receipt from Health Services or a message from your Class Dean. Excused absences for non-academic reasons (job interviews, significant extracurricular commitments, etc.) must be arranged with me well in advance of the scheduled date. Attendance is measured not only by your physical presence, but by active contributions to course discussion and weekly writing exercises. Consistent, silent attendance will receive a “C.”

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** All available for purchase in the College Bookstore (if you purchase your books through other sources, please only buy the same editions to ensure uniform pagination). A copy of all texts will also be available on three-hour reserve at the Waidner-Spahr circulation desk.


**RESEARCH AND WRITING RESOURCES:** I strongly encourage students to take advantage of writing and research assistance that is available on campus. The library liaison for this course is Chris Bombaro (bombaroc@dickinson.edu), who is happy to schedule individual meetings to discuss your research project and the resources of the College’s library. You are also encouraged to visit the Writing Center at any stage of the writing process, from formulating a thesis to polishing a final draft. In both cases, you will not be able to make last-minute appointments; plan ahead to take full advantage of these resources.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** taken from “The Dickinson College Plagiarism Policy”:
“To plagiarize is to use without proper citation or acknowledgment the words, ideas or original research of another. [. . .] When one borrows facts which are not matters of general knowledge—including all statistics—one must indicate one’s indebtedness in the text or footnote. When one borrows an idea or the logic of an agreement, one must acknowledge indebtedness either in a footnote or in the text. When in doubt—footnote [. . .] if you have questions, consult with your instructor.”
I am happy to discuss questions about proper citation both during class time and privately during office hours. All violations of the College's academic honesty policy, per College rules, will be immediately sent to the Judicial Board.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES:** In full support of the Dickinson College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be recommended for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances) so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Students are required to register with Academic Resource Services in the Advising Office located on the first floor of Biddle House (contact ext. 1080 or waybranj@dickinson.edu) to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.