

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**  
www.mlcs.ualberta.ca

**2015-2016** MLCS : 507 Currents in Literary & Cultural Theory  
(Fall Term)

Instructor: *Dr. Daniel Laforest*  
Office: 409-B  
Telephone: 780-492-4926 Fax: 780-492-9106  
E-mail: [daniel.laforest@ualberta.ca](mailto:daniel.laforest@ualberta.ca)  
Personal Website: [DLaforest UofA page](#)  
Course Website:

Time: Wed 5-8  
Place: HC 2-34  
Office Hours: Fri, 2-4  
or by appointment

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**Course Prerequisite:** Consent of department

**Course-based Ethics Approval** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes  No, not needed, no such projects approved

**Community Service Learning** component

Required  Optional  None

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available**

- Exam registry – Students' Union  
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes  No

**Course Description and Objectives:**

How do we think *with* literature and language, and eventually beyond them? What is theory and how does it work? What forms of thinking are present in literary works and/or works of art, and how can they be applied to our daily life and to the issues of our time? What are the limits of language? How do writers and artists transcend them? This course offers a survey of contemporary critical theory with emphasis on major theoretical schools after the New Criticism (20th-21st Centuries). It will examine their intersections with important streams in philosophy, as well as with recent historical events. Essential texts from major

thinkers and theoreticians will be examined, contextualized, and put in relation with contemporary problems and questionings. Intercultural perspectives will be at the forefront. Creative and concrete applications of theory will also be the object of special focus. Classes will be seminar-like, with equal distribution between lectures and group discussions.

Divided into 5 modules, this course will pursue the following topics :

- 1) *What is Theory* (J-P. Sartre; W. Godzich; M. Horkheimer & T. Adorno)
- 2) *Mimesis and Representation* (Plato; Aristotle; E. Auerbach; F. Hegel; L-F de Saussure; E. Benveniste; E. Ionesco)
- 3) *The Rise of the Self and Self-Expressivity* (W. Wordsworth; T.S. Eliot; L. Glück; H. Cixous; D-F. Wallace; J. Franzen; D. Markson)
- 4) *The Disappearance of the Self and the Rise of Structures* (R. Barthes; J. Kristeva; J. Derrida; J. Butler)
- 5) *Norms, Power & the Freedom of Creativity* (V. Woolf; G. Canguilhem; M. Foucault; P. Bourdieu; H.K. Bhabha; Z. Smith; T-N Coates).

**Texts:**

**Required**

- Jonathan Culler (2011), *Literary Theory. A Very Short Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press, 165 p. ----- UofA Bookstore

AND

- Series of texts available on eclass

**Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

Two (2) Team Presentations	30% <b>(TBA)</b>
One (1) Critical Report	15% <b>(due October 14)</b>
One (1) Creative/Practical Application Proposal	15% <b>(due November 4)</b>
Final Research Paper (written)	30% <b>(due December 11)</b>
Participation	10%

**Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable):**

N/A

**Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

Explained in first class handout

## **Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar.”

## ***Academic Integrity:***

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx> ) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

## ***Learning and Working Environment:***

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment safe and free of discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels this policy has been or is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that directs discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>).

Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110>

## ***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

**Students involved in language courses and translation courses** should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.”

**Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of

fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) ) <http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.3.html#23.3> ) and 23.5.6 (<http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.5.html#23.5>) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

**In this course**, 10% of the final grade will go for active participation.

***Policy for Late Assignments:***

Late assignments will only be accepted prior to the approval of the professor, obtained at least two weeks before the originally assigned submission date. The professor will set the new submission date, which will fall no later than one week after the original date.

***Student Accessibility Services:***

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Specialized Support & Disability Services, contact their office immediately (2-800 SUB; Email [sasrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sasrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB [www.ssds.ualberta.ca](http://www.ssds.ualberta.ca) ).

***Grading:***

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (“**MLCS Graduate Grading Scale**”). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

**MLCS Graduate Grading Scale**

A+	97-100	Excellent
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A	93-96	Excellent
A-	90-92	Excellent
B+	87-89	Good
B	79-86	Good
B-	74-78	Satisfactory
C+	68-73	Satisfactory
C	63-67	Failure
C-	58-62	Failure
D+	54-57	Failure
D	50-53	Failure
F	00-49	Failure