



Instructor: Ella Soper

~ ella.soper.jones@utoronto.ca

Course Number: ENG280H5F

Course Title: Critical Approaches to Literature

Course description: This challenging and yet “user-friendly” course offers a survey of contemporary literary theory from Psychoanalytic criticism to Ecocriticism, considering along the way the traditions of Marxist, Feminist, New, Reader-Response, Structural, Deconstructive, New Historical, Lesbian/Gay/Queer, and Postcolonial criticism. Our examination of these critical debates will be informed by a discussion of the aesthetic, cultural, and political priorities that continue to shape them.

In addition to weekly assigned readings on and about critical theory, we will perform an intensive study of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* over the course of the term: we will consider how the application of a variety of critical reading practices informs our appreciation and understanding of the text, and this example will help to

Continued...

model the process by which students will select a critical approach and develop a research paper on a literary work of their choice.

Required Reading:

Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (2nd ed.) (Routledge); F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Broadview); assigned readings to be distributed in class

First Authors to be Studied:

Tyson and Fitzgerald

Films: Folman and Polonsky, *Waltz with Bashir*; Forster, *Stranger Than Fiction*

Method of Instruction: Lecture/discussion

Method of Evaluation: article critiques--2 (15% ea.); mid-term test (10%); essay (20%); final exam (30%); participation (10%).