Course Description:
No reading is “innocent.” We’ll begin with this assertion and study the influences that shape our ability to read, both the written word and the world. As a required prerequisite for upper-division English studies, this course introduces representative critical approaches to literature and offers an intensive participation in critical reading, analytical thinking, and argumentative writing. Enabling students to develop and articulate interpretations from a variety of theoretical approaches, the course investigates the key assumptions/methodologies of significant schools of literary criticism. Introducing students to theories that are based both on close textual study and on contexts, such as psychoanalytic theories, gender studies, and postcolonialism, the course requires application of different kinds of critical readings to literary and filmic texts in a variety of genres and writing of short, analytical papers as well as a substantive documented paper.
Required Texts:
Bressler *Practical Criticism*; Toni Morrison, *Sula*; film *Get Out*; Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber*; selected poetry online including Seamus Heaney and Adrienne Rich; *MLA Handbook for Writers* hard copy or online.

Departmental Program Goals and Learning Outcomes:
English majors will be able to
1. Understand and assess the traditions, conventions, and contexts associated with the study of the English language and its literatures.
2. Apply critical thinking skills to the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information and ideas from diverse oral, written, and/or visual sources.
3. Conduct research, develop organizational strategies, and compose professional documents using the academic conventions of English Studies as a discipline.

Departmental Course Description:
A gateway course that introduces students to representative critical approaches that they will encounter in the major. Emphasis will be given to research skills, methodology and analytical writing. Required for the major and minor in English. Only six hours of upper division work may be taken before the completion of this course. Enrollment requires permission of academic coordinator.

Course Requirements:
1. As an introduction to study of English as a discipline, this is a foundational course which serves as a kind of practicum. Reading assigned texts before class is essential; class attendance, discussion, and participation in in-class activities make up 20% of the grade.

2. All written assignments must be completed in accordance with current MLA guidelines, so careful attention to the *MLA Handbook for Writers* is required.

3. Essays are due as scheduled on the syllabus; late papers are graded down one letter grade per day late.

4. Students will participate in informal group presentations as part of in-class work and an oral presentation at semester’s end applying a critical method to a selection from contemporary culture (song, film, TV show, exhibit, commercial).

Evaluation Methods:
1. Essays are graded on the assumption that the fundamentals of good writing (including grammar, sentence style, and thesis-driven essay organization and development) have been gained in ENGL 1101 and 1102. We will also work on increased sentence effectiveness. If there are basic writing problems (major grammar errors or basic lack of organization), we will need to meet early in the semester to address these. Additional hours in the Writing Center for practice of
basic skills may be required. Each essay assignment will offer specific guidelines and criteria and will measure the ability to put into practice the general critical principles of methods we discuss.

2. The research paper provides an opportunity to become competent in all phases of researched writing—collecting sources, planning a paper, writing an abstract, drafting, producing a correct bibliography, organizing an argument with attention to critical method, and revision and polishing. Students will share their progress at each stage of the process in informal oral reports and one written progress report (all part of a participation grade). The final grade on the paper will be based on effective writing (organization, development of a sustained critically-focused argument, and grammar), effective use of sources, and correct MLA documentation style.

3. The exam will be a general test of your knowledge of the basic fundamentals of each critical theory we have explored in the course (not tests on the literature).

Students will complete the following assignments:
1. one brief textual explication (one page)
2. two critical analysis papers (2-3 pp and 4-5 pp. critical essays using different lenses)
3. one oral presentation on reading popular culture through a critical lens.
4. an extended, focused, and well-researched documented paper
5. one exam given after all critical methods units and before work on final paper

**Grade Calculation:** Students will be evaluated by the following:
- Essays 40%
- Participation (quizzes, workshops, deadlines during paper process) 20%
- Oral Presentation 10%
- Research Paper 20%
- Exam 10%

**Plagiarism Policy:** The Department of English and Philosophy defines plagiarism as taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are presented in electronic, print, and verbal sources. The Department expects that students will accurately credit sources in all assignments. An equally dishonest practice is fabricating sources or facts; it is another form of misrepresenting the truth. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course. Any plagiarized assignment will receive a Zero. Students will be reported to the appropriate university officials.

**UWG Policies, Services, and Requirements for all courses:**
[http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf)

W 15  Introduction to course: Requirements, policies, and “innocent reading” / First response: Analysis of famous visual image, Photograph “The Soiling of Old Glory” (this photograph will be reviewed later in the semester through different critical lenses) / assign text readings

M 20  Brief Debate from Graff’s *Teaching the Conflicts* (in class) / Methods of Reading: read in
Advance Rich’s “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” and Heaney’s “Digging”  
W 22  TEXT-Based Critical Methods (formalism and New Criticism): and online [reading](#)  

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 27</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic Criticism (Bressler) / Is psych crit an embarrassment? Read Peter Brooks <a href="#">here</a></td>
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<td>W 29</td>
<td>Gender Studies (Bressler) / assign Carter, selections from <em>The Bloody Chamber</em></td>
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<td>M  3</td>
<td>Labor Day Holiday</td>
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<td>W  5</td>
<td>Carter: select stories / assign scene analysis/explication</td>
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<td>M 10</td>
<td>Out of Town Conference: No Class / #1 due in course by end of day</td>
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<td>W 12</td>
<td>Morrison, <em>Sula</em></td>
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<td>M 17</td>
<td>Morrison cont’d / essay 2 assigned: Morrison or Carter: using psychoanalytical or gender studies lens</td>
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<td>W 19</td>
<td>Effective essay construction/ integrating quotations</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 24</td>
<td>African-American literary criticism / postcolonial studies (Bressler and course) / Essay 2 due in course</td>
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W Cont’d

October
M  1 Exam
W  3 Discussion of film *Get Out*

M  8 Film discussion cont’d / assign essay #3 / Withdrawal Deadline
W 10 Using critical lenses: scene analysis discussions in class: student-selected scenes

M 15 Conferences as needed / essay #3 due in classes
W 17 Initial Project selection / prospectus writing / assign prospectus and first draft

M 22 Prospectus due in class / research methods
W 24 Initial Draft 3 pp. due in class

M 29 Draft 5pp due in class / targeted workshop: thesis, argumentative topic sentences, development
W 31 Draft 7 pp due in class / targeted workshop: sentence variety, quotation variation / assign oral presentations

November
M  5 Final draft Q and A / bibliography editing: due in class / oral presentation rubric and examples
W  7 Contemporary Example Presentations

M 12 Contemporary Example Presentations
W 14 Contemporary Example Presentations

M 19, W 21 Thanksgiving Holiday

M 26 Final Draft editing in class
W 28 Final draft editing in class

December
M  3 No class / revisions if required to research paper (to achieve at least a C evaluation on this paper)
W  5 Last Day of Class / return to initial queries and first day concerns / assign final reflection due in classes by time of final exam