English 378: Survey of Current Literary and Cultural Theory
When: Fall 2017
Time: MW 3:30-4:45
Contact: Prof. Gregory Jay (gjay@uwm.edu)

The study of literary and cultural theory should be an exciting adventure in intellectual discovery. It should not be an alienating march through forests of impenetrable prose and incomprehensible ideas. But no doubt our readings will at times be challenging, asking us to rethink our assumptions about selfhood and society, art and the unconscious, and the social construction of gender, sexuality, and race. The schools and movements we will cover include New Criticism, structuralism and poststructuralism, postmodernism, psychoanalysis, feminism, Marxism, queer theory, postcolonial critique, visual culture, and critical race discourse. Through class discussion, small group work, and short writing assignments we will test these theories in analyses of literature, film and, indeed, the way we make meaning out of our everyday lives. The variety of approaches sampled should give all students an opportunity to evaluate which theories they find most interesting and valuable, and to explore chosen ones in greater depth. Along the way we will discuss the application of critical theories to many specific works of literature, film, and media. Our textbook, *Critical Theory Today*, 3rd edition, by Lois Tyson, features the application of theory to F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, so students need to also have a copy of that novel.

Seminar Discussion Format
Frequent Short Reading Responses
Short Papers
Final Essay

Textbooks:
Title: Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide
Author(s): Tyson; Lois
Isbn: 978-0415506755
Edition: 3rd (****You MUST have this edition)
Book Importance: Required

Title: The Great Gatsby
Isbn: 978-0743273565
Author(s): Fitzgerald, F. Scott
Edition: Revised
Book Importance: Required