

English 481: Theories of Literature and Social Justice  
Professors Dawn Keetley and Scott Gordon  
Spring 2012  
Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:45pm-2:00pm, Drown 102a

### Course Description

This course introduces students to theories of literature and social justice. We will address the following broad (and frequently overlapping) questions: What is literature? What is social justice? How are literary forms (and literary criticism) distinctive in the ways in which they grapple with questions of social justice? How do literary forms reinforce or challenge dominant ideologies? In what ways does literature critique social injustice and imagine new models of more perfect human flourishing? How does literature generate varying emotions in its readers that might serve to promote (or prevent) social justice? While we recognize that much literature itself rather expressly takes on the goal of furthering some idea of a “better” society, the course mostly presumes that the project of “literature and social justice” is about particular reading strategies—strategies we will unearth, debate, and try on during the course of the semester. The majority of the reading will be works of theory and criticism, but we will read two primary works so that we will have some common ground on which we can test our theories.

### Course Requirements

Class Participation	15%
CourseSite Postings (weekly)	15%
Seminar Paper (20pp.)	50%
Summaries/Analyses (4 total)	20%

**Academic Integrity:** Lehigh University requires all professors to forward suspected cases of plagiarism to the University Committee on Discipline. Here is Lehigh University’s official statement on plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged appropriation of another’s work, words, or ideas in any essays, outlines, papers, reports, or computer programs. Specifically, (1) students who use the exact words of another must enclose those words in quotation marks or show through indentation or type style that the material is quoted and indicate the source, either within the text of their work or in a footnote; (2) students who take ideas from another person or written work, but who either paraphrase those ideas in their own words or else make a few mechanical alterations (rearrange sentences, find synonyms, alter prepositions, punctuation, conjunctions, and the like) must also indicate the source, either within the text of their work or in a series of footnotes clearly indicating the extent of the material paraphrased; (3) students may not turn in as their own work any materials written for them by another person or any commercially prepared materials, such as computer programs and term papers, purchased on or off campus.

There is more information about academic integrity at <http://www.lehigh.edu/~indost/integrity.html>

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, please contact both your instructor and the Office of Academic Support Services, University Center C212 (610 758-4152) as early as possible in the semester. You must have documentation from the Academic Support Services office before accommodations can be granted.

## THEORIES OF LITERATURE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

### CONCEPTS: SOCIAL JUSTICE, LITERATURE

- Monday Jan 16 Introduction to course: what is social justice?
- Wednesday Jan 18 Ben Jackson, "The Conceptual History of Social Justice," *Political Studies Review* 3 (2005): 356-73.
- Brian Barry, "Social Justice: The Basics," from *Why Social Justice Matters* (Polity, 2005), 1-34.
- Monday Jan 23 Friedrich A. Hayek, "'Social' or Distributive Justice," from *Law, Legislation and Liberty, Vol. 2, The Mirage of Social Justice* (Chicago, 1976), 62-100.
- Amartya Sen, "Introduction: An Approach to Justice," from *The Idea of Justice* (Harvard, 2009), 1-29.
- Wednesday Jan 25 Raymond Williams, "Literature," from *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977), 45-54.
- Terry Eagleton, "What is Literature," from *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minnesota, 1983), 1-16
- Jonathan Culler, "What is Theory?" and "What is Literature and Does it Matter?" from *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 1997), 1-42
- Jonathan Culler, "What Is Literature Now?" *New Literary History* 38.1 (2007): 229-37. (Note: This special issue of *New Literary History* is devoted to the question, What Is Literature Now?)

### READINGS: LITERATURE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Monday Jan 30 Stephen Greenblatt, "Shakespeare Bewitched," *New Historical Literary Study*, eds. Jeffrey Cox and Larry Reynolds (Princeton, 1993), 108-35.
- Jane Tompkins, "Sentimental Power: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Politics of Literary History," *The New Historicism Reader*, ed. H. Aram Veenser (Routledge, 1994), 206-228.
- Steven Justice, "Insurgent Literacies" and "*Piers Plowman* in the Rising," from *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381* (California, 1994), 1-66, 102-39.
- Wednesday Feb 1 Anita Pacheco, "Royalism and Honor in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*," *SEL* 34 (1994): 491-506.
- Margaret Ferguson, "Juggling the Categories of Race, Class and Gender:

Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*," *Women's Studies* 19 (1991): 159-81.

Liliane Weissberg, "Gothic Spaces: The Political Aesthetics of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," *Modern Gothic: A Reader*, eds. Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith (Manchester, 1996), 104-20.

Dean Franco, "What We Talk About When We Talk About *Beloved*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 52.2 (2006): 415-39.

#### THEORIES: CLASS, GENDER, SEXUALITY, RACE

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| Monday    | Feb 6  | Raymond Williams, from <i>Marxism and Literature</i> (Oxford 1977), 95-191.   |
| Wednesday | Feb 8  | Raymond Williams, from <i>Country and the City</i> (Oxford, 1973), 1-127.   |
| Monday    | Feb 13 | Frederic Jameson, "Preface" and "On Interpretation: Literature as a Socially Symbolic Act," from <i>The Political Unconscious</i> (Princeton: 1981), 9-102<br><br>Frederic Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping," in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., <i>Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture</i> (Illinois, 1988), 347-60.  |
| Wednesday | Feb 15 | Iris Marion Young, "Displacing the Distributive Paradigm," and "The Scaling of Bodies and the Politics of Identity," from <i>Justice and the Politics of Difference</i> (Princeton, 1990), 15-38 and 122-55.<br><br>Patricia Williams, "On Being the Object of Property," from <i>Alchemy of Race and Rights</i> (Harvard, 1992).   |
| Monday    | Feb 20 | Wai Chee Dimock, "Introduction: Justice and Commensurability," and "Rights and Reason," from <i>Residues of Justice: Literature, Law, Philosophy</i> (California, 1996), 1-10, 182-223.<br><br>Robin West, "Invisible Victims: Herman Melville's 'Bartleby the Scrivener' and Susan Glaspell's 'Jury of Her Peers,'" from <i>Caring for Justice</i> (New York, 1997), 218-58. |
| Wednesday | Feb 22 | Pierre Bourdieu, from <i>Masculine Domination</i> (Stanford, 1998), 1-80.   |
| Monday    | Feb 27 | Nancy Fraser, "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age," <i>New Left Review</i> 212 (1995): 68-93.<br><br>Fraser, "Rethinking Recognition," <i>New Left Review</i> 3 (2000): 107-20.  |
| Wednesday | Feb 29 | Judith Butler, "Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality" and "The Question of Social Transformation," from <i>Undoing Gender</i> (Routledge, 2004): 57-74, 204-231.   |

Heather Love, "Introduction" and "Spoiled Identity: Radclyffe Hall's Unwanted Being," from *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Harvard, 2009).

Monday March 5 SPRING BREAK  
Wednesday March 7 SPRING BREAK

Monday March 12 Howard McGary, "Race and Class Exploitation," "The African-American Underclass and the Question of Values," "Morality and Collective Liability," "Justice and Reparations," and "Racism, Social Justice, and Interracial Coalitions," from *Race and Social Justice* (Wiley-Blackwell 1999), 27-42, 62-78, 81-109, 196-214.

Howard Winant, "Racial Dualism at Century's End," from *New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice* (Minnesota, 2004), 166-87.

bell hooks, "Justice: Childhood Love Lessons," from *All About Love: New Visions* (William Morrow, 2001), 15-30.

Wednesday March 14 Henry Louis Gates, Jr. "Fade to Black: From Cultural Studies to Cultural Politics," from *Tradition and the Black Atlantic: Critical Theory in the African Diaspora* (Basic Civitas, 2010), 33-82.

Saidiya V. Hartman, "Introduction" and "Innocent Amusements: The Stage of Sufferance," from *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford, 1997), 3-16, 17-48.

## HUMAN AND ANIMAL RIGHTS

Monday March 19 Lynn Hunt, "Paradoxical Origins of Human Rights," in *Human Rights and Revolution*, ed. Jeffery Wasserstrom, Lynn Hunt, and Marilyn Young (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 3-17.

Hunt, "Torrents of Emotion: Reading Novels and Imagining Equality," from *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (Norton, 2007), 35-69.

Wednesday March 21 J. M. Coetzee, "The Lives of Animals" and "The Poets and the Animals," from *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton, 1999), 1-69.

Monday March 27 Essays by Marjorie Garber, Peter Singer, Wendy Doniger, and Barbara Smuts, from *The Lives of Animals*, 73-120.

Martha Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion and Humanity': Justice for Nonhuman Animals," *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions* (Oxford, 2005), 299-320.

Susan McHugh, "Literary Animal Agents," *PMLA* 124.2 (2009): 564-75.

Cary Wolfe, "Human, All Too Human: 'Animal Studies' and the Humanities," *PMLA* 124.2 (2009): 564-75.

#### READERS, AFFECT, JUSTICE

- Wednesday March 29 Martha Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice* (Beacon Press, 1995).
- Monday April 2 Suzanne Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy," *Narrative* 14.3 (2006): 207-36.
- Keen, "Empathy in the Marketplace," from *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford, 2007), 101-119.
- Wednesday April 4 John Johnson, et. al, "Hierarchy in the Library: Egalitarian Dynamics in Victorian Novels," *Evolutionary Psychology* 6 (2008): 715-38.
- Robert Lane, "Self-Reliance and Empathy: The Enemies of Poverty and of the Poor," *Political Psychology* 22 (2001): 473-92.
- Mark Bracher, "How to Teach for Social Justice: Lessons from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Cognitive Science," *College English* 71 (2009): 363-88.
- Monday April 9 Sianne Ngai, "Introduction," "Tone," and "Envy" from *Ugly Feelings* (Harvard, 2005), 1-88, 126-73.
- Wednesday April 11 Nancy Fraser, "Reframing Justice in a Globalizing World," *New Left Review* 36 (2005): 69-88.
- Azar Nafisi, "Austen" and "Epilogue," from *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (Random House, 2008), 255-344.

#### THE ACADEMY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Monday April 16 Stanley Fish, from *Save the World on Your Own Time* (Oxford, 2008), 3-59, 168-78.
- Mark Bracher, "Teaching for Social Justice: Reeducating the Emotions Through Literary Study," *Journal of Advanced Composition* 26.3-4 (2006): 463-512.
- Elizabeth Ammons, "Postmodern Fundamentalism," from *Brave New Words: How Literature Will Save the Planet* (Iowa, 2010), 1-36.
- Howard Winant, "Teaching Race and Racism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," from *New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice* (Minnesota, 2004), 69-79.
- Wednesday April 18 Paolo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Continuum, 1968).

Monday	April 23	Donald E. Hall, <i>The Academic Self</i> (Ohio, 2002).
Wednesday	April 25	Social justice and university politics: adjuncts, the OCCUPY movement