

TERM: Spring 2026

COURSE NUMBER & CATEGORY: ENGL 2500: Theory, Power, and Rhetoric

COURSE TITLE: Theory, Power, and Rhetoric

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: MW 11:50 am-1:30 pm

INSTRUCTOR: Dermot Ryan

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:

This course has two main goals:

1. To introduce students to key concepts and arguments within contemporary literary, cultural, and rhetorical theory
2. To use these concepts and debates to analyze literary and cultural practices/products.

While our discussions will be organized around important contributions to literary, cultural, and rhetorical theory, we will also look at a range of material from the world of literature, film, advertisement, music, and social media. By closely analyzing these “primary texts,” we will come to see that one does not necessarily apply theory to texts and practices; rather, we use theoretical concepts to recognize and figure out the theoretical work that is informing and animating the world around us.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will be able to read primary texts of literary theory, rhetoric and critical cultural theory.
- Students can identify the methods or concepts of literary theory, rhetoric and critical cultural theory.
- Students will be introduced to ways that theory helps them write about different aspects of literary texts and their contexts.

CLASS LEVEL RESTRICTION:

N/A

RECOMMENDED/PREREQUISITES:

N/A

COURSE ATTRIBUTES:

OLD CURRICULUM

- ☐ GENRES (LD)
- ☒ HISTORIES (LD)
- ☐ AUTHORS (UD)
- ☐ CRITICAL/THEORETICAL (UD)
- ☐ COMPARATIVE (UD)
- ☐ CREATIVE/ARTISTRY

CORE ATTRIBUTES:

N/A

NEW CURRICULUM

- ☐ DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH (LD)
- ☐ HISTORY OF LIT, MEDIA, AND CULTURE (LD)
- ☐ READING AND WRITING GENRES (LD)
- ☒ THEORY, POWER, AND RHETORIC (LD)
- ☐ PRE-1800 (UD)
- ☐ CREATIVE ARTISTRY (UD)
- ☐ RACE, INTERSECTIONALITY, AND POWER (UD)
- ☐ UPPER-DIVISION ELECTIVE (UD)
- ☐ 5000-LEVEL SEMINAR (UD)