Spring 2019 Course Descriptions

Instructor: Robert Griffin
Course: ENGL 308.500 & ENGL 308.200
Title: History of Literary Criticism

Description: This course offers a survey, from the Greeks to the present, of thinking about what we now refer to as “literature.” Broadly, up through the mid-20th Century, a double focus can be charted: certain writers emphasize the formal properties of art (beauty,) while others debate the value and function of literature in society (utility). More recent critics call into question the definition of literature itself and expand “criticism” to include informed reflection on many kinds of cultural production.

You should be able to leave this course with an understanding of key texts in the critical tradition, and with an appreciation of some of the central concerns of ancient, modern, and contemporary literary theory. Further, the student's own principles, if not thoroughly challenged and undermined, will at least become more fully conscious in relation to current thinking.