This course is an introduction to literary studies. We will begin by examining the practice and discipline of literary criticism from a very broad historical perspective, discuss the advent and rise of English studies in the academy, and then consider the relatively recent emergence of literary theory and critical theory as a tool for reading, assessing, and evaluating the politics of canon formation. Though this course intends to provide a general historical context for understanding some of the more important developments within the field of literary studies, we will engage in-depth with a variety of approaches to literature that have emerged since the aftermath of World War II: psychoanalytic literary theory, Marxist literary theory, deconstruction, postcolonialism, ecocriticism, and the relatively new field of postcolonial ecocriticism. Students will take quizzes on a regular basis and one midterm exam. Additionally, there will be a research paper due at the end of the semester that will test the student’s ability to close read a literary text through the lens of one or more of the theories listed above.

Potential Texts:
-- *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Terry Eagleton
-- *Civilization and its Discontents*, Sigmund Freud
-- *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels
-- *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M.H. Abrams