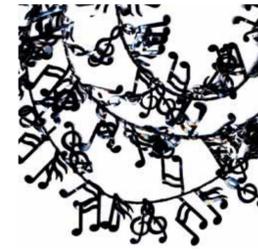
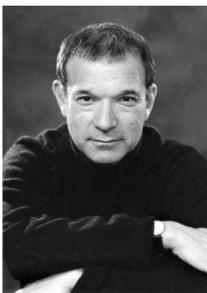
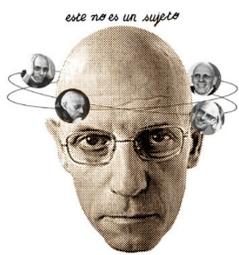
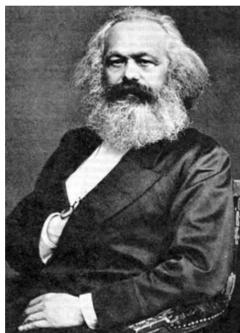
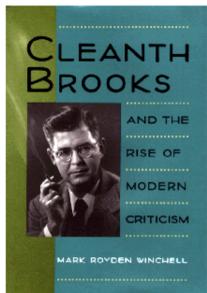
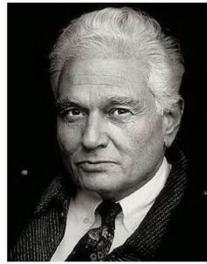


The Challenge of Teaching Theory: Becoming Jazz Players in a World of Ideas



Kelly Sultzbach, English



**A Few
Final Project
Paper Titles**

**Size Matters and
Soccer Doesn't: An
American Masculinity**

A New Historicist
& Marxist Cri-
tique of Cultural
Oppression and
Discrimination in
the *Harry Potter*
Novels

**The Différance
in Hip-Hop:
Kanye West's
Yeezus**

Domestic-ish
Beliefs on
Diversity
Deconstructed

A Marxist & Post-
Structuralist
Reading of
Empire in the
Melian Dialogue
(431-404 BC)

**With Regards to
Happily-Ever-
After: A Cultural
Studies & Decon-
struction Analysis
of *Blue Valentine*
and the Holly-
wood Romance**

Power Control and
Gender Equality in *50
Shades of Grey*

**Devils in the Wilder-
ness: The Character of
Wilderness in American
Horror Fiction**

<p>Challenges Identified Through Backwards Design Exercises:</p>	<p>#1: Reading Comprehension of Theoretical Texts</p>	<p>#2: Applying Theory to a Variety of "Texts"</p>	<p>#3: Innovative Final Projects that Encourage Students to Find Value in Theory</p>
<p>Course Design Adaptation:</p>	<p>Weekly Critical Reading Exercises To Do Before Class Discussion</p> <p>Early Critical Reading Assignments asked students to <u>identify key quotes and be ready to explain</u> what they meant, synthesize main ideas, <u>identify quotes that complicate the main idea</u> and sections they had questions about, as well as <u>finding key theoretical ideas represented in quotes from application articles</u> using those theories</p> <p>Later Critical Reading Assignments asked students to <u>develop their own positions</u> on readings by identifying ideas they agreed or disagreed with, <u>comparing potential strengths and weaknesses of different theories</u>, and noticing <u>how key theoretical terms were deployed</u> in ways that multiplied or varied their meaning</p>	<p>Applying Theories to in-class "Case Study" Texts such as "My Country 'Tis of Thee," The Reichstag Building, & <i>Fight Club</i></p> <p><u>After main theoretical concepts were mastered</u> and students had opportunities to read and <u>discuss articles written by other critics who were applying those theories to our shared class literary texts</u>, we worked on <u>in-class "case studies," applying theories to a wider range of non-fiction, film, and cultural texts.</u></p>	<p>Freedom to Apply 2 Course Theories to ANY KIND OF TEXT students wanted to work with.</p> <p>As early as the middle of the semester, reading exercises asked students to begin <u>evaluating potential texts and theories for the final project</u>. They wrote proposals and gave <u>in-class oral presentations of the proposals</u>, which generated <u>class questions and feedback</u>. Peer-review workshops were also designed.</p>
<p>Practical Implementation:</p>	<p>Students used their reading work in small groups to develop responses to questions inserted throughout an introductory lecture and to apply the theory to a "text" chosen for class discussion. Points were awarded for completing the exercises each week. Occasionally I would collect a round and comment on them.</p>	<p>Students were asked to develop theoretical interpretations of these texts in small groups, then we debated them in class. Paper assignments allowed students to create similar arguments on their own with more detailed use of theoretical quotes and analysis.</p>	<p>The scaffolded activities (above) allowed students multiple opportunities to switch texts, improve theory application, respond to counter-arguments, and revise before the final project was due. While I gave written comments on proposals, most feedback on organization and quality was generated by structured peer discussion.</p>