

English 504 Approaches to the Analysis of Writing (5)  
Fall 2003  
Tuesdays, 2-4:40, 318

Charles W. MacQuarrie  
E-mail cmacquarrie@csub.edu  
Telephone office 952-5098

## Syllabus

### TEXTS:

Corbett, Edward P.J. and Robert J. Connors. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. Oxford UP, 1998.

Toolan, Michael. *Language in Literature: An Introduction to Stylistics*. New York: Edward Arnold, 1998.

Traugott, Elizabeth and Mary Louise Pratt. *Introduction to Linguistics for Students of Literature*.

Readings Packet. of Restoration and Romantic poetry and prose. Available at the Copy House in the Stater Brothers mall at the corner of avenue L and 30<sup>th</sup> street west.

### Course description

This course is intended to bring together the linguistic analysis that students learn in “The Structure of English” and “Introduction to Linguistics” with the literary analysis, close reading skills, students practice in most literature courses. New representations of authorship (variously associated with hyper-rhetoric, multiculturalism, cultural criticism, and post-structuralism) contributed to the sharp decline of stylistics in rhetorical and literary studies in the 1990's. Yet even though style is now seldom taught in English classes, its importance for one's writing remains as great as ever. The purpose of this seminar, therefore, is to work towards formulating a stylistics that is consonant with current rhetorical and literary theory and that can be applied to a pedagogy of style. Students will be challenged to apply theories of prose style to their own writing, to their scholarly endeavors, and to their current or future pedagogies.

This course is an introduction to and survey of linguistic criticism of (primarily) literary texts. Though most forms of literary criticism require close reading and careful attention to language, stylistics requires and applies the principled methods of linguistics. We will be paying special attention to the stylistic conventions that characterize classicism and romanticism. We will begin by reading James Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760), as well as Hugh Blair's stylistic criticism of the work, and discussing the appearance of classical and romantic stylistics in this work. We will also use excerpts from Pope, Dryden, Grey, Coleridge, and Byron as primary texts.

We will consult and discuss secondary texts such as, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* by Corbett. We will move next to the more technical presentation in Traugott and Pratt's *Linguistics for Students of Literature*. Here we will examine style through all of the linguistic "levels," moving from sound to syntax to semantics and discourse. The Traugott and Pratt is somewhat dated (1980), as those of you who have had more recent training in syntax will immediately see, but it is the clearest "beginner's" approach to the combination of technical linguistics with literary and non-literary textual analysis. Moreover, the second half of the book raises a number of important aspects of discourse, those most relevant to literary texts--thematic roles analysis, speech act theory, indirect discourse, deixis, point of view. We will actually do some exercises from this book, not for evaluation, but for practice. Much of this type of analysis looks impossible or merely improbable until you try it, so try it we will. Concurrently with reading and practising on the Traugott and Pratt material, we will, of course be working through the primary source material that I discussed in the previous paragraph.

We will also dip into articles from various perspectives -- a range of critics including Deborah Cameron, Sara Mills, and Julia Kristeva in order to take up concerns of a feminist (perhaps gender would be a more inclusive term) stylistics, and we will discuss the paradigm of Saxon/Celt, Reason/Imagination, Classical/Romantic, Male/Female, which are at the root of much of this "scholarship." We will discuss problems as well as potential in this approach, especially as it relates to Restoration and Romantic prose and poetry.

Requirements:

Students will be expected to make write a short stylistic analysis every week on English writers from the Restoration and/or Romantic period.

Week 1 Introduction

Read Toolan 1-33 and Corbet 244-58 for next week.

Week 2 Classical Stylistics in the Restoration period

Analysis of excerpts from Pope and Dryden

3-4 page stylistic analysis of an excerpt from Pope due next week.

Read Toolan 33-91 and Traugot 210-44

Week 3 Stylistics in the Romantic era:

Read Hugh Blair and excerpts from MacPherson's Fragments.

3-4 page stylistic analysis of an excerpt from MacPherson due next week.

Week 4 More on MacPherson and the birth of Romantic style. Students read their MacPherson papers aloud to the class.

Toolan 92-129

Week 5 Thomas Gray

Stylistic analysis essay

Week 6 Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Analysis and essay on stylistic influence of MacPherson/Grey

Week 7 George Gordon, Lord Byron

Analysis and essay on style and stylistic influences

Week 8 John Keats

Analysis of selected Keats and an essay on style of Romanticism

Week 9 Mary Shelley

Analysis of style. Feminine/feminist stylistics. Essay on Mary Shelley's style and Feminist discourse.

Week 10 Review

Week 11 Final Exam

## **Waiting List Policy:**

On a waiting list, you are eligible for a place in the class

- 1. if you come to every class and**
- 2. if you turn in the work while you are there**

Being on a waiting list does not mean you are guaranteed a place in the class. It simply means you are welcome to wait for an opening in the class if you desire. If no one drops out of the section you're attending, no students can add.

As a result, you should be aware of the last day to add and have a back-up class chosen if you need another class. This plan is especially important for financial aid recipients, who must carry a full load to receive their financial aid. **Being on a waiting list does not count as a class toward your full load.**

## **Instructor-Initiated Drop Policy:**

This course is subject to the policy on instructor initiated drops. If the class is full and has a waiting list, I have the right to have you administratively dropped from the class by the end of the second week of the term if you have missed **three** consecutive class sessions **during the first week of the term** and have not contacted me with alternate plans. However, you should not assume that you will be automatically dropped from the course due to non-attendance.

## **Grading Criteria as Defined by the English Department, CSUB**

### An "A" paper—unusually competent

1. Avoids the obvious and thus gains insights on an analytical level that are illuminating and stimulating to an educated reader.
2. Develops ideas effectively and purposefully with appropriate evidence, examples, and illustrations.
3. Progresses by clearly ordered and necessary stages with paragraphs that are coherent and unified.
4. Uses a variety of punctuation conventionally and purposefully.
5. Has sentences which are skillfully constructed, concise, forceful, effective, and varied.
6. Demonstrates a concern with the right words and a willingness to be inventive with words and structures in order to produce a clearly identifiable style, even though at times the efforts may be too deliberate or fall short of the writer's intentions.

### A "B" paper—demonstrably competent

1. Usually avoids the obvious and offers interesting interpretations, but lacks the imaginative insights of the A paper.

2. Develops an idea with a clear and effective sense of order.
3. Progresses by ordered stages with paragraphs that are coherent and unified.
4. Uses mechanics and punctuation to help communicate the meaning and effect of the prose.
5. Has sentences which are correctly constructed with efficient use of coordination and subordination; demonstrates an understanding of variety.
6. Draws upon words adequate to express the writer's own thoughts and feelings and demonstrates an understanding of alternate ways of expression as a means of making stylistic choices possible.

#### A "C" paper—competent

1. Functions on the literal level, often depending on the self-evident.
2. Develops ideas minimally, often leaving the reader with unanswered questions.
3. Has a discernible, if mechanical organization.
4. Conforms to conventional grammar, mechanics, and punctuation.
5. Has sentences which are correctly constructed, though perhaps tending toward repetitious patterns with minimal or mechanical use of coordination and subordination.
6. Works with a limited range of words and thus becomes dependent on the clichés and colloquialisms most available; is also generally unaware of choices that affect style and thus is unable to control the effects a writer may seek.

#### A "D" paper—lacking competence

1. Exploits the obvious either because of a lack of understanding, an inability to read, a failure to grapple with a topic, or, in many cases, a lack of interest.
2. Wanders aimlessly because of a lack of overall conception or, in some instances, has a semblance of form without the development that makes the parts a whole.
3. Has a plan or method that is characterized by irrelevancy, redundancy, or inconsistency.
4. Frequently lacks careful mechanical and grammatical distinctions although some papers contain correct (if simple) sentences.
5. Has sentences which are not correctly constructed or which are monotonous or repetitious.
6. Is characterized by convoluted sentences that are close to the rapid associations of thought or by "safe" words (ones the writer ordinarily speaks or can spell) and by excessively simple sentence structures.

#### An "F" paper—incompetent

1. Doesn't fulfill the assignment; is unclear overall.
2. Lacks specific development; tends to wander aimlessly
3. Lacks logical and coherent progression.
4. Consistently lacks conventional grammar and mechanics so that communication is unclear.

## Bibliography

- Flannery, Kathryn T. *The Emperor's New Clothes: Literature, Literacy, and the Ideology of Style*. Pittsburgh: U Pittsburgh P, 1994.
- Hariman, Robert. *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*. U Chicago P, 1995.
- Hart, Roderick. *Modern Rhetorical Criticism*. 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1997.
- Ohmann, Richard. *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession, with a New Introduction*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996.
- Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Methuen, 1982.
- Weber, Jean Jacques, ed. *The Stylistics Reader: From Roman Jakobson to the Present*. New York: St. Martin's, 1996.

### Style textbooks

- Baker, Sheridan. *The Practical Stylist with Readings and Handbook*. New York: Longman, 1998.
- Haynes, John. *Style*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 Ways to Turn a Phrase*. Davis, CA: Hermagoras P, 1993.
- Richardson, Peter. *Style: A Pragmatic Approach*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1998.
- Strunk, William, and E.B. White, Jr. *The Elements of Style*. Cutchogue: Buccaneer Books, 1995.
- Vitanza, Victor J. *Writing for the World Wide Web*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1998.
- Williams, Joseph. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 5th ed. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997.

### Additional sources

- Catano, James V. "Stylistics." *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism*. Ed. Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997. Online. Available <http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/guide>.

Milic, Louis T. "Stylistics." *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Communication from Ancient Times to the Information Age*. Ed. Theresa Enos. New York: Garland , 1996. 703-709.

Purcell, William M., and David Snowball. "Style." *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Communication from Ancient Times to the Information Age*. Ed. Theresa Enos. New York: Garland, 1996. 698-703.

Colin MacCabe. New York: Methuen, 1987. 33-47.

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