

**Instructor:** Thomas C. Jones  
**Time/Location:** T 1:30-4:15 B431

**Email:** tjones@mica.edu  
**Office Hours:** tba

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Lois Tyson: *Critical Inquiry—A User Friendly Guide* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2006)  
+ weekly handouts

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES & STRUCTURE:**

The chief goal of Critical Inquiry is to help students gain an understanding of the intellectual and philosophical content of their own work and the work of others. Critical Inquiry calls for a vigorous investigation into one's personal values and the mechanisms by which these values are applied when the art maker creates and critiques. Critical Inquiry also asks students to assess the consequences of the value choices they make and apply every day.

This course gives students the practical opportunity to sharpen/extend their ability to articulate critical responses, both in written and spoken form. Thus, Critical Inquiry is designed to aid students as art critics by demonstrating the *link between critical thinking and art making* and by showing the powerfully complementary nature of language as medium of expression vital to the thoughtful artist.

Critical Inquiry asks students to engage in four critical activities:

- 1) Respond visually to various artifacts (literature/film)
- 2) Examine critically via language (written/spoken) the artifact & responses to the artifact
- 3) Engage in critical dialogue/debate
- 4) Write critically in an extended, formal manner and in a shorter, more expressive mode

Each session centers on an artifact, usually a text-based artifact such as a short story, poem, or film. **Each week students write “one-pagers” in response to the artifact** that will be at the center of discussion that week. One page, double-spaced, is not much more than a paragraph. It is enough to articulate one thought or thought process (e.g., Reader-Response—describing *what happens* in that first encounter with the artifact). Keep these one-pagers together as they comprise a **critical response journal** crucial in writing the final paper.

The class is divided into *four workgroups*, and the members of each group play a distinct role in each session. The roles shift from week to week, and all students will engage equally in each of these roles: producing a **visual response** to the artifact, leading a **critique** of the visual responses, producing and refining a **written response** to the artifact, and teaching the class about new modes of inquiry connected to the **theory** for that week.

In all of these activities, students are encouraged to respond in a wholly authentic and personal manner and, at the same time, to work hard to understand what is bound up in these responses—what these individual responses imply about language, literature, art, society, identity. In Critical Inquiry, students' critical and aesthetic views are both respected and interrogated, and for both reasons students' will be asked tough questions about those views and the manner of their presentation. It is impossible *not* to have a critical response to an artifact, but it is possible to be unable or unwilling to understand, articulate, or honestly investigate that response. It is this unwillingness that Critical Inquiry seeks to overcome.

At the end of the course, students write a **personal critical profile**. This is a more substantial paper (7-8 pages) in which each student outlines the sources and consequences of her or his values and intellectual habits as a young artist in relation to the theories/artifacts considered throughout L101. At

the start of course, the final essay may sound daunting. However, the work itself—the reading, the discussions, the visual responses, the essays, the one-pagers, and the critiques—is all designed to produce the research. So the digging will have been done. The task will be to synthesize the raw material into a cogent essay. In that synthesis lays the potential for deep personal satisfaction at gaining important insights into one’s artistic and intellectual nature, perhaps for the first time.

## **WORKGROUPS:**

For each class session, *in addition to the one-pagers*, each workgroup has specified responsibilities.

Students in one workgroup each produce a **visual response** to the artifact, using whatever medium or process they think appropriate. Visuals may illustrate an action/event, parallel a scene, recreate atmosphere, suggest a central conflict, reflect theme, heighten symbol, even satirize. Titles required.

The students in a second workgroup **critique** the visual creations of the first workgroup. The critique is a pervasive activity in the training of the young artist, a staple of the art school experience, and Critical Inquiry provides students with an opportunity not only to engage in the critique but also to examine the content and process, the assumptions and values, of the critique itself. After the critique is finished, the rest of the class will discuss visuals *and* comments made by critiquers about visuals.

The members of a third workgroup introduce the class to new modes of inquiry that are connected to the **theory** reading for the week. Students are encouraged to be creative and enterprising in how they go about this. For example, students may:

- Engage class in a game/activity that amplifies or explores a concept from the theory reading
- Demonstrate how a theoretical concept applies to an artifact from previous week—e.g., by reading past artifact through the ‘lens’ of current week’s theory
- Demonstrate how a theoretical concept applies to another artifact—e.g., any work of art available online (so everyone can see) or literature (20 copies of something short enough to read in 1-5 minutes)
- Keyword a specific theoretical concept and present/explain a particularly enlightening website
- Research a current social phenomenon and discuss its relevance to theoretical concept
- A handout (20 copies): cartoon strip, illustration, map, diagram, chart that visually represents a concept

When your group is up for theory, please **email** your intentions to your group members and to me *by Saturday at 5 p.m.* Cite a specific term or set of related terms, concept, or passage from a particular section of that week’s Tyson chapter, including page numbers, and briefly explain your intentions. This email (no attachments please) helps to avoid redundancy in the material covered and *constitutes five of the 40 points* for each theory presentation.

The members of a fourth workgroup *expand and revise* a one-page response (from a previous week) into a thoughtful and well-written **three-page essay**. This is an opportunity to revisit those first responses and, with the benefit of additional time and discussion, to push the questions further, formulate a more precise argument, provide more exact evidence, consider alternative positions, etc. For each three-pager, students have opportunity to revise. In fact, first drafts will not even receive points; only the substantially revised second draft will receive points. A revision is due anytime within two weeks of the original’s return. **Always include the original draft (with teacher comments) along with revised draft.**

**LIST OF ASSIGNMENTS & POINT VALUES:**

On page four is a breakdown of the assignments that also provides an at-a-glance view of the rotating course design. In a thousand-point system, each rotation constitutes 260 points. Students are encouraged to keep track of points. To estimate grade at any time during the semester, simply divide points so far received into points so far available.

**WRITTEN WORK:**

All assignments should be **typed, double-spaced**, with a **standard 12-point font**. One page means one full page of writing, no matter how much space title and name take up at the top of the page. Multiple pages should always be numbered and stapled. If work must be emailed, please remember to both attach the assignment *and* paste it into the email body itself in case attachment won't open. Be sure to ask me about emailed assignments if they are not returned to you.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Participation is essential to the success of the class. To encourage participation, assignments will only be accepted from students who productively attend that week's class session or who have been excused from the session. This means that **each unexcused absence may cost 30-80 points**. Please communicate with me regarding any absence, preferably in advance, and **be prepared to verify excuse; missed visual and theory points can be made up only with a verified excuse**. Students are responsible for getting any handouts and assignment information from the missed class. Note: Film screening attendance is also required.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

MICA is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of MICA in this respect. Students are urged to avoid any behavior that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, or misrepresentation of facts. Academic dishonesty, like the *intentional or unintentional* claiming of another's writing or ideas as one's own, can result in suspension or expulsion from the Institute.

**WRITING STUDIO:**

The Writing Studio (Bunting 452) offers tutoring to all MICA students—undergraduates, graduates, and those for whom English is a second language—in every phase of the writing process and on a wide variety of projects (e.g., three-pagers and final paper). For additional info, call 410-225-2418, email [writing@mica.edu](mailto:writing@mica.edu), or refer to <http://www.mica.edu/learning>.

**ADA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT:**

In order to provide the highest quality educational experience for every student, MICA is committed to compliance with the ADA/Section 504. Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me at [tjones@mica.edu](mailto:tjones@mica.edu) to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Learning Resource Center at 410-225-2416, in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional info refer to <http://www.mica.edu/learningresourcecenter>.

**HEALTH & SAFETY COMPLIANCE** from the Office of Environmental Health & Safety:

The Office works to provide EHS support for all members of the MICA community. The primary goal of the Office is to be proactive in establishing a culture of safety in which each member of the community shares ownership responsibility that allows each person to be involved in maintaining a healthy work and studying environment. EHS uses several methods to achieve this objective.

First, the EHS office looks at the totality of the EHS requirements by combining campus needs with

the state and federal requirements and clearly communicating the shared policies and procedures. Second, EHS identifies training needs and develops guidelines for the use of equipment, materials, and procedures. Third, we ensure compliance with policies through evaluations, inspections, and committees.

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to understand health and safety policies relevant to their individual activities and to review MICA's Emergency Action Plan, as well as to participate in training, drills, etc. It is also each faculty member's responsibility to coordinate with the EHS office to ensure that all risks associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department guidelines. Each of the Academic Departments also publish EHS procedures and policies such as dress code, the use of personal protective equipment, fire safety, training, and how to properly dispose of chemical waste., Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, it is the responsibility of the faculty to review, test, and assess each student's awareness of basic safety procedures, such as evacuation routes, use of chemicals, fire prevention, and all other guidelines posted by the EHS (e.g. smoking policy, independent studio policies, pet policy, disposing of hazardous and chemical waste, etc.).

For any question relating to EHS, please contact Denelle Bowser, EHS manager, at [dbowser@mica.edu](mailto:dbowser@mica.edu) or by calling 410-462-7593. You can also visit the department online at [www.mica.edu/ehs](http://www.mica.edu/ehs).

#### **N1H1 PANDEMIC INFORMATION:**

What do I do if I get sick? *If you are sick consider the following:*

- Limit contact with other people as much as possible. **DO NOT GO TO CLASS!** Seek medical attention at Mt. Royal Medical Assoc. but please call ahead (410) 225-8855.
- Students who are sick should self-isolate for at least 24 hours after any fever is gone.
- Make sure to get plenty of rest and drink clear fluids to keep from being dehydrated.
- Avoid normal activities including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

#### *Reporting Procedures:*

- Contact the Office of Student Affairs at 410-225-2422 who will assist with plans for self-isolation, arranging for meals, and any other necessary support.
- Contact any faculty whose class you anticipate missing and inform them of your illness. Work with them to make arrangements for catching up on any missed work. If you have difficulty reaching your faculty or if your illness lingers to the point where you miss two or more of any one class contact the Office of Student Affairs.

## L101.06 ~ LIST OF ASSIGNMENTS & POINT VALUES

### ROTATION ONE (Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5)

**WEEK 2:** New Criticism / "...Walk Away from Omelas" **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

**WEEK 3:** Reader-Response / "Where Are You Going..." **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

**WEEK 4:** Deconstructive Crit / "About the Typefaces..." **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

**WEEK 5:** Psychoanalytic / "My Mother's Memoirs..." **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

ROTATION ONE: \_\_/260

### ROTATION TWO (Weeks 7, 9, 10, 11)

**WEEK 7:** Feminist Criticism / "Series 7" **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

**WEEK 9:** GLQ Crit / "Having a Coke w/ You" **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

**WEEK 10:** Marxist Criticism / "Wall Street...Our Intimacy" **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

**WEEK 11:** African-American Crit / "Melvin in the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade" **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

ROTATION TWO: \_\_/260

### ROTATION THREE (Weeks 12, 13, 14, 15)

**WEEK 12:** Postcolonial / "Rikki Tikki Tavi" **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

**WEEK 13:** New Historicism / "Afterimages" **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

**WEEK 14:** Cultural Criticism / "Kinky" **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

**WEEK 15:** Structuralist Crit / "Résumé" **One-Pager:** \_\_\_\_/30  
**Visual:** \_\_\_\_/50  
**Theory:** \_\_\_\_/40 email sent on time yes no  
**Essay:** \_\_\_\_/50 original points: \_\_\_\_/50

ROTATION THREE: \_\_/260

Rotations, Subtotal: \_\_\_\_/780  
Participation: \_\_\_\_/50  
Personal Critical Profile: \_\_\_\_/220  
**Total points:** \_\_\_\_/1000

# T H E S C H E D U L E

## **WEEK #1 : August 31** Course Introduction

— ROTATION ONE: Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5 —

### **WEEK #2 : September 7**

Artifact: Ursula K. Le Guin—“The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”

print out this story from <http://harelbarzilai.org/words/omelas.txt>

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 5: New Criticism

note: you are not required to read the *Great Gatsby* section at end of each chapter

Group One: Visuals

Group Two: 3-Page Essay

Group Three: Critique

Group Four: Theory

### **WEEK #3 : September 14**

Artifact: Joyce Carol Oates—“Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”

print out this story from the Joyce Carol Oates Home Page: <http://jco.usfca.edu/works/wgoing/text.html>

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 6: Reader-Response Criticism

Group One: Theory

Group Two: Visuals

Group Three: 3-Page Essay

Group Four: Critique

### **WEEK #4 : September 21**

Artifact: Jonathan S. Foer—“About the Typefaces Not Used In This Edition”

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 8: Deconstructive Criticism

Group One: Critique

Group Two: Theory

Group Three: Visuals

Group Four: 3-Page Essay

### **WEEK #5 : September 28**

Artifact: Russell Banks—“My Mother’s Memoirs, My Father’s Lie, & Other True Stories”

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 2: Psychoanalytic Criticism

Group One: 3-Page Essay

Group Two: Critique

Group Three: Theory

Group Four: Visuals

— ROTATION TWO: Weeks 7, 9, 10, 11 —

**WEEK #6 : October 5**

Screening: TBA

**WEEK #7 : October 12**

Artifact: TBA

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 4: Feminist Criticism

[note: section on French Feminism is optional]

Group One: Visuals

Group Two: 3-Page Essay

Group Three: Critique

Group Four: Theory

**WEEK #8 : October 19**

Fall BREAK: 10/16-10/19

**WEEK #9 : October 26**

Artifact: Frank O'Hara—"Having a Coke with You"

print out this poem from <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=171381>

and then listen to O'Hara read poem at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDLwivcFe8>

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 10: Lesbian, Gay, & Queer Criticism

Group One: Theory

Group Two: Visuals

Group Three: 3-Page Essay

Group Four: Critique

**WEEK #10 : November 2**

Artifact: Timothy S. Levitch—"Wall Street: The Story of What Happened to Our Intimacy"

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 3: Marxist Criticism

Group One: Critique

Group Two: Theory

Group Three: Visuals

Group Four: 3-Page Essay

**WEEK #11 : November 9**

Artifact: Dana Johnson—"Melvin in the Sixth Grade"

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 11: African-American Criticism

Group One: 3-Page Essay

Group Two: Critique

Group Three: Theory

Group Four: Visuals

— ROTATION THREE: Weeks 12, 13, 14, 15 —

**WEEK #12 : November 16**

Artifact: Rudyard Kipling—“Rikki Tikki Tavi”

print out this story from <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/mongoose/www/rtt.html>  
as well as this related article from <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/lr/2002/06/02/stories/2002060200150200.html>

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 12: Postcolonial Criticism

Group One: Visuals

Group Two: 3-Page Essay

Group Three: Critique

Group Four: Theory

**WEEK #13 : November 23**

Artifact: Audre Lorde—“Afterimages”

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 9: New Historicism

Group One: Theory

Group Two: Visuals

Group Three: 3-Page Essay

Group Four: Critique

**WEEK #14 : November 30**

Artifact: Denise Duhamel—“Kinky”

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 9: Cultural Criticism

Group One: Critique

Group Two: Theory

Group Three: Visuals

Group Four: 3-Page Essay

**WEEK #15 : December 7**

Artifact: Luc Sante—“Résumé”

Theory: Tyson, Chapter 7: Structuralist Criticism

Group One: 3-Page Essay

Group Two: Critique

Group Three: Theory

Group Four: Visuals

**WEEK #16 : December 14**

Personal Critical Profile due in class