



THEORIES OF
CRITICAL READING
FROM TEXT TO PARATEXT

Course description

"Learning how to be a literary critic is, among other things, a matter of learning how to deploy certain techniques. Like a lot of techniques – scuba-diving, for example, or playing the trombone – these are more easily picked up in practice than in theory. All of them involve a closer attention to language than one would usually lavish on a recipe or a laundry list." (Terry Eagleton, *How to Read Literature*, 7)

In this course, students will learn to read literature critically, with close attention to language, form and the ways in which texts create meaning. Participants will be encouraged to engage with different traditions of literary criticism – including practical criticism and approaches informed by theory – and will have the opportunity to practise their critical reading skills on a range of primary texts.

Syllabus

Week 1 (7 April 2023)	Good Friday – No class
Week 2 (14 April 2023)	Introduction
No set reading.	
Week 3 (21 April 2023)	Practical Criticism
Reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Introductory' and 'Poem V' from I. A. Richards, <i>Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgement</i> (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner, 1930)
Week 4 (28 April 2023)	Close Reading
Reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Openings' from Terry Eagleton, <i>How to Read Literature</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013)
Week 5 (5 May 2023)	Structuralism
Primary reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'The Structural Study of Myth' from Claude Lévi-Strauss, <i>Structural Anthropology</i>, trans. by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963)
Secondary reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Introduction: <i>The Implied Order: Structuralism</i>' from <i>Literary Theory: An Anthology</i>, ed. by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (New York: Wiley, 2017)

Week 6 (12 May 2023)	Semiology
Reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selections from Roland Barthes, <i>Mythologies</i>, trans. by Richard Howard and Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012)
Week 7 (19 May 2023)	Post-Structuralism
Primary reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The Death of the Author' and 'From Work to Text' from Roland Barthes, <i>The Rustle of Language</i>, trans. by Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)
Secondary reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Post-Structuralism' from Terry Eagleton, <i>Literary Theory: An Introduction</i> (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996)
Week 8 (26 May 2023)	Deconstruction
Primary reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbara Johnson, 'Writing' from <i>Critical Terms for Literary Study</i>, ed. by Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990)
Secondary reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Post-Structuralism' from Terry Eagleton, <i>Literary Theory: An Introduction</i> (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996)
Week 9 (2 June 2023)	Pentecost Break – no class
Week 10 (9 June 2023)	Cultural Materialism
Primary reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Foreword: Cultural Materialism' and 'Introduction: Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism and the New Historicism' from <i>Political Shakespeare</i>, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985)
Secondary reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'New Historicism and Cultural Materialism' from Peter Barry, <i>Beginning Theory</i>, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995)
Week 11 (16 June 2023)	Feminist Criticism
Reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kathleen McLuskie, 'The Patriarchal Bard: Feminist Criticism and Shakespeare: <i>King Lear</i> and <i>Measure for Measure</i>' from <i>Political Shakespeare</i>, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985)
Week 12 (23 June 2023)	Paratexts
Reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Introduction' from Gérard Genette, <i>Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation</i>, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
Week 13 (30 June 2023)	How to Read a Page
Reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'How to Read a Page: Modernism and Material Textuality' from George Bornstein, <i>Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
Weeks 14 & 15 (7 & 14 July 2023)	Student Presentations