



LONDON SOUTH BANK
UNIVERSITY

unit guide

Critical Approaches to Literature

PCA-2-CAP

Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences

2006/7

become what you want to be

Table of Contents

1.0	Unit Details	3
2.0	Short Description	3
3.0	Aims of the Unit	3
4.0	Learning Outcomes	3
4.1	Knowledge and Understanding	3
4.2	Transferable Skills	3-4
5.0	Assessment of the Unit.....	4
6.0	Introduction to Studying the Unit.....	4
6.1	Overview of the Main Content	4
6.2	Overview of Types of Classes	4
6.3	Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time	4-5
7.0	The Programme of Teaching, Learning and Assessment.....	5-7
8.0	Learning Resources	7
8.1	Core Materials	7
8.2	Optional Materials.....	7-10

1.0 UNIT DETAILS

Unit Title:	Critical Approaches to Literature
Unit Level:	2
Unit Reference Number:	PCA-2-CAP
Credit Value:	15 CAT points
Student Study Hours:	150
Contact Hours:	45
Private Study Hours:	105
Course(s):	English
Year and Semester	2006/7, 1
Unit Coordinator:	Vassilena Parashkevova
UC Contact Details (Tel, Email, Room)	vassilena@tiscali.co.uk
Subject Area:	English
Summary of Assessment Method:	an in-class timed exercise (30%) and a 2,000 word essay (70%)

2.0 SHORT DESCRIPTION

This unit introduces the conceptual frameworks and methodological vocabularies of literary analysis.

3.0 AIMS OF THE UNIT

- To build upon your earlier experience of reading and analysing literary texts
- To introduce you to the conceptual frameworks and methodological vocabularies of key theories of literary analysis, applying them to a range of literary texts.

4.0 LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding

On successful completion of this unit, you should:

- be familiar with both the conceptual frameworks and methodological vocabularies of key theories of literary analysis
- be able to critically compare and contrast the different approaches of these theories
- be able to apply them to particular texts and groups of texts

4.2 Transferable Skills

You will have the opportunity to develop:

- Interactive skills through seminar and workshop activities
- Oral communication skills through seminar discussion

- Public reading/speaking skills through presentations
- An understanding of different theoretical approaches and the ability to put them into practice

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

The unit will be assessed in two parts:

Assessment A: In week 8 there will be an in-class timed exercise amounting to 30% of the total assessment. This will be a seen paper, made up of short-answer questions, which you will receive one week before the test, and one longer piece of writing.

Assessment B: A 2,000 word essay amounting to 70% of the total assessment. Essay titles will be given out during the semester.

Reminder re plagiarism - the act of plagiarism is to pass off as your own work, the ideas or thoughts of someone else, without giving credit to that other person by quoting the reference to the original. Your work will be penalized if you do this. Your attention is drawn to the LIS Help Sheet 04, available on the LISA website - this is a very helpful introductory guide for students on the subject of plagiarism, and it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with it.

6.0 INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE UNIT

6.1 Overview of the Main Content

During this unit, we will examine and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of a range of major theoretical methods of critical analysis and apply them to literary texts. The existence of a variety of critical theories suggests that there can never be a complete, universal mode of criticism which would embrace all requirements of every type of critical practice or 'exhaust' the meaning of a particular work of literature.

Some of the issues that we will discuss will revolve around questions such as:

- Does literature refer to or correspond to something outside texts?
- What mental processes, whether the writer's or the reader's, contribute to the production and interpretation of literary texts?
- To what extent are texts 'autonomous'? What are the formal and structural properties of texts?
- How do social, economic, geographical and historical processes condition the production of literary texts?

6.2 Overview of Types of Classes

A one-hour lecture followed by a two-hour seminar.

The lectures will contextualise the theoretical approach under investigation. In the seminars, we will discuss key texts within the framework of pre-set questions.

6.3 Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

It is very important that as well as attending classes, you should spend study time outside of the classroom reading and thinking about the primary texts and any other

designated reading. This will considerably enhance the quality of seminars and the benefits that you gain from taking part in them.

7.0 THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

You will be encouraged to write full answers to the topic questions in the unit booklet and to revise your answers after each seminar discussion. This practice will help you to prepare for the assessment test and essay.

Important Note: *It is essential that you have your own copy of the text(s) to be read for each week. You will not be able to share texts. The Rivkin and Ryan Reader will be used throughout the degree and you are strongly encouraged to purchase your own copy.*

Unless otherwise indicated, the reading can be found in the core text reader (page numbers to the reader are given in brackets); other reading will be found after the question sheets in the unit handout booklet.

Week 1 Introduction to theoretical approaches to literature

Lecture: The background to what we have come to accept as 'doing' English Literature. Asking questions of our assumptions about the nature of Literature and the role of the critic.

Seminar: An exercise in critical analysis

Week 2 The rise of 'English'

Lecture: How has 'English' become a discipline for study? Liberal Humanism and the study of literature. The development and growth of the canon of literary texts.

Seminar reading: extracts from Walter Pater, 'The Renaissance', Matthew Arnold, 'Sweetness and Light' and F. R. Leavis, 'The Great Tradition'; George Eliot, from *Adam Bede*

Week 3 Language and meaning: Formalism

Lecture: An exploration of literary technique and its role in the aesthetic of literature. The beginning of an 'objective' response to aesthetics.

Seminar reading: Viktor Shklovsky, 'Art as Technique' (17), Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'Spring', James Tate, 'I am a Finn'

Week 4 Language and meaning: Signs and signification

Lecture: What is language and how does it mean? Introducing the idea of language as a system of signs (sounds and figures) requiring collective cooperation. Implications for aesthetics and ideas.

Seminar reading: Ferdinand de Saussure, from *A Course in General Linguistics* (76); Christina Stead, from *The Man Who Loved Children*

Week 5 Post-structuralism: The signifier

Lecture: What exactly is the signifier and what does it signify? How do signifying systems work and what does this imply about Truth?

Seminar reading: Extracts from Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences'; William Wordsworth, 'Strange Fits of Passion I Have Known'; Robert Frost, 'The Road Not Taken'

Week 6 The role of the reader

Lecture: The role of the author in constructing meaning. What role does the reader play in (re-)creating the meaning of a text?

Seminar reading: Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', Italo Calvino, from *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*

Week 7 Revision session: preparing for the test

Lecture: There will be no lecture this week

Seminar: This seminar will be run as a question-and-answer workshop based on the last 6 weeks' work. **The test paper for week 8 will be handed out at the end of this session.**

Week 8 In-class timed exercise: Assessment A (30%)

The seen paper will consist of two parts. You should split your time evenly between them. In the first part you will be asked to answer questions based on theoretical material studied so far and you will be expected to use quotations from appropriate texts. The second part will consist of an exercise in critical analysis of a literary text that will be provided.

You will NOT be allowed to bring notes or books into the seminar room.

Week 9 Psychoanalytic criticism

Lecture: What is the link between the psyche and the imagination? How are the processes of the mind articulated in language? What are the implications for collective and individual identity?

Seminar reading: Sigmund Freud, from *The Interpretation of Dreams* (128); poetry from Blake and Rossetti

Week 10 Psychoanalytic criticism

Lecture: The Self and the recognition of difference. What do we need language for? What does 'I' mean?

Seminar reading: Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage' (178); Angela Carter, 'The Bloody Chamber'

Week 11 Ideology: Marxism

Lecture: Literature, like any cultural artefact, is produced within a network of social and political relations. An examination of these relations: how the literary text is both a product and a reflection of the society within which it is generated.

Seminar reading: Karl Marx, from *The German Ideology* (250), Karl Marx, 'Wage Labor and Capital' (262); D.H. Lawrence, 'The Rocking Horse Winner'

Week 12 Ideology and the State

Lecture: The development of the individual within the social system. The production and control of information, and the dissemination of power.

Seminar reading: Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' (294); Bharati Mukherjee, 'Loose Ends'

8.0 LEARNING RESOURCES

8.1 Core Materials

Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan (eds.) 1998. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Blackwell
801 LIT

It is also recommended that students should buy a dictionary or glossary of literary or critical terms. Copies that can be found in the Perry Library are:

Abrams, M. H. 1993. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers
Key Text 803 ABR

Hawthorn, J. 1998. *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*, London: Arnold
801 HAW (1998)
Reference Only 801 (2000)

8.2 Optional Materials

RECOMMENDED READING

Works particularly useful for the unit are in bold type:

Barry, Peter 1995. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, Manchester University Press
801. 95

Bennett, A. and N. Royle 1995. *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf
801.95 BEN

Bristow, Joseph 1997. *Sexuality*, New York and London: Routledge
306.7 BRI

Culler, Jonathan 1997. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press
801 CUL

Green, Keith and Jill LeBihan 1996. *Critical Theory and Practice*, London: Routledge
801.95 GRE

Hawkes, David 1996. *Ideology*, London: Routledge [missing]
140 HAW

Hillis Miller, J. 1988. "The Critic as Host" in ed. Lodge, David *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, London: Longman, 278-86
801.95

Jefferson, Ann and David Robey 1982. *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*, London: Batsford
801 MOD

Lodge, David (ed.) 1988. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, London: Longman
801.95

Lynn, Steven 1997. *Texts and Contexts: Writing About Literature with Critical Theory*, London: Longman
801.95

Sim, Stuart and Borin van Loon 2001. *Introducing Critical Theory*, Cambridge: Icon
301.1 SIM

Wolfreys, Julian (ed.) 1999. *Literary Theories: A Reader and Guide*, Edinburgh: EUP
801.95

BACKGROUND READING

Arnold, Matthew 1963. *Culture and Anarchy*, Cambridge
370.1 ARN

Barry, Peter (ed.) 1987. *Issues in Contemporary Critical Theory: A Casebook*, Basingstoke: Macmillan
801 ISS

Barthes, Roland 1972. *Mythologies*, London: Cape
410 BAR (1957, 1972, 1993)

Barthes, Roland 1975. *S/Z*, New York: Hill and Wang
149.946 BAR (1975)
302.2 BAR (1990)

Barthes, Roland 1990. *The Pleasure of the Text*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell
801.3 BAR

Bertens, Hans 2001. *Literary Theory: The Basics*, London and New York: Routledge
801.95

Cixous, Helene & C. Clement 1996. *The Newly Born Woman*, London: I. B. Tauris
305.42 CIX

Culler, Jonathan 1983. *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, London: Routledge
801.95 CUL

Derrida, Jacques 1978. *Writing and Difference*, London: Routledge
194 DER
194 DER DER

Eagleton, Terry 1976. *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory*, London: NLB
801.95 EAG

Eagleton, Terry 1983. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell
801 EAG (1983)
801.95 EAG (1996)

Eco, Umberto 1984. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Bloomington: Indiana UP
801.95

Eco, Umberto 1990. *The Limits of Interpretation*, Bloomington: Indiana UP
801.95 ECO

Eliot, T.S 1975. *Selected Prose*, London: Faber
828.9 ELI

Freud, Sigmund 1958. *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976
150.1952 FRE (1976)
154.63 FRE (1999)

Hawkes, Terence 1977. *Structuralism and Semiotics*, London: Methuen
149.946 HAW

Held, David 1990. *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*, Cambridge: Polity Press
301.01 HEL

Hoggart, Richard 1956. *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working Class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments*, London: Penguin, 1992
302.2 HOG

Jameson, Fredric 1972. *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*, Princeton University Press
415 JAM

Jameson, Fredric 1981. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, London: Methuen
809.93532 JAM (1981)
809.3034 JAM (1989)

Leavis, F.R 1962. *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad*, Harmondsworth: Penguin
823.09 LEA

**Lodge, David 1992. *The Art of Fiction*, London: Penguin
808.3 LOD**

Spivak, Gayatri C. 1988. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, New York and London: Routledge
306 SPI

Williams, Raymond 1963. *Culture and Society: Coleridge to Orwell*, London: Hogarth, 1987
909.7 WIL

**Williams, Raymond 1976. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, London: Fontana
300.3 WIL (1076, 1983)**

Wright, Elizabeth 1998. *Psychoanalytic Criticism: A Reappraisal*, Cambridge: Polity
801.95 WRI

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON ESSAY-WRITING, LITERARY THEORY, GRAMMAR, AND GRADUATE CAREERS IN ENGLISH

Carey, Gary and Snodgrass, Mary Ellen 1999. *A Multicultural Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co.

Fabb, N and Durant, A. 1993. *How to Write Essays, Dissertations and Theses in Literary Studies*, London: Longman

Foley, Mark and Hall, Diane 2003. *Longman Advanced Learners' Grammar*, Harlow: Longman, 2003

ARIES: Assisted Revision in English Style

<http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/SESL/STELLA/ARIES/>

ARIES is a self-access learning programme for students who want to improve their punctuation and spelling. These are accompanied by self-correcting interactive exercises and tests, so that you can monitor your progress.

The Internet Grammar of English

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/>

The freely available Internet Grammar is aimed at university undergraduates with a good command of English but little knowledge of grammar. It contains a comprehensive online grammar with searchable index and glossary as well as a range of exercises.

Times Literary Supplement

<http://www.the-tls.co.uk/>

The Times Literary Supplement website features essays and critical reviews of recently published books as well as short stories and poetry by leading contemporary authors.

Prospects – Graduate Careers in English

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Prospects is the official graduate careers website. It has a section entitled 'Options with different subjects' from which it is possible to find careers information specifically for English graduates. This includes suggestions of career areas and skills gained whilst studying. The 'What do graduates do?' section contains statistical data on career choices by discipline.