

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	: Theoretical Positions and Interpretive Practices
Course Code	: ENG387
Recommended Study Year	: 2 nd & 3 rd Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours	: 2 hours Lecture/week 1 hour Tutorial/week
Category in Major Programme	: Disciplinary Elective
Prerequisite(s)	: N/A
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Exclusion(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

This course explores a number of important theoretical positions that are available in contemporary English studies and demonstrates how they can be used to approach written texts in particular and to understand cultural activities in general. The emphasis of the course is on how to relate selected critical theories to students' own reading and writing practices.

Aims

1. To introduce different theoretical positions available for the study of literature
2. To examine the ethical or aesthetic orientations that distinguish those theories from one another
3. To investigate the role of the reader/audience in the study of literature

Learning Outcomes

Students are expected to:

1. Become familiar with the important schools of thoughts in contemporary literary study;
2. Understand the basic theoretical concepts underlying important contemporary approaches to literature, and;
3. Be able to generate and articulate personal responses to literary texts as well as to explain the premises and assumptions underlying such personal responses.

Indicative Content

The theoretical positions and approaches featured in this course are:

PRACTICAL and NEW CRITICISM,
MARXISM, CULTURAL MATERIALISM and NEW HISTORICISM,
FEMINISM and GENDER STUDIES.
POSTCOLONIALISM and MULTICULTURALISM.

These major theoretical schools in the field of English studies are characterized by sharply different intellectual goals and procedural priorities. For this reason, it is probably sensible to present each of the above positions in terms of the following:

1. Overview and representative figures or important issues
2. Worked examples
3. Student activities

Teaching Method

There will be both lectures and group discussions in this course. Lectures will provide a broad framework which connects various works to be read and specific and individual analyses will be conducted in small groups. Students will be assigned selected texts to read prior to the lectures, and they will be expected to discuss these texts among themselves. The exercises during the term will give students opportunities to apply the background provided in the lectures and the insights gained in the group discussions to their analysis of specific texts. Some texts may be assigned and examined, but not specifically taught in class, so as to bring students to independent reading.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

The progress of learning will be measured through class discussions, presentations, exercises and a final test.

Assessment

Continuous assessment (60%)

- 30% Mid-term test
- 30% critical essay

Final test (40%)

Required Readings

Pope, Rob, *The English studies book: an introduction to language, literature and culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

Complementary Readings

Bertens, Hans, *Literary theory: the basics*, London: Routledge, 2001.

Eagleton, Terry, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

----- *After Theory*, London: New York: Allen Lane, 2003.

Gorden, Michael et al. (ed), *The Johns Hopkins guide to literary theory & criticism*, Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.

Waugh, Patricia. (ed), *Literary Theory and Criticism: an Oxford guide*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Selden, Raman et al., *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 4th ed., London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997.

Abrams, M.H., *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 6th edition, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1993.

Wolfreys, Julian et al., *Key concepts in literary theory*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.

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