

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	: Theoretical Positions and Interpretive Practices
Course Code	: ENG3387
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd or 4 th Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture-tutorial mode
Class Contact Hours	: 2-hour lecture per week 1-hour tutorial per week
Category	: Discipline Elective (Contemporary Literary Strand)
Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s)	: Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	: Nil

Brief Course Description

ENG3387 explores a number of important theoretical positions 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. More specifically, this course will be examining how cultural texts in general and literary texts in particular can be interpreted from the perspectives of practical and new criticism, Marxism, cultural materialism and new historicism, feminism and gender studies, post-colonialism and multiculturalism. The emphasis of the course is on how to relate these critical theories to students' own reading and writing practices.

Aims

This course aims to accomplish the following:

1. to introduce different theoretical positions available for the study of literature;
2. to examine the ethical and/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. be knowledgeable about the major schools of thoughts in contemporary literary study;
2. understand the basic theoretical concepts undergirding these 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 Contents

The theoretical positions and approaches featured in this course are:

- Practical and New Criticism;
- Marxism, Cultural Materialism and New Historicism;
- Feminism and Gender Studies;
- Post-colonialism and Multi-culturalism.

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:

- overview and representative figures or important issues
- worked examples
- student activities

Teaching Method

There will be both lectures and tutorial 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 achievements made by students will be measured through one presentation, two essays, and a final test. In each of these situations, key concepts and main principles will be raised to gauge students' familiarity with the theoretical models covered in the course; unseen literary texts will also be given to students for their analysis to measure their ability to apply those theoretical tools in their own reading.

No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcome
1.	Task 1	1-3
2.	Task 2	1-3
3.	Task 3	1-3
4.	Task 4	1-3

Assessment

Continuous Assessment: 100%

Assessment Task #1 (10 points)

Presentation on a reading assignment

Assessment Task #2 (30 points)

Write an essay to perform a Practical/New Critical analysis of a given text

Assessment Task #3 (30 points)

Write an Essay to perform a Feminist or Post-colonial analysis of a given text

Assessment Task #4 (30 points)

Final Test

- 1) to define and explain the key concepts that are related to various critical schools (10 points)
- 2) to attempt a Marxist analysis of a given text (20 points)

Alignment of Intended Learning Outcomes and Assessment Tasks

Intended Learning Outcomes	Assessment Tasks
ILO1 (be knowledgeable about the major schools of thoughts in contemporary literary study)	AT1, AT2, AT3, AT4
ILO2 (understand the basic theoretical concepts undergirding these approaches to literature, and)	AT1, AT2, AT3, AT4
ILO3 (be able to generate and articulate personal responses to literary texts as well as to explain the premises and assumptions underlying such personal responses)	AT1, AT2, AT3, AT4

Required Readings

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

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Oxford: Heinemann Education, 1996.

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.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the stipulated course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students should be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. For example, presentation of another person's work (including the borrowing of exact phrases, summarized ideas or even footnotes/citations) without proper acknowledgement of the source is not allowed. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.