

Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice. The information below is provided as a guide for course selection and is not binding in any form, and should not be used to purchase course materials.

COURSE SYLLABUS

ENGL 603

LITERARY THEORY AND PRACTICE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the relationship between contemporary literary theory and critical practice, with emphasis on using a variety of critical approaches to analyze literary texts.

RATIONALE

This course seeks to demystify literary theory and study it as a practical tool for interpreting literary texts. As such, ENGL 603 will introduce a range of critical theories, along with suggestions for and examples of their use in interpretation and will offer the student ample opportunity to try out a variety of critical approaches in a number of analytical essays. Such practice will help the student become more informed about and comfortable with the field of literary criticism, will strengthen his/her critical thinking and writing abilities, and will prepare him/her to share these approaches with others.

I. PREREQUISITE

For information regarding prerequisites for this course, please refer to the [Academic Course Catalog](#).

II. REQUIRED RESOURCE PURCHASE

Click on the following link to view the required resource(s) for the term in which you are registered: <http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/liberty.htm>

III. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS FOR LEARNING

- A. Computer with basic audio/video output equipment
- B. Internet access (broadband recommended)
- C. Blackboard [recommended browsers](#)
- D. Microsoft Office

IV. MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Explain the commitments of the major schools of contemporary literary criticism.
- B. Define and use terminology from each of the major schools.
- C. Evaluate the usefulness of a variety of critical approaches.
- D. Employ a variety of critical approaches in analyzing literary texts.

- E. Test contemporary critical approaches against a Christian worldview.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Textbook readings and lecture presentations
- B. Course Requirements Checklist

After reading the Course Syllabus and [Student Expectations](#), the student will complete the related checklist found in Module/Week 1.

- C. Discussion Board Forums (2)

Discussion boards are collaborative learning experiences. Therefore, the student is required to provide a thread in response to the provided prompt for each forum. Each thread must be 500–550 words, include at least 2 citations from the assigned readings, and demonstrate course-related knowledge. In addition to the thread, the student is required to reply to 2 other classmates' threads. Each reply must be at least 250–300 words, and must include at least 1 citation from the assigned readings.

- D. Application Essays (3)

These application essays provide an opportunity for the student to test out a theory in its practical effects by using it to interpret a poem. For each of the three essays, the student will select an approach covered since the previous application essay was due (so for example, the student may choose New Criticism or Structuralism for Module/Week 2, Political Criticism or Deconstruction for Module/Week 4, and New Historicism, Cultural Studies, or Postcolonialism for Module/Week 6) and will put into practice the interpretive principles that undergird that theory as laid out in the assigned reading. Select a poem to analyze from the list provided on Blackboard. These papers should be 750–1,000 words and should use no outside sources.

- E. Research Topic

At the end of Module/Week 3, the student will submit their topics for their research paper. This will consist of the title of the novel being looked at, an explanation for why that novel was selected, and a brief explanation of the number and types of journal articles uncovered in a database search (looking at the *MLA Bibliography*, *Project Muse*, and *JSTOR*).

- F. Annotated Bibliography

At the end of the Module/Week 5, the student will submit an Annotated Bibliography of 6 journal articles on the novel chosen for the student's final research paper. In addition you will include a 75–100-word summary of each article's main argument and a 25–50 word evaluation/assessment of the argument.

G. Research Paper

This Research Paper builds on the student's research into the critical history of a literary work of his/her choosing. The first half of the 12–14-page paper involves an overview of the 6 journal articles used for the Annotated Bibliography. The student will provide a literature review of these articles, explaining what the different interpretations conclude about the chosen book and what the central interpretive challenges are. The next 3 pages will offer an assessment of these various interpretations, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, which clash with each other, and which might complement another's analysis. The final 3 pages provide the student an opportunity to offer his or her own interpretation of the novel and even conclusions about the different literary theories on offer based on this critical background.

H. Quizzes (4)

These quizzes cover the presentations and reading assigned since the previous quiz (for example, Quiz 2 covers assignments from module/weeks 2 & 3). These quizzes will each consist of 25 objective questions (a combination of multiple choice, true/false, matching, and short answer). Each quiz will be open-book and open-notes and have a 30-minute time limit with a penalty of 1 point per minute over the 30 minutes.

I. Tests (2)

These tests will cover the reading and presentations assigned since the previous test (Test 1 covers module/weeks 1–4; test 2 covers module/weeks 5–8). They consist of 35 objective questions (a mixture of multiple choice, matching, true/false that are 2 points each) and 1 short essay question (30 points). They are open-book and open-notes and allow the student 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete. For each minute a student takes over that limit, 1 point will be deducted.

VI. COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES

A. Points

Course Requirements Checklist	10
Discussion Board Forums (2 at 50 points each)	100
Quizzes (4 at 40 points each)	160
Application Essays (3 at 70 points each)	210
Tests (2 at 100 points each)	200
Research Topic	20
Annotated Bibliography	60
Research Paper	250
Total	1010

B. Scale

A = 940–1010 A- = 920–939 B+ = 900–919 B = 860–899 B- = 840–859
 C+ = 820–839 C = 780–819 C- = 760–779 D+ = 740–759 D = 700–739
 D- = 680–699 F = 0–679

C. Disability Assistance

Students with a documented disability may contact Liberty University Online's Office of Disability Accommodation Support (ODAS) at LUOODAS@liberty.edu to make arrangements for academic accommodations. Further information can be found at www.liberty.edu/disabilitysupport.

If you have a complaint related to disability discrimination or an accommodation that was not provided, you may contact ODAS or the Office of Equity and Compliance by phone at (434) 592-4999 or by email at equityandcompliance@liberty.edu. Click to see a full copy of Liberty's [Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) or the [Student Disability Grievance Policy and Procedures](#).

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory Today*. 25th anniversary edition. Minneapolis: U of MN P, 2008.
- Leitch, Vincent, et al. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. 3rd edition. New York: Norton, 2018.
- Richter, David H. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Shorter third edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. 3rd edition. New York: Routledge, 2015.

COURSE SCHEDULE

ENGL 603

Textbooks: Bertens, *Literary Theory: The Basics* (2014).

Brooker & Widdowson, *A Practical Reader in Contemporary Literary Theory* (2013).

MODULE/ WEEK	READING & STUDY	ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS
1	Bertens: Introduction Brooker & Widdowson: Introduction Brooker & Widdowson: General Introductions chs. 1–6 1 presentation 1 article	Course Requirements Checklist Class Introductions DB Forum 1 Quiz 1	10 0 50 40
2	Bertens: chs. 1–3 Brooker & Widdowson: chs. 1.1, 2.1, 4.1, 6.1, 6.2 1 article 1 presentation	Application Essay 1	70
3	Bertens: ch. 4 (except for “Politics of Gender” section) Brooker & Widdowson: chs. 3.2, 4.2, 5.5 1 article 1 presentation	Research Topic Quiz 2	20 40
4	Bertens: chs. 5–6 Brooker & Widdowson: chs. 1.2, 2.2, 4.3, & 4.4 1 article 1 presentation	Application Essay 2 Test 1	70 100
5	Bertens: ch. 7 Brooker & Widdowson: chs. 1.5, 2.3, & 4.5 1 article 1 presentation	Annotated Bibliography Quiz 3	60 40
6	Bertens: ch. 8 Brooker & Widdowson: ch. 3.4, 6.3, & 6.4 1 article 1 presentation	Application Essay 3 Quiz 4	70 40

MODULE/ WEEK	READING & STUDY	ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS
7	Bertens: ch. 4, "Politics of Gender" section Brooker & Widdowson: ch. 1.3, 1.4, 3.1, & 3.3 1 article 1 presentation	Research Paper	250
8	Bertens: Conclusion 1 article 1 presentation	DB Forum 2 Test 2	50 100
TOTAL			1010

DB = Discussion Board

NOTE: Each course module/week begins on Monday morning at 12:00 a.m. (ET) and ends on Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. (ET). The final module/week ends at 11:59 p.m. (ET) on **Friday**.