

Reading List for Critical Theory Exam

[valid for students entering their programs between FA 12 and FA 17]

The Critical Theory exam is understood to be broadly comprehensive, requiring general familiarity with the historical progression of twentieth-century literary theories and the fundamentals of the major critical schools since, and including, New Criticism. You may base this broad knowledge on one of the reference/overview books listed below or on a comparable text. **In addition, you should specialize** in at least four subcategories by reading several of the specific primary texts listed below, for a total of about twenty (mostly article- or chapter-length) readings.

Many of the texts listed below are frequently anthologized: see the *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (2010), *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Blackwell 2010), or *Critical Theory Since Plato* (Wadsworth 2004).

RESOURCES/OVERVIEWS

- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Critical Theory* (Manchester 2009)
Birns, Nicholas. *Theory After Theory: An Intellectual History of Literary Theory from 1950 to the Early 21st Century* (Broadview 2010)
Dobie, Ann. *Theory Into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism* (Wadsworth 2011)
Parker, Robert Dale. *How to Read Literature* (Oxford 2011)

HISTORY OF CRITICISM, including New Criticism/Formalism

At least **two** of the following pre-New Criticism texts:

- Plato, *Republic*, especially Books II, III, VI, and X (~380 B.C.)
Aristotle, *Poetics* (~335 B. C.)
Horace, *Ars Poetica* (~18 B. C.)
Sidney, Philip. "The Defence of Poesy" (1595)
Dryden, John. "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy" (1668)
Pope, Alexander. "Essay on Criticism" (1711)
Burke, Edmund. from *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, especially Part 1, sections I-VIII and Part 3, section XXVII (1756)
Hume, David. "Of the Standard of Taste" (1757)
Kant, Immanuel. from *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, especially selections from "Analytic of the Beautiful" and "Analytic of the Sublime" (1790)
Arnold, Matthew. "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1864)
Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1921)

and at least **three** of the following foundational texts of New Criticism/Formalism

- Shklovsky, Viktor. "Art as Technique" (1917)
Richards, I. A. *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*, especially part three (1929)
Eichenbaum, Boris. "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'" (1926)
Ransom, John Crowe. "Criticism, Inc." (1938)
Wimsatt, W.K. and Monroe Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy" (1946)
Brooks, Cleanth. *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*, especially "The Heresy of Paraphrase" (1947) or "The Formalist Critics" (1951)

STRUCTURALISM/DECONSTRUCTION

Four or five of the following texts:

- de Saussure, Ferdinand. "Course in General Linguistics" (1916)
Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folk-Tale*, especially chapters 3, 6, and 9 (1928)
Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*, especially essays one and two (1957)
Derrida, Jacques. "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (1966)

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author" (1967) or "From Work to Text" (1971)
deMan, Paul. "Semiotics and Rhetoric" (1973)
Culler, Jonathan. *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature*, especially "The Linguistic Foundation" (1975)

NEW HISTORICISM/CULTURAL STUDIES

Four or five of the following texts:

Lyotard, Jean-Francois. "Defining the Postmodern" (1966)
Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*, especially "Country and City" and "A Problem of Perspective" (1973)
White, Hayden. "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" (1974)
Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*, especially "The Birth of the Prison" (1975)
Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulations*, especially "The Precession of Simulacra" (1983)
Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies" (1992)
Gallagher, Catherine and Stephen Greenblatt. *Practicing New Historicism*, especially "Introduction" (2000)

MARXISM AND NEO-MARXISM

Four or five of the following texts:

Marx, Karl. "Wage Labor and Capital" (1891)
Gramsci, Antonio. *Prison Notebooks* (1929-35), especially "The Formation of the Intellectuals" (*see Norton anthology*) and "Hegemony (Civil Society)" (*see Blackwell anthology*)
Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936)
Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, especially "The Culture Industry as Mass Deception" (1944)
Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1970)
Williams, Raymond. "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" (1973)
Jameson, Frederic. "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" (1982) or selections from *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981)

POSTCOLONIALISM AND RACE STUDIES

Four or five of the following texts:

Fanon, Franz. "On National Culture" from *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)
Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" (1977)
Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, especially "Introduction" (1979) or "Jane Austen and Empire" from *Culture and Imperialism* (1993)
Gates, Henry Louis. "The Blackness of Blackness: A Critique of the Sign and the Signifying Monkey" (1983) or "Talking Black, Critical Signs of the Times" (1987)
Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera*, especially "La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness" (1987)
Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988)
hooks, bell. "Post-Modern Blackness" (1990)
Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*, especially "Of Mimicry and Man" and "Signs Taken for Wonders" (1994)
Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, especially "Introduction" (1993)

PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM

Four or five of the following texts:

Freud, Sigmund. "Creative Writers and Daydreaming" (1907) or selections from *The Interpretation of Dreams*, especially chapter VI, "The Dream-Work" (1911)

Jung, Carl. "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry" (1922)
Karen Horney, "The Flight from Womanhood: The Masculinity Complex in Women" (1926)
Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I" (1966)
Kristeva, Julia. *Revolution in Poetic Language* especially "The Semiotic and the Symbolic" (1974)

GENDER STUDIES, FEMINISM, AND QUEER THEORY

Four or five of the following texts:

Rich, Adrienne. "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision" (1971) or "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (1980)
Cixous, Helene. "Laugh of the Medusa" (1975)
Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema" (1975)
Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex" (1975)
Kristeva, Julia. "Women's Time" (1979)
Wittig, Monique. "The Straight Mind" (1980) or "One is Not Born a Woman" (1981)
Irigaray, Luce. "Women on the Market" (1985)
Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, especially chapter one, "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire" (1990)
Sedgwick, Eve. *Epistemology of the Closet*, especially "Introduction: Axiomatic" and "The Beast in the Closet" (1990)
Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, especially "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity" (1993)
Kimmell, Michael. "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity" (1994).

AESTHETICS

Four or five of the following texts:

Trotsky, Leon. "The Formalist School of Poetry and Marxism," in *Literature and Revolution* (1924)
DiBattista, Maria. "'Sabbath Eyes': Ideology and the Writers's Gaze," in *Aesthetics and Ideology* (1994)
Levine, George. "Introduction: Reclaiming the Aesthetic," in *Aesthetics and Ideology* (1994)
Nussbaum, Martha. "The Narrative Imagination," in *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (1997)
Scary, Elaine. "On Beauty and Being Wrong," in *On Beauty and Being Just* (1999)
Altieri, Charles. "Taking Lyrics Literally: Teaching Poetry in a Prose Culture" (2001)

READER RESPONSE AND ETHICAL CRITICISM

Four or five of the following texts:

Rosenblatt, Louise. "Towards a Transactional Theory of Reading" (1969)
Fish, Stanley. "Interpreting the Variorium" (1976); reprinted in *Is There a Text in this Class?* (1980)
Iser, Wolfgang. "The Rudiments of a Theory of Aesthetic Response," in *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1976), or "Interaction between Text and Reader," in *Prospecting: from Reader Response to Literary Anthropology* (1989)
Booth, Wayne C. "Why Ethical Criticism Can Never Be Simple" (1998)
Nussbaum, Martha. "The Absence of the Ethical" or "The Ancient Quarrel: Literature and Moral Philosophy," both in *Ethics, Literature, and Theory: An Introductory Reader* (2005)