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)
- 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)
- Ransom, John Crowe. “Criticism, Inc.” (1938)

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)
Barthes, Roland. “The Death of the Author” (1967) or “From Work to Text” (1971)
deMan, Paul. “Semiology and Rhetoric” (1973)

NEW HISTORICISM/CULTURAL STUDIES
Four or five of the following texts:
- Williams, Raymond. The Country and the City, especially “Country and City” and “A Problem of Perspective” (1973)
- Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish, especially “The Birth of the Prison” (1975)
- Baudrillard, Jean. Simulacra and Simulations, especially “The Precession of Simulacra” (1983)

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)
- Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor Adorno. Dialectic of Enlightenment, especially “The Culture Industry as Mass Deception” (1944)
- Williams, Raymond. “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory” (1973)

POSTCOLONIALISM AND RACE STUDIES
Four or five of the following texts:
- Fanon, Franz. “On National Culture” from The Wretched of the Earth (1961)
- Anzaldua, Gloria. Borderlands/La Frontera, especially “La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness” (1987)
- Bhabha, Homi. The Location of Culture, especially “Of Mimicry and Man” and “Signs Taken for Wonders” (1994)

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)

GENDER STUDIES, FEMINISM, AND QUEER THEORY
Four or five of the following texts:
Cixous, Helene. “Laugh of the Medusa” (1975)
Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema” (1975)
Kristeva, Julia. “Women’s Time” (1979)
Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, especially chapter one, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire” (1990)

AESTHETICS
Four or five of the following texts:
Trotskey, 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)

READER RESPONSE AND ETHICAL CRITICISM
Four or five of the following texts:
Fish, Stanley. “Interpreting the Variorium” (1976); reprinted in Is There a Text in this Class? (1980)