

The University of Jordan
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of English

Course Title: **The Modern Critics**
Course Number: 2201729
Instructor:

Course Description:

The twentieth century may be considered the golden age of literary theory. Never in the history of literature has there been a comparable surge of interest in literary criticism, both theoretical and practical. But the variable deluge of critical writings has become so vast, and sometimes so abstruse, that an attempt at disentangling the truly seminal ideas is absolutely necessary. This course, therefore, is intended to deal with the most basic concepts and the main theoretical trends in recent literary criticism in order to provide students with broad guidelines for further exploration of a field that is becoming increasingly demanding and highly specialized. Areas to be covered include: New Criticism, Myth Criticism, Structuralism, Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis. Whenever possible, theory should be tested by application to actual literary texts.

How the Seminar is Conducted:

In each meeting, one or two students are expected to give a presentation on an assigned topic. The presentation is to be prepared carefully, typed, and distributed to students beforehand. In the seminar, the presenter will go over the main points for a maximum of 10-15 minutes. Upon the delivery of the presentation, the students will ask questions and make comments. The seminar leader (myself) will assess both the presenter and the commentators. Following this, the seminar leader will make comments on the presentation and related topics. After this, we will together examine representative samples from the text(s) assigned texts. All are expected to take an active part in the discussion, and all are to pay careful attention as to how they phrase what they say. Naturally, students are expected to come to the seminar fully prepared, having read all the assigned material. In addition to the assigned presenter(s), any student can volunteer to give any brief intervention or presentation.

Evaluation:

Midterm Exam 30%; presentations, projects, participation, and activities 10%; research paper 20%; final exam 40%. The presentations are to be written in the student's own words, no copy-and-paste, and should contribute to an apt understanding of and thinking about matters – no rehash of known information. The paper (10-15 pages) is to be of a publishable nature, handling a research topic in a scholarly fashion, written according to the conventions of the MLA style sheet. The paper is expected to explore a topic deeply and intelligently. Originality is rewarded, and plagiarism is basis for failure of the course.

Do's and Don'ts:

DO come to class on time; late arrival is not tolerated.
DO come to class fully prepared; you cannot hide among a small group.
DO take part in class discussions; participation is required.

DO follow up on library assignments; library readings are a must.
DO read all the assigned material carefully, and beyond it.
DO phrase whatever you say or whatever you write carefully and correctly.
DO get started early on your paper.

DO not miss any classes; attendance is required in all meetings.
DO not copy and paste; and DO not plagiarize.
DO not leave the cellular phone on in class.

Textbooks:

K. M. Newton, *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory: A Reader*. London: Macmillan, 1988.

Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh, *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*. London and New York: Edward Arnold, 1989.

Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Routledge, 1982.

Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London and New York, Routledge, 1998.

Weekly Readings:

Week I	Intro & Orientation
Week II	Newton, pp. 21 - 73
Week III	Newton, pp. 74 - 146
Week IV	Newton, pp. 147 - 218
Week V	Newton, pp. 219 - 277
Week VI	Rice & Waugh, pp. 1 - 109
Week VII	Rice & Waugh, pp. 109 - 196
Week VIII	Rice & Waugh, pp. 197 - 260
Week IX	Rice & Waugh, pp. 261 - 361

MIDTERM EXAM

Week X	Norris, pp. 1 - 73
Week XI	Norris, pp. 74 - 150
Week XII	Allen, pp. 1 - 132
Week XIII	Allen, pp. 133 - 210
Week XIV	Loomba, pp. 1 - 103
Week XV	Loomba, pp. 104 - 183
Week XVI	Loomba, pp. 184 - 258