

University of Jordan
Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Literary Theory and Criticism

Course Code: 2231441

Course Description:

This is an introductory course to major literary theories and criticism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It will introduce the students to each of the following theories and philosophical movements: New Criticism, Structuralism, Deconstruction/Post-structuralism, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, Marxism, Historicism and Cultural studies, Postcolonial and Race studies, and Reader Response and Reception theories. The approach of the course is to examine the theories in the context of practice. Some of the questions we will address: Why does theory matter? How relevant is theory to our lives? How does it alter our political, social, and personal perceptions?

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to:

A. Knowledge and Understanding

- identify the different theories of the twentieth and twentieth centuries and their influence on writing, thoughts, and academic education
- place the theories in their historical and political contexts, and
- understand the ways in which the examined theories interacted with each other whether as a response, reaction or extension of each other

B. Intellectual/Cognitive/Analytical Skills

- develop the necessary analytical and critical thinking skills to examine literary theories
- critique the theories and their critical approaches,
- use the theories to critique aspects of their daily lives, and
- produce coherent, meaningful, and logically constructed essays

C. Subject Specific Skills

- be able to apply theories to aspects of their lives
- reproduce these theories in their (students') own context and social and individual experiences
- practice theory, and
- competently produce written and oral works that analyze and explicate the theories and their social, political, and intellectual implications

D. Transferable Skills

- think critically and constructively within a group of peers
- adopt literary knowledge to their own personal experiences, and
- produce coherent and well expressed essays and oral presentations

Textbook:

Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 5th edition (Longman: Harlow, England, 2005).

Additional readings for application purposes

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

References:

Bennett, Andrew and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 4th edition (Longman: Harlow, England, 2009)

Bloom, Harold, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd edition (Oxford UP: New York & Oxford, 1997)

Eagleton, Terry, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 3rd edition (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN, 2008)

Frye, Northrop, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton UP: Princeton, NJ, 2000)

Garrard, Greg, *Ecocriticism* (The New Critical Idiom), 2nd edition (Routledge: London & New York, 2004)

Course Policy:

- You are expected to be in class on time. Students coming late are allowed to enter but will be marked absent on attendance sheet. The same applies to leaving class early. **No exceptions.**
- Participation and students' involvement are crucial to the success of the course. All students are expected to have read the assigned materials before coming to class in order to fully engage in the discussions. You are important to this course, so please make your voice and opinion heard.
- The University allows students to be absent **seven** times during the semester. Those times include ones with an excuse. The only excuse that would remove your absence from your record is in case of a conflict with another course (a scheduled written exam). If you exceed this limit, you will not be allowed to sit for the final exam.
- **No make-up exams.** In case of sickness, only reports issued directly from a public clinic or hospital will be accepted. Medical reports from private practiced doctors or private hospitals will not be accepted even if they are stamped by the university's clinic. Reports should be produced within a week of the date of the exam. **No exceptions.**

Assessment:

30% Midterm; 10% Quiz; 10% Presentations and Participation; 50% Final

Course Plan:

Please note that this course plan is subject to change and modifications, as discussions progress and students' input and involvement in the course readings become an integral part of the course design. Students will be notified of any changes in advance.

Date	Theory
Week (1)	Introduction
Week (2)	Scott Fitzgerald's <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week (3)	New Criticism, moral formalism and F.R. Leavis + A new critical reading of <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week (4)	Russian Formalism and the Bakhtin School
Week (5)	Reader-oriented theories + A reader-response analysis of <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week (6)	Structuralist theories + A structuralist reading of <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week (7)	Marxist theories + A Marxist reading of <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week (8)	Feminist theories + A feminist reading of <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week (9)	Poststructuralist theories
Week (10)	A deconstructive reading of <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week (11)	A psychoanalytic reading of <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week (12)	A new historical reading of <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week (13)	Postmodernist theories
Week (14)	Postcolonialist theories + A postcolonialist reading of <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Week (15)	Ecocriticism
Week (16)	Revision

P.S. Students are expected to work in groups for the assigned presentations.