

Paper IX

Critical Theory – I

With the changing contours of power dynamics and a sustained emphasis on representational politics, a reassessment of the methodology of the Literature classroom has been effected. Not only is the canon spilling outside the erstwhile ambit of “Wulf to Woolf”, the tools of analysis have, likewise, witnessed a shift. From literary benchmarks to extra literary- to progressively borrowing from diverse fields, viz., economics to psychology, history to sociology, theory represents a wide spectrum. Today this eclectic field is thoroughly aligned to the purposes of the study of literature and collected under the rubric of “theory.” The effect of literary theory on study of literature has clearly transcended the original impulse of text analysis and is witnessing a more integral role, with theory asserting a tangible influence on the production of literature itself. The course is designed with the intent of introducing an MA classroom to core texts representing a range of literary theory. The selected texts represent a historical progression of literature analysis as well as the ideological impulses that have modified the practice of literary studies.

Unit I

1. M.H. Abrams, “What's the Use of Theorizing about the Arts?”, *Doing Things with Texts* (London & New York: Norton Paperback, 1991) 31-72.

Unit II

1. Roman Jakobson, “Two Aspects of Language”, *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Blackwell, 2004, 2nd Ed.) 76- 80.
2. Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author”, *Image/ Music/ Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath (Hill and Wang, 1977) 142-147.

Unit III

1. Jacques Derrida, “Letter to a Japanese Friend”, *Derrida and Differance*. Eds. David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (Evanston III: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 1-6.
2. Jean Francois Lyotard, “Answer to the Question, What is the Postmodern?” (1- 16)& “Note on the Post- in Postmodern” (75-80), *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence 1982-85* (Minnesota & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1992)

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Unit IV

1. Michel Foucault, "Panopticism" from "Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison", *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, Vol. 2, No. 1, The Dynamics of Race and Incarceration: Social Integration, Social Welfare, and Social Control (Autumn, 2008) 1-12.
2. Giles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control”, *October*, Vol. 59 (Winter, 1992), 3-7.

Unit V

1. Jean Baudrillard, “The System of Objects” (10-28) & “Simulacra and Simulations” (166-184), *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988)

Secondary Readings

- Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory* (Oxford: OUP, 2017)
- Hans Bertens, *Literary Theory: The Basics* (London & New York: Routledge, 2017)
- Ryan Bishop, (ed.). *Baudrillard Now: Current Perspectives in Baudrillard Studies* (Polity, 2009)
- Steven Connor, *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)
- Simon During, *Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing* (London & New York, Routledge, 2013)
- Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (Penguin UK, 2004)
- Pelagia Goulimari, *Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to Postcolonialism*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2014)
- Wilfred L. Guerin, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

- Hayes, Bruce, et al. Victoria A. Fromkin (ed.) *Linguistics: An Introduction to Linguistic Theory* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013)
- Klages, Mary. *Key Terms in Literary Theory*. A&C Black, 2012.
- Vincent B Leitch, and William E Cain. *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. (W. W. Norton & Company, 2010)
- Irene Rima Makaryk, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993)
- Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (John Wiley & Sons, 2017)
- Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today* (London & New York: Routledge, 2014)
- Patricia Waugh, *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Tim Woods, *Beginning Postmodernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999)

Model Paper

Time: 3 hours Total Marks 80 Note: Attempt all questions. Each question carries 16 marks

Q. 1 How is literary theory different from literary criticism? What led to the rise of literary theory?

Or

How does M.H. Abrams explain the usefulness of literary theory? Do you agree with his views?

What, according to Jakobson, are the two aspects of language? How do his ideas enable us to critically analyze a literary text?

Or

How does the death of the author facilitate the birth of the reader?

Derrida says “deconstruction is everything and nothing”. Explain the difficulties in defining ‘deconstruction’.

Or

What are the semantic possibilities of the prefix ‘post-’ in post-modernism?

How does Foucault use the structure of panopticon to theorize all- pervasive gaze of power?

Or

Increasingly we are heading towards societies of control, without being subjected to external institutional controls. Explain.

The images are more real than the real. Explain Baudrillard’s concept of simulacrum.

Or

What is the future of truth according to Baudrillard? *****