



English (ENGL) 316

Approaches to Literary Theory and Criticism (Revision 3)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

Individualized study online  . Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits:

3

Areas of study:

Arts or Humanities

Prerequisites:

ENGL 211 and **ENGL 212** or equivalent first year English course(s).

Precluded:

None

Challenge:

ENGL 316 is not available for challenge.

Faculty:

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences


Overview

ENGL 316 is an introductory level course designed to familiarize you with a variety of critical perspectives and help you understand literary works more profoundly by integrating literary theory in your response to these works. ENGL 316 also aims to prepare English program students for ENGL 423, which deals with some of the more contemporary literary theories covered in English 316 in more depth.

Outline

- Chapter 1: Defining Criticism, Theory, and Literature
- Chapter 2: A Historical Survey of Literary Criticism
- Chapter 3: Russian Formalism and New Criticism
- Chapter 4: Reader-Oriented Criticism
- Chapter 5: Modernity and Postmodernism: Structuralism and Deconstruction
- Chapter 6: Psychoanalytic Criticism
- Chapter 7: Feminism
- Chapter 8: Marxism
- Chapter 9: Cultural Poetics or New Historicism
- Chapter 10: Cultural Studies: Postcolonialism, African-American Criticism, and Queer Theory

Evaluation

To **receive credit**  for ENGL 316, you must complete two essay assignments, two discussion forum posts, and a final examination. In order to pass the course, you must achieve a composite grade of at least **D (50 percent)**  and a minimum grade of “D” (50 percent) on the final exam.

Activity	Weight
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Activity	Weight
First discussion forum post	5%
First Essay	20%
Second discussion forum post	5%
Second Essay	20%
Final Exam	50%
Total	100%

The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the [Exams and grades](#)  section of the Calendar.

Materials

Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Abrams, M. H. and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 11th ed. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013.

Physical course materials

The following course materials are included in a course package that will be shipped to your home prior to your course's start date:

Bressler, Charles, E. ;*Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. 5th ;ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 8th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

Lodge, David and Nigel Wood, eds. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. 3rd ed. London: Pearson Longman, 2008.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF SHORT FICTION, 2015, 152 ASSORTED
AUTHORS ISBN:9780393937763

Other Materials

The course materials also include a student manual/study guide.

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services at AU](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 3, April 26, 2023

Updated September 23, 2026

View [previous revision](#) 