

Anglophone literature

Brief exam description:

The exam centres on a selection of issues that are frequently fictionalised in American literature, emphasising the variety of writing styles, subject matters, narrative elements, character types, and ideological issues that manifest themselves in post-WWII fiction, drama, and poetry written in English.

Areas of competence required:

- Candidates are required to demonstrate their ability to compare and contrast a variety of texts relevant to the chosen topic, using specific examples they consider relevant and avoiding unsupported generalisations.
- Candidates are required to apply various reading strategies (e.g. biographical, feminist, formalist, psychological, etc.) to reveal subtle text cues and layers of narrative and non-narrative texts relevant to the chosen topic.
- Candidates are required to provide support for their general claims, i.e. to use specific examples from relevant primary and secondary literature, referring to specific passages, characters, actions, scenes, etc.
- Candidates are required to introduce the chosen topic briefly (including the relevant cultural and historical background, if applicable), then move on to discuss relevant details, and try and respond to any questions raised or comments made by members of the examination board;
- Candidates are required to avoid stating the obvious (e.g. irrelevant plot synopses, extended author biographies, or complete lists of works written by an author) and overgeneralised reader-response comments.
- Candidates are required to make references to any compulsory literature within the scope of the literature-related subjects that they consider relevant.
- Candidates are required to use established terms/concepts of literary theory rather than to use a non-academic jargon.

Most importantly, candidates are encouraged to use their original ideas and interpretations, however unusual or controversial, as long as they can be supported by evidence from literary works of art relevant to the chosen topic

Colloquium topics:

1. Feminism: Foundations and Development

Discuss the basic concepts of feminism and the goals of early feminist movements. How did the second and third waves reshape feminist theory, and what characterizes contemporary feminism?

2. Feminist Literary Criticism

Explain how feminist theory is applied to literary texts. Provide a feminist analysis of a selected work, focusing on representation, gender roles, and power structures.

3. Postcolonial Theory: Key Concepts

Define colonialism and postcolonialism. How does *The Empire Writes Back* define the relationship between literature and postcolonial identity?

4. Major Thinkers in Postcolonial Studies

Discuss key terms and theorists in postcolonial theory: cultural identity (Stuart Hall), Orientalism (Edward Said), and diaspora (James Safran). How do these concepts help interpret literary texts?

5. Postmodernism: Concepts and Literature

What are the defining features of postmodernism? Discuss its impact on literature, including fragmentation, metafiction, and the rejection of grand narratives.

6. Postmodernism and Capitalism (Jameson)

Analyze Frederic Jameson's view of postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism. How do parody, pastiche, and consumer culture function in postmodern texts?

7. Simulation and Representation (Baudrillard)

Explain Jean Baudrillard's concepts of simulacra and simulation. How do these ideas challenge traditional notions of reality and representation in literature?

8. Popular Culture and Literary Theory (Storey & Fiedler)

Discuss John Storey's definition of popular culture. How does Leslie Fiedler's idea of "Cross the Border—Close the Gap" challenge distinctions between high and low culture?

9. Popular Culture in Media: Music and Television

Examine popular culture through hip hop/rap music (Richard Shusterman) and television/soap operas (John Fiske). How do these forms challenge traditional aesthetic hierarchies?

10. Environmental Criticism (Ecocriticism) and Glotfelty

Define environmental criticism (ecocriticism) and discuss its main concerns. How does Cheryll Glotfelty conceptualize the relationship between literature and the physical environment? Illustrate how ecocritical approaches can be applied to literary texts.

Compulsory Reading:

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989 (The first two chapters only).

Jean Baudrillard: "Simulacra and Simulations", In: Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, ed.

Mark Poster (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1988), pp.166-184.(

https://epk.home.xs4all.nl/theory/Simulation/Baudrillard_Simulacra%20and%20Simulations.pdf)

Fiedler, L. "Cross the Border-Close That Gap"

Fiske, J. "Moments of Television: Neither the Text nor the audience," In: Seiter, E., Borchers, H., Kreuzner, G., Worth, E.M. (eds.), *Remote Control*. London: Routledge, 56-78. <https://www.aau.at/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/text-fiske.pdf>

Glotfelty, Cheryll, and Harold Fromm (eds.). *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996 (Introduction only).

Hall, S. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" Hall, Stuart, (1994) "Cultural identity and diaspora" from Williams, Patrick and Laura Chrisman, *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: a reader*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf. pp.227-237.
 (<http://sites.middlebury.edu/nydiasporaworkshop/files/2011/04/D-OA-HallStuart-CulturalIdentityandDiaspora.pdf>)

Jameson, F. 2009. "Postmodernism and Consumer Society", in *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*. London; Verso, pp.1-20.
 (https://art.ucsc.edu/sites/default/files/Jameson_Postmodernism_and_Consumer_Society.pdf)

Safran, W. "Diaspora in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return, In: James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9(3): 302–338.
 (https://www.academia.edu/5029348/Diasporas_in_Modern_Societies_Myths_of_Homeland_and_Return)

Shusterman, R. "The Fine Art of Rap" *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, 2000

Storey, J: *Postmodernism and Television*, in, Storey, J. (ed.). *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (http://www.mdw.ac.at/upload/MDWeb/ims/pdf/Storey,_Kap.1.pdf)

Compulsory Reading - Fiction:

S. Perkins Gilman: *The Yellow Wall Paper* J.Lahiri: *The Interpreter of Maladies* (short story)
 R. Coover: *Lucky Pierre in the Doctor's Office* (short story)

Literature:

Barry, P. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP. 2nd edition, 2002.

Green, K., LeBihan, J. *Critical Theory and Practise: A Coursebook*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

Hall, D.E. *Literary and Cultural Theory. From Basic Principles to Advanced Applications*. Boston, New York: Houghton/Mifflin, 2001.

Sutherland-Smith, J. *Multiple Visions: Approaches to Cultural Studies I*. Prešov: FF PU, 2016. http://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Sutherland_Smith1

Sutherland-Smith, J. *Multiple Visions: Approaches to Cultural Studies II*. Prešov: FF PU, 2016. http://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Sutherland_Smith2

Tyson, L. *Using Critical Theory. How to Read and Write About Literature*. London, New York, 2011, second ed.

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