City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

offered by Department of English
with effect from Semester A 2024/25

Part I   Course Overview

Course Title: **Critical Approaches to Literature**

Course Code: **EN6508**

Course Duration: **One Semester**

Credit Units: **3 Credits**

Level: **P6**

Medium of
Instruction: **English**

Medium of
Assessment: **English**

Prerequisites:
(Course Code and Title)   **Nil**

Precursors:
(Course Code and Title)   **Nil**

Equivalent Courses:
(Course Code and Title)   **Nil**

Exclusive Courses:
(Course Code and Title)   **Nil**

Part II   Course Details

1. **Abstract**

    The course aims to introduce students to major theoretical concepts and critical practices in literary studies. Students will explore and discuss   specific writers, genres or themes in the context of literary history and criticism. The critical perspectives that this course explores include structuralism, gender studies, postcolonialism, narratology, psychoanalysis, postmodernism and reader-response theory. Through applying these different theoretical perspectives to the literary texts covered in this course, students will acquire the interpretative and critical analytical skills that are crucial to literature research and writing. Students will generate critical, analytical and creative responses to selected texts throughout the course.

2. **Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)**
    (CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	*A2*	*A3*
1.	Identify key critical approaches to literature	NA	V	V	
2.	Analyse the characteristics of the set texts in the context of relevant theories and criticism.	NA	V	V	V
3.	Apply literary theories to interpret selected literary texts	NA	V	V	V
4.	Apply and develop critical reading, thinking, and writing, and research skills to interpret literary texts and situate them within the relevant critical contexts.	NA	V	V	V
5.	Examine the social, cultural and political influence on the development of critical practices in literary studies	NA	V	V	V
		100%			

A1:   Attitude
Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.
A2:   Ability
Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.
A3:   *Accomplishments*
Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

(LTAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

LTA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5		
Interactive lectures and discussion	Each week students will discuss key topics and major critical approaches with their peers in small groups and in response to questions raised by the instructor.	V	V	V	V	V		
Composition and critical analysis of key concepts and ideas	Students will apply their knowledge of the critical approaches covered in class and their literary interpretative skills to compose short writings and a critical essay on selected topics.	V	V	V	V	V		
Application of knowledge through presentation and discussion	Students will demonstrate their critical engagement with selected texts and theories through presentations and discussion.	V	V	V	V	V		
Test	Students will apply their knowledge of course materials and analytical skills to address questions raised in the test at the end of the course.	V	V	V	V	V		

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5			
Continuous Assessment: _100_ %								
Final Test The final test will evaluate student's knowledge and understanding of literary theories and literary texts covered in this course and their skills of literary analysis and interpretation. This test will take place at the end of the course.	V	V	V	V	V		45%	Individual assessment
Group Presentation Students will form small groups to give a presentation on selected literary criticisms, their application and limitations.	V	V	V	V	V		25%	Group assessment
Analysis Paper Students will write a short textual analysis paper in response to one of the set questions on selected literary texts covered in this course.	V	V	V	V	V		20%	Individual assessment
Class Participation and Discussion Students will be required to participate actively in class discussion and activities, as well as demonstrate their reading preparation.	V	V	V	V			10%	
Examination: _0_ % (duration: , if applicable)								
							100%	

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
Analysis Paper	Thesis and Argumentation	Thesis is clear and appropriate for the writing task. There is a sense of originality in the way the writer has answered the question. Ideas are well supported and conclusions reveal a progression of ideas	The responses contain sharp ideas that are clearly expressed, original, and thoughtfully supported.	Elements of B and D	The topic is clear but there is little originality in the way that the writer has answered the question. Ideas are not always supported. There is little sense of progression as the paper develops.	The essay appears to be off topic or only loosely related to the task. The writer may have misunderstood the question.
	Engagement	Sophisticated critical reading and interpretative skills apparent.	The discussion of the primary texts and secondary source materials is appropriate and sufficiently detailed. There is a sense of the writer critically engaging with the texts.	Elements of B and D	Some discussion of the primary texts and secondary source materials, but mostly in general and broad terms. The selection of the texts may not be appropriate for the task.	Very little if any engagement with the primary texts.
	Organisation	Organization supports thesis in a logical and	Organization clearly supports thesis.	Elements of B and D	There maybe abrupt or illogical shifts in ideas.	Ideas are not clearly marked or

		compelling way. The organization between sentences, paragraphs, and ideas is cohesive and effective in terms of advancing the writer's arguments.	Transitions between ideas are clear and are appropriately expressed.		Parts of the response may be illogically connected or tangential. Mechanical and inappropriate use of transitional phrases.	contextualised.
	Language	Exceptionally well composed. Words are used with precision and accuracy. A wide variety of sentence structures are used.	Strong control of language and a wide lexical range. Grammatical structures are varied and well constructed. Small errors may persist but the meaning is sharp and clear.	Effective and functional control. Basic ideas are communicated effectively. Errors cause minimal distraction.	There is a high density of errors, causing strain for the reader. The meaning is sometimes lost or unclear	Almost every sentence has some kind of error, which causes serious problems for the reader. The meaning is often lost or distorted.
Participation		Makes significant contribution to in-class discussion and completes tasks satisfactorily.	Makes occasional contribution to in-class discussion and completes the tasks satisfactorily.	Seldom makes contribution to in-class group discussion and in class tasks.	Little evidence of participation in class; completes very few in-class tasks.	Fails to complete in-class tasks or participate in class discussions.
Group Presentation	Content	The topic is well-researched, and analysis and explanation are supported by details.	Good research skills apparent. Content is thoughtful. There maybe some lack of details.	Elements of B and D	Content is lacking details or consideration. Research appears to be superficial.	The content is insufficient and/or substantially lacking in detail. Lacking evidence of research.

		Ideas are insightful and original.			
	Language and Delivery	Exceptionally well presented. Ideas are communicated with precision and accuracy. Excellent non-verbal communication.	Strong control of language and effectively communicated. Small errors persist but the meaning is clear. Effective non-verbal communication.	Elements and functional control of presentation. Basic ideas are communicated effectively. Errors cause minimal distraction. Satisfactory non-verbal communication.	There is a high density of errors, causing strain for the audience. The meaning is sometimes lost or unclear. Non-verbal communication is weak.	There are serious problems in comprehension for the audience. The meaning is often lost or distorted.
	Organization	Visually appealing and highly effective team management. Smooth and effective transitions and strong cohesions.	Visually appealing and effectively organized with some inconsistencies. Good transitions and sense of cohesion. Good team management is apparent.	Elements of B and D.	Lacking in clear organization. Design is inappropriate and/or ineffective. Team management may appear uneven. Presentation appears fragmented and lacking in cohesion.	The organization is confusing, unclear, or non-existent. There is an obvious lack of teamwork and cohesion.
Final test	Content and Analysis	Shows an excellent understanding of selected literary texts, main concepts, theoretical approaches	Shows a good understanding of selected literary texts, main concepts, theoretical approaches	Shows a fair understanding of selected literary texts, main concepts, theoretical approaches	Shows little understanding of selected literary texts, main concepts, theoretical approaches	Failed to fulfil the requirements of the test questions, or show a complete lack of understandings of

		and their application. The argument and ideas are fully supported by relevant examples and analyses.	and their application. The argument and ideas are well supported by relevant examples and analyses.	and their application. The argument and ideas are partially supported by relevant examples and analysis.	and their application. There is minimal attempt to provide support or examples to substantiate the claims and analysis.	selected literary texts, main concepts, or theoretical approaches.

Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
Analysis Paper	Thesis and Argumentation	Thesis is clear and appropriate for the writing task. There is a sense of originality in the way the writer has answered the question. Ideas are well supported and conclusions reveal a progression of ideas	The responses contain sharp ideas that are clearly expressed, original, and thoughtfully supported.	The topic is clear but there is little originality in the way that the writer has answered the question. Ideas are not always supported. There is little sense of progression as the paper develops.	The essay appears to be off topic or only loosely related to the task. The writer may have misunderstood the question.
	Engagement	Sophisticated critical reading and interpretative skills apparent.	The discussion of the primary texts and secondary source materials is appropriate and sufficiently detailed. There is a sense of the writer critically engaging with the texts.	Some discussion of the primary texts and secondary source materials, but mostly in general and broad terms. The selection of the texts may not be appropriate for the task.	Very little if any engagement with the primary texts.

	Organisation	Organization supports thesis in a logical and compelling way. The organization between sentences, paragraphs, and ideas is cohesive and effective in terms of advancing the writer's arguments.	Organization clearly supports thesis. Transitions between ideas are clear and are appropriately expressed.	There maybe abrupt or illogical shifts in ideas. Parts of the response may be illogically connected or tangential. Mechanical and inappropriate use of transitional phrases.	Ideas are not clearly marked or contextualised.
	Language	Exceptionally well composed. Words are used with precision and accuracy. A wide variety of sentence structures are used.	Strong control of language and a wide lexical range. Grammatical structures are varied and well constructed. Small errors may persist but the meaning is sharp and clear.	There is a high density of errors, causing strain for the reader. The meaning is sometimes lost or unclear	Almost every sentence has some kind of error, which causes serious problems for the reader. The meaning is often lost or distorted.
Participation		Makes significant contribution to in-class discussion and completes tasks satisfactorily.	Makes occasional contribution to in-class discussion and completes the tasks satisfactorily.	Little evidence of participation in class; completes very few in-class tasks.	Fails to complete in-class tasks or participate in class discussions.
Group Presentation	Content	The topic is well-researched, and analysis and explanation are supported by details. Ideas are insightful and original.	Good research skills apparent. Content is thoughtful. There maybe some lack of details.	Content is lacking details or consideration. Research appears to be superficial.	The content is insufficient and/or substantially lacking in detail. Lacking evidence of research.
	Language and Delivery	Exceptionally well presented. Ideas are communicated with	Strong control of language and effectively	There is a high density of errors, causing strain for the audience.	There are serious problems in comprehension for the

		precision and accuracy. Excellent non-verbal communication.	communicated. Small errors persist but the meaning is clear. Effective non-verbal communication.	The meaning is sometimes lost or unclear. Non-verbal communication is weak.	audience. The meaning is often lost or distorted.
	Organization	Visually appealing and highly effective team management. Smooth and effective transitions and strong cohesions.	Visually appealing and effectively organized with some inconsistencies. Good transitions and sense of cohesion. Good team management is apparent.	Lacking in clear organization. Design is inappropriate and/or ineffective. Team management may appear uneven. Presentation appears fragmented and lacking in cohesion.	The organization is confusing, unclear, or non-existent. There is an obvious lack of teamwork and cohesion.
Final test	Content and Analysis	Shows an excellent understanding of selected literary texts, main concepts, theoretical approaches and their application. The argument and ideas are fully supported by relevant examples and analyses.	Shows a good understanding of selected literary texts, main concepts, theoretical approaches and their application. The argument and ideas are well supported by relevant examples and analyses.	Shows a fair understanding of selected literary texts, main concepts, theoretical approaches and their application. The argument and ideas are partially supported by relevant examples and analysis.	Failed to fulfil the requirements of the test questions, or show a complete lack of understanding of selected literary texts, main concepts, or theoretical approaches.

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. **Keyword Syllabus**
   (An indication of the key topics of the course.)
   Literary theory, textual practice, literature, postcolonialism, gender, psychoanalysis

2. **Reading List**
2.1 **Compulsory Readings** (*tentative list)
   (Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Barry, Peter, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*
2.	Castle, Gregory. *The Literary Theory Handbook* (selections)
3.	Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. London: Blackwell, 2017 (selections)

2.2 **Additional Readings**
   (Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. London: Vintage, 2000.
2.	Bennett, Andrew & Nicholas Royle. *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory.* London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
3.	Belsey, Catherine. *Critical Practice.* London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
4.	Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* London and New York: Routledge, 2010.
5.	During, Simon. *The Cultural Studies Reader.* London: Routledge, 1993.
6.	Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
7.	Frow, John. *Genre.* London and New York: Routledge, 2015.
8.	Highmore, Ben. *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction.* London: Routledge, 2002.
9.	King, Bruce. *The Internationalization of English Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
10.	Leitch, Vincent (Ed.). *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism.* London and New York: Norton, 2001.
11.	Lentricchia, Frank and Thomas McLaughlin. *Critical Terms for Literary Study.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995.
12.	Lodge, David. *The Art of Fiction.* London: Vintage Books, 2011.
13.	Onega, Susanna and Christian Gutleben (Eds.) *Refracting the Canon in Contemporary British Literature and Film*. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2004.
14.	Pope, Rob. *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture.* London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
15.	Poplawshi, Paul. *English Literature in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
16.	Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society.* London: Fontana Press, 1983.