

# 1--Introduction to Literary Theory

Content Area: **ELA**  
Course(s): **Women's Literature**  
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**  
Length: **4-5 weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Course Pacing Guide

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Unit	MP/Trimester	Weeks
Introduction to Literary Theory	1	4-5 weeks
Gender, Power, and Social Norms	1	5-6 weeks
Choice Book Unit 1	1 into 2	2 weeks
Women's Poetry	2	4-5 weeks
Choice Book Unit 2	2	2 weeks

## Unit Overview

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In undergraduate and graduate classrooms, students do not read literature in isolation. Instead, literature is situated as part of a larger literary tradition (which we often study in high school) and through different “lenses” of literary theory (which we do not often study in high school). The aim of this unit will be to introduce students to literary theory, to familiarize students with some of the most influential schools of literary theory (including feminist theory), and to give students a chance to apply those critical lenses to the texts we read in class.

## Enduring Understandings

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- Studying and understanding literary theory is an essential part of the humanities, especially in higher education
- Literary theory is a product of society, and thus has changed and evolved as society does so
- Literary theory is composed of (sometimes opposed) schools, disciplines, and groups, each with their own focal points & perspectives
- Critical lenses (feminist, post-colonial, critical race, etc.) all rely on certain assumptions and examine particular questions
- Applying a critical lens to a text allows you think think about it in a more specific, focused way, and can also be used as a tool to understand societal dynamics/hierarchies/ideologies

## Essential Questions

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- How do scholars analyze texts?
- How have these scholarly approaches/lenses changed over the years? How have these changes been linked to social changes?

- What are the major schools of literary theory today?
- How are they related to each other?
- How can one apply those theories when reading a text?
- How do those theories reveal or question power dynamics and societal beliefs?
- Which theories might you personally find most relevant, important, or meaningful in today's society?

## New Jersey Student Learning Standards (No CCS)

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LA.RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
LA.RL.11-12.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
LA.RL.11-12.6	Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
LA.RL.11-12.7	Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (e.g., Shakespeare and other authors.)
LA.RL.11-12.9	Demonstrate knowledge of and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century foundational works of literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
LA.RL.11-12.10b	By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at grade level or above.
LA.RI.11-12.1	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
LA.RI.11-12.2	Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.5	Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
LA.RI.11-12.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.7	Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
LA.RI.11-12.10b	By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above.
LA.W.11-12.1.A	Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
LA.W.11-12.1.B	Develop claim(s) and counterclaims avoiding common logical fallacies and using sound reasoning and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing

	out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
LA.W.11-12.1.C	Use transitions (e.g., words, phrases, clauses) to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
LA.W.11-12.1.D	Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
LA.W.11-12.1.E	Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
LA.W.11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.11-12.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LA.W.11-12.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.
LA.SL.11-12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
LA.SL.11-12.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well reasoned exchange of ideas.
LA.SL.11-12.1.B	Collaborate with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and assessments (e.g., student developed rubrics), and establish individual roles as needed.
LA.SL.11-12.1.C	Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
LA.SL.11-12.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.
LA.SL.11-12.3	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
LA.SL.11-12.4	Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LA.SL.11-12.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

## Amistad Integration

- Literary theory is undergirded by the need to analyze power dynamics (including racial power dynamics) and determine how those power dynamics influence the creation and reception of literature
- Literary theory requires that readers consider human nature and behavior, prejudice/discrimination, and moral responsibilities in acting in a complex & diverse society
- Critical race theory is one of the specific critical lenses studied and practiced in this unit

## Holocaust/Genocide Education

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## Interdisciplinary Connections

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SOC.6.1.12	U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.
SOC.6.1.12.D.2.b	Explain why American ideals put forth in the Constitution (i.e., due process, rule of law, and individual rights) have been denied to different groups of people throughout time.
SOC.6.1.12.D.3.e	Determine the impact of religious and social movements on the development of American culture, literature, and art.
VPA.1.2.12.A.CS1	Cultural and historical events impact art-making as well as how audiences respond to works of art.
VPA.1.4.12.A.2	Speculate on the artist's intent, using discipline-specific arts terminology and citing embedded clues to substantiate the hypothesis.
VPA.1.4.12.A.4	Evaluate how exposure to various cultures influences individual, emotional, intellectual, and kinesthetic responses to artwork.
VPA.1.4.12.A.CS1	Recognition of fundamental elements within various arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual art) is dependent on the ability to decipher cultural implications embedded in artworks.
VPA.1.4.12.A.CS3	Artistic styles, trends, movements, and historical responses to various genres of art evolve over time.

## Technology Standards

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TECH.8.1.12.C.CS1	Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others by employing a variety of digital environments and media.
TECH.8.1.12.D.CS2	Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.
TECH.8.1.12.E.CS2	Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.

## 21st Century Themes/Careers

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CAEP.9.2.12.C.2	Modify Personalized Student Learning Plans to support declared career goals.
CAEP.9.2.12.C.3	Identify transferable career skills and design alternate career plans.

## Financial Literacy Integration

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PFL.9.1.12.A.5	Analyze how the economic, social, and political conditions of a time period can affect the labor market.
PFL.9.1.12.F.1	Relate a country's economic system of production and consumption to building personal wealth and achieving societal responsibilities.

## Instructional Strategies & Learning Activities

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- Summer work: students will read two high-quality young adult books centered upon a female protagonist, and analyze gender roles in the novels they choose
- Students will use Google Docs to identify, track, and share trends in gender representation/roles in their novels
- Students will learn how these notes can be used as a model for applying one critical lens in literary theory (feminist theory), and use that lens as a model/example of applying literary theory in general
- Students will read/discuss a critical text that further models a feminist reading of children's literature (Bruce Handy's *Wild Things: The Joy of Reading Children's Literature as an Adult*)
- Students will use *Critical Theory* book and teacher-made Google Slides to learn the basic components of literary theory, as well as its evolution and branches
- Students will choose one critical lens to research independently, and then use it to analyze part of their summer reading novel(s)

## Differentiated Instruction

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- Individual choice of texts (summer reading)
- Individual choice of critical lens to examine in depth
- Teacher feedback on writing: rubric allows for individual goal setting and skill focus points (which will be followed up on during next unit)
- Flipped classroom: pre-reading and writing allow for students to generate individually relevant questions for classroom discussion the next day

## Formative Assessments

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- summer reading annotations
- summer reading paragraph writing
- classroom discussion and exit tickets

## **Summative Assessment**

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- end of unit analytic writing assignment
- unit test

## **Benchmark Assessments**

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- end of unit analytic writing assignment
- unit test

## **Alternate Assessments**

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- all students complete the same assignments, but select texts & focal areas of their choice

## **Resources & Technology**

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- teacher-created Google Slides on literary theory
- AP/College Board-created Google Slides on critical lenses
- student-created Google docs used to find & analyze patterns of gender representations in novels
- test study guide

## **BOE Approved Texts**

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- *Critical Theory: A Graphic Guide* (Stuart Sim)

## **Closure**

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- Gallery Walks
- Exit tickets
- Sticky note check-ins
- Question brainstorming

## ELL

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- Alternate texts
- Shortened written responses
- Extended Time
- Teacher Modeling
- Simplified Written and Verbal Instructions
- Frequent Breaks
- E-Dictionaries
- Google Translate

## Special Education

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List is not inclusive but may include examples such as:

- Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of key concepts.
- Evaluate the classroom structure against the student's needs (flexible structure, firm limits, etc.).
- Keep workspaces clear of unrelated materials.
- Keep the classroom quiet during intense learning times.
- Seat the student close to the teacher or a positive role model.
- Provide an unobstructed view of the chalkboard, teacher, movie screen, etc.
- Keep extra supplies of classroom materials (pencils, books) on hand.
- Give directions in small steps and in as few words as possible.
- Have student repeat the directions for a task.
- Go over directions orally.
- Extended time for assessments
- Allow tests to be taken in a room with few distractions (e.g., the library).
- Show a model of the end product of directions (e.g., a completed math problem or finished quiz).
- Stand near the student when giving directions or presenting a lesson.

## 504

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Examples of accommodations in 504 plans include but are not limited to:

- preferential seating
- extended time on tests and assignments
- reduced homework or classwork
- verbal, visual, or technology aids
- behavior management support
- adjusted class schedules or grading

- pre-approved nurse's office visits and accompaniment to visits

## **At Risk**

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Examples may include:

- Use of mnemonics
- Have student restate information
- Provision of notes or outlines
- Concrete examples
- No penalty for spelling errors or sloppy handwriting
- Follow a routine/schedule
- Teach time management skills
- Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task
- Adjusted assignment timelines
- Work-in-progress check
- Pace long-term projects
- Cue/model expected behavior
- Use de-escalating strategies

## **Gifted and Talented**

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Offer the Most Difficult First

Offer choice

Speak to Student Interests

Encourage risk taking