

Fiction, Criticism and Interpretation

7.1 Module Overview									
Module Number		Module Title	Fiction, Criticism and Interpretation						
Stage of Principal Programme			1	Semester	2	Duration. <i>(Weeks F/T)</i>	12	ECTS	5
Mandatory / Elective (M/E)	M	Hours of Learner Effort / Week	2.3						
Analysis of required hours of learning effort									
Teaching and Learning Modalities					✓if relevant to this module	Approx. proportion of total (hours)			
Contact Hours									
In person face-to-face					✓	28			
Synchronous									
Indirect/Non-Contact Hours									
Asynchronous									
Work Based									
Other:									
• Independent self- direct reading					✓	82			
• Research, preparation and completion of assessment					✓	25			
• Exam Preparation					✓	40			
Total						125			

Pre-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title	N/A
Co-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title	N/A
Maximum number of learners per instance of the module	120
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.	
Role e.g., Tutor, Mentor, Lecturer, Research Supervisor, etc.	Qualifications & experience required
Lecturer	A minimum level 9 qualification in English Literature or closely cognate area
Tutor	A minimum level 9 qualification in English Literature or closely cognate area
	Staff - Learner Ratio X:Y
	1:120
	1:20

Assessment Techniques – percentage contribution				
Continuous Assessment	40%	Proctored Exam – in person	60%	Practical Skills Based
Project		Proctored Exam – online		Work Based
Capstone (Y/N)?	N	If Yes, describe		

7.2 Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)	
MIMLO On completion of this module a learner will be able to:	Related MIPLO #

1. Recognise and evaluate different theories and methods of textual interpretation	1, 2, 3, 4
2. Demonstrate knowledge of relevant critical language and literary terminology appropriate to the analysis prose fiction, both the novel and short story.	1, 2, 3, 4
3. Identify and recognise the form of the short story and the novel and critically evaluate different theories of both genres in relation to prominent practitioners of both forms.	1, 2, 3
4. Fully participate in classroom discussion and debate regarding module content, and cogently express analysis and argument in written format	1, 2, 3, 4, 8

7.3 Indicative Module Content, Organisation and Structure

This module is designed to help learners transition to the study of literature at 3rd level by guiding them to read literary texts in a flexible and sophisticated manner. Learners will interrogate their own literary critical perspectives and preconceptions as well as exploring fundamental questions related to the practice of reading and the relationship between language, interpretation and meaning. As part of this process, learners will be introduced to some of the major theoretical and critical approaches that pertain to the study of English Literature

The module will also investigate the uses, boundaries, and theories of fiction, and chart the procedures through which different texts produce meaning in different times, cultures and societies. One of the central components of the module is to familiarize learners with common terms and definitions used in the critical evaluation of fiction, which has direct benefit to the study of various modes of fiction explored elsewhere in the degree. In this regard, it will develop competencies and knowledge from Stage 1 'Introduction to Literary Studies' and provide a basis for the critical study of fiction in a range of other modules.

The module will begin by briefly introducing learners to the field of literary and cultural theory, before providing a broad outline of the theory of fiction and the novel and short story forms. Learners will then develop their comprehension of different critical perspectives through reading assigned texts through different theoretical lenses including, Marxist, Feminist, Gender studies and Eco-Critical approaches. Key topics governing discussion of texts include:

- Interpreting fiction: critical terminology, strategies, and methodologies.
- Tracing evolving fictional forms.
- Representation and reality: fiction, society and the mediation of meaning.
- The interpretative possibilities and usefulness of different critical approaches.

7.4 Work-based learning and practice-placement *(if applicable)*

N/A

7.5 Specific module resources required *(if applicable)*

N/A

7.6 Application of programme teaching, learning and assessment strategies to this module

Lectures will present information to learners in a variety of ways: from lecturer-led presentation of relevant cultural, and critical context, to more discursive teaching formats offering greater opportunity to engage in detailed critical analysis of primary texts. In lectures, learners will be strongly encouraged to discuss and interrogate a range of interpretative positions related to the literature under discussion, while tutorials will also provide further opportunity for close-text analysis and debate, learner-led discussion, as well as assistance with assessment. Lecture content will primarily be displayed using Microsoft PowerPoint, but other presentation software will be deployed as needed: such as Mentimeter or Prezi.

Learners will access class notes, PowerPoints, and relevant articles and documents on Moodle, which will act as the digital interface for the course. A range of weblinks will also be accessible through Moodle, including documentaries, archival recording, and links to other primary sources of relevance to the course. This will facilitate asynchronous learning and encourage learners to develop their sense of cultural context for the texts being considered.

The assessment for the module consists of 10% Attendance, 30% Continuous Assessment, and 60% Proctored Exam.

Summative

In class test (30%)

One-hour in-class test in which learners answer a series of short questions on an assigned text

Proctored written examination (60%)

A two-hour exam in which learners answer two questions. One question will involve direct response to a passage of a text covered in the module.

Formative: Tutorials will be used to engage in close-text analysis of key passages of the assigned texts, some of which will appear on the exam. In tutorials, learners will be assigned a specific passage and must complete a five-minute presentation that analyses the writing in light of particularly theoretical perspective.

7.7 Summative Assessment Strategy for this module

MIMLOs	Technique(s)	Weighting
2, 3, 4	In-Class Test: One-hour in-class test in which learners answer a series of short questions on an assigned text	30%
1-4	Proctored Exam: A two-hour exam in which learners answer two questions. One question will involve direct response to a passage of a text covered in the module.	60%

7.8 Sample Assessment Materials

In Class Test:

This will be a 1-hour in-class test that will involve 2 sections:

- a) A series of short questions on key terms and concepts covered on the module
- b) Several questions that involve a close reading of a short passage from a module text.

Proctored Exam: Sample Exam Questions

1.) *Question accompanied by passage of text:* (Extract from *The Great Gatsby*)

In the above passage, analyse how Fitzgerald uses setting, sensory detail, dialogue, action and appearance to reveal the larger cultural and social tensions that characterise the world of the novel.

2.) Write an essay that reads any one course text in light of one critical or theoretical approach we have covered during this module.

3.) In his study of the short story, *The Lonely Voice*, Frank O'Connor argues that "the short story has never had a hero" but instead is populated with "submerged population groups," which he defines as "outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of society." To what extent does O'Connor's definition apply to any of the characters in the short stories covered by this course.

Marking of assessments will be in line with the Marking Assessment Guidelines as outlined in Section 3.3 of the College's [Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards](#) unless otherwise indicated.

7.9 Indicative reading lists and other information resources

Texts named here are indicative only and content may change from year to year as the course is updated. Reading lists should maintain a gender balance in the primary texts.

Indicative Core Reading:

Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights* (1847)

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925)

A selection of short stories by Franz Kafka, Shirley Jackson, Frank O'Connor, Alice Munro, Claire Keegan

Indicative Critical Reading

Allen, Walter, *The Short Story in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)

Baldick, Chris, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Bennett, Andrew and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* (London: Routledge, 2023)

Culler, Johnathan, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Eagleton, Terry, *The English Novel: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005)

Fowler, Roger (ed.), *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms* (London: Routledge, 2016)

Hale, Dorothy J., *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006)

Ingman, Heather, *A History of the Irish Short Story* (2009)

May, Charles, *The Short Story: The Reality of Artifice* (London: Taylor Francis Ltd., 2002)

O'Connor, Frank, *The Lonely Voice* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1962)

Tyson, Lois, *Critical Theory Today*, 4th edn (London: Routledge, 2023)