

Final Examination Review

The final examination is worth 200 points or 20% of your final grade this semester. The examination will be held on Monday, May 8th from 2:00 to 3:50 in Eisenhower Hall 219. Please bring a blank blue book or blank loose-leaf paper for your answers. You may also bring with you one 4" x 6" index card with notes, a card that you will hand in with your answers.

There will be three parts to the exam.

Part I (20 points). This part of the examination will have some short answer questions.

Part II (60 points). This question will appear on the final examination, though the list of terms will be reduced from twenty to ten. Define six of the concepts listed below as they have been used by the critics or theorists studied in this course and/or appeared in our discussions of the history of literary theory and criticism. In defining each term, please explain what the term means. Then, briefly identify the term's source or origin (as it appeared in our course) and/or the theorist(s) who used the term. If the term has been relevant to multiple theorists, you do not need to cite each theorist who used it, but please try to identify the theorist or theorists for whom the term was most important. Finally, briefly explain the term's significance to history of literary theory since 1900.

Each definition should be about a paragraph long. Here is the list of concepts from which I will draw the ten that will appear on the final exam:

postmodernism	semiotic (Kristeva's sense)
aura	the carceral
defamiliarization (<i>ostraneniye</i>)	author
<i>mestiza</i>	signifier/signified
androgyny	uncanny
deconstruction	heteroglossia
work/text	essentialism
<i>langue/parole</i>	meaning/significance
postcolonialism (postcolonial theory)	identity politics
gender/sex	modernity

Part III (120 points). I will provide you with questions selected from the following list. You will write an essay in response to **two** of them. The final arrangement of the questions will allow for some choice.

1. Select any of the literary theorists who wrote after 1900 (that is, any whom we have studied so far this semester) and write an essay that explains how her or his work is connected to the literary theoretical ideas that preceded it. What are the more important influences that you see? Where does your selected theorist depend upon or respond to the theories, ideas, or works of previous theorist or critics?

2. Which of the theories or texts we studied this semester seems to you the most useful for the analysis and interpretation of literary texts? Which of these seems the most distant from the actual practice of interpreting and analyzing literary texts? Write an essay that explains your answer to these two questions and compares the two selected texts.

Note: Your answer does not need to be evaluative or polemical. For example, you do not necessarily have to argue that the more practically useful approach is by definition better than the one with more "theoretical" or less obvious literary critical concerns.

3. How does the thinking of the early-twentieth-century structuralists and formalists (Saussure and Eichenbaum, for example) differ from the late-twentieth-century theories of the poststructuralists (like Derrida or Foucault)?
4. You walk into a coffee shop and see two friends arguing energetically about the history of theory. Fred is arguing that twentieth-century theory became more autonomous and specialized, increasingly fragmented and removed from the everyday concerns of real people. Judy thinks just the opposite; she says that twentieth-century theory gradually became more interested in the real, often political concerns of an increasing number of people, that it enlarged its vision beyond specialized issues to become engaged with a broad array of social and cultural topics that matter to lots of people. You sit down, and they both turn to you and say, "What do you think?" Develop your response into an essay that makes specific reference to theories and texts we studied this semester.
5. The twentieth-century witnessed an explosion of literary theories about identity and subjectivity. Some of these theories focused on the construction or development of the subject (psychoanalysis, for example, but also theories focused on the "individual" or the social construction of subjectivity), and some on the cultural aspects of identity (such as class, gender, sex, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and nation). What are some of the strengths of this focus on identity? What are the pitfalls? Write an essay that addresses these questions and makes specific reference to theories and texts we studied this semester.
6. Write a defense of literary criticism and theory. Imagine that President Wefald has called for the elimination of ENGL 795 Literary Criticism from K-State's curriculum. He wants English majors and graduate students to focus on studying literature, not "theory." His proposal has some support among students and even a few professors. Thus, you feel as if you should write a letter in defense of literary criticism and theory. Your letter might draw upon other defenses (Sidney, Arnold, Pope, Bhabha, Brooks, for example), or it might draw upon a few theoretical texts that you see as especially significant or valuable as examples. Whatever your approach, your letter should make use of specific reference to ideas and texts studied in ENGL 795.
7. Select a theory we studied this semester (the theory could be a school or movement, a specific theorist, or a specific text). Then write an essay that explains how and why you appreciate or identify with the aims and methods of this selected theory. How does it relate to you and how you read, think about, and write about literary texts?