

Midterm Examination Review

The midterm is worth 100 points or 10% of your final grade this semester. Please bring a blank blue book or blank loose-leaf paper for your answers. You may not use your books or your notes. There will be three parts to the exam.

Part I (14 points). This part of the exam will have a few short answer questions.

Part II (36 points). This question will appear on the midterm exam, 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.
- 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.
- Briefly explain the term's significance to history of literary theory before 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 midterm:

catharsis	rhetoric
decorum	aesthetics
idealism (philosophical)	the beautiful
mimesis	modernity
the sublime	subjective universality
the three unities	art for art's sake
fourfold exegesis	Romanticism
hermeneutics	taste
disinterestedness	judgment
ancients vs. moderns	Apollonian/Dionysiac

Part III (50 points). I will provide you with two questions selected from the following list. You will write an essay in response to one of them.

1. Select any of the literary theorists who wrote before 1900 (that is, any whom we've studied so far this semester) and explain how his work differed from earlier ideas about literature, criticism, or literary theory. In what ways did your chosen theorist alter the course of literary theory with his ideas or works?

2. Write an essay that compares two different theories of figurative language. These theories might focus on the role of metaphor and figuration in the development of language (Vico, Emerson, for example), the relationship of metaphor to truth (Plato, Nietzsche, Sidney, for example), the best use of figurative language (Pope, Longinus, Horace, for example), or the proper way to interpret figurative language (Aquinas, Maimonides, Schleiermacher, for example). There may be other approaches, but your essay will need to develop some type of focus that allowed you to compare the two different theories of figurative language.
3. How does the thinking of the mid-to-late nineteenth-century theorists (Victorian theorists like Arnold, Eliot, and Pater, but also Nietzsche and French thinkers like Gautier and Baudelaire) differ from the Romantics (whether they be German, British, or American)?
4. From Plato to the present, morality, virtue, and ethics have been perennial and important issues to literary theorists. Select two literary theorists with differing attitudes toward the issue of morality in literature and compare them. (Note: this question does not require you to choose one pro-virtue critic and one anti-moralism critic; you need only compare critics whose ideas about virtue are distinct from each other.)
5. What is the function or purpose of literature? What possible use does it serve? Or does it even have a purpose? When might it be prone to abuse or when might its proper use be perverted? Choose two literary theorists who have contrasting ideas about the utility or purpose of literature and compare them.