



English Minor Reading List 2019 Entry

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the English Minor at NCH!

In your first year, you will take a course in Criticism throughout both the main teaching terms, in autumn and spring. This course teaches you how to read both closely and in a theoretically-informed way. Please read as much of the following as you can – and read widely in English literature in general. For reference – in your second year the concentration is on Shakespeare, and in your third year you will be writing a dissertation, which must in some way be comparative (for example, between literature of different languages or places, or between different art forms).

Happy Reading! If you have any queries about reading, before you arrive in September, feel free to email me on: catherine.brown@nchlondon.ac.uk

Dr. Catherine Brown, Head of, and on behalf of, the English Faculty at NCH

CRITICISM (studied throughout Michaelmas and Hilary Terms)

REQUIRED READING (to be read before you start term):

- Barry, P. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009) third edition. A simple, clear, but intelligent introduction to a wide range of literary theories. It can easily be bought second hand from sites such as AbeBooks, or as an electronic book from iBooks or Kindle.

IF POSSIBLE, ALSO READ

- Nowottny, W. *The Language Poets Use* (London: The Athlone Press, 1965) second edition. Nowottny's book is not easy going at all times, but so very much worth it for her clear analysis of how poetic language is related to natural language. You should look particularly at those sections in which she reads specific poems.

REFERENCE BOOKS TO BUY, IF POSSIBLE

- An English dictionary. Collins and the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary are both good (you will have access to the full Oxford English Dictionary online once you have started as a student).
- Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. (Kentucky: Heinle Languages, 2008) ninth (international) edition. Bear in mind that you may need to use the index to locate

certain words. For example, there are no entries for 'metaphor' or 'metonymy', but the index indicates that both are under 'figurative language'.

- Culler, J.A., *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (London: 1999). This is the more zesty and idiosyncratic of the two books.
- Birch, Dinah, ed., *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 7th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). An excellent reference guide, including short biographies of authors, and plot summaries of major works.

In addition, any of the following would be good investments, in approximate order of importance:

- Makaryk, Irena R. ed., *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993). The best reference companion to literary theory.
- Preminger, Alex, and T.V.F. Brogan, eds, *The New Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton, 1993), 611-613. Companions to poetry do not come more hard-core and comprehensive than this one.
- Eagleton, T. *How to Read a Poem* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007). Like most of Eagleton's writing, this is vigorous and engaging. It argues for the importance of paying close attention to form in reading. It is an accessible introduction to the ideas behind close reading.
- Tambling, J. *What is Literary Language?* (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1988). This is a basic introduction to literary language and rhetoric, and includes exercises (close readings of poetry) and a glossary. It includes a section on the differences between British and American close reading (from p. 19), and a brief section on Russian formalism (p. 27).
- Walder, D. (ed.) *Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) second revised edition. This is an anthology of Anglophone perspectives on literary study from the 1920s, including critics such as T.S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf, and with more of an emphasis on modernism than postmodernism. It is a useful introduction to theory 'before theory' (i.e. pre-1970s).