

Introduction to Critical Literary Theory

As you prepare to write your research paper, you must first foray into the world of critical literary theory. In short, literary theory gives you tools to read a work of literature. Reading literature requires that each reader reconstruct the work as s/he reads it. This work of reconstruction can never be objective; we each bring our own backgrounds, time in history, gender, experience, prejudices, etc. to a work as we read it. Literary theory can help us identify some of the aforementioned trappings that we bring to reading. Literary theory can give us a new way of understanding a work. Literary theory can help us formulate questions to ask as we are reading.

We will use a website from Purdue University to help us out. [Guide to Critical Theory](#) Please read the introduction, then research the area that I have assigned you according to your book. In each section there are important terms and questions to ask in reading a novel through these various critical lenses. You will be able to use this site as a resource in your paper. On Friday, each group will present the key ideas of their assigned area. Each individual student will also briefly give a book talk on their assigned book.

Gender and Sex

Laura, Marah, Anna, Lauren, Abby

Narratology

Elizabeth, Derrick

New Historicism

Trevor, Travis, Annie, Brad, Elisha,

Postmodernism

Matt, Aly, Cayla

Psychoanalysis

Jordan, Meggi, Brady