

**Carleton University**  
**Fall 2024/Winter 2025 Preliminary Course Outline**  
**Department of English**

**ENGL 3106A: Theories and Critical Practices**

**Prerequisites:** Third-year standing or permission of the department.

**Instructor:** B. Johnson  
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**\*\*\* This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change.  
A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. \*\*\***

**Course Description:**

This intensive two-term course has a number of aims: (1) to provide a general introduction to the history of literary studies; (2) to familiarize students with a range of critical practices; (3) to explore how “literature” has been theorized as an object of study; (4) to help students deepen their ability to read and respond to both theory and literary criticism; (5) to explore how literary and cultural critics employ and engage with theory in their analyses of texts; (6) to provide students with opportunities to practice engaging meaningfully with theory and criticism in their own critical work; (7) to encourage reflection on the value of the humanities and the reasons we read and analyze literature and popular fiction. To these ends, the first term explores textual and psychoanalytic approaches to literary study. The second term examines ethical and political approaches to literary and cultural studies, paying particular attention to the intersection of these approaches with the approaches studied in the fall term. A diverse selection of short stories, novels, poetry, and film will accompany and illuminate our reading of theory and criticism.

**Learning Outcomes:**

These include the development of skills in the following: the advanced analysis of literary and cultural texts; critical vocabularies and methodologies to inform such analyses; reading and understanding literary theory; reading and making use of secondary sources. ENGL 3106A is a **Writing Attentive** class, which means that it will also include guidance on writing development, including the following sorts of assignments: students will complete at least one writing assignment focused on theories and/or critical practices; students will complete at least one writing assignment focused on understanding and evaluating secondary sources; students will write at least one substantial formal essay in which they are expected to do the following: (i) develop an argument or thesis statement; (ii) develop complex ideas using persuasive, clear and grammatically correct English; (iii) use and cite from primary texts appropriately; (iv) develop secondary research and citation skills.

**Texts (tentative):**

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 4th Ed. (Manchester)  
Anthony Stevens, *Jung: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford)  
Barbara Foley, *Marxist Literary Criticism Today* (Pluto)  
John Grafton, *Great Ghost Stories* (Dover)  
M. R. James, *Collected Ghost Stories* (Oxford)  
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Norton Critical Edition)  
Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room* (Norton Critical Edition)

R. K. Narayan, *The Guide* (Penguin)

**Evaluation:**

Attendance (10%)

Reading Journal (20%)

Essay (20%)

Group Article Presentation (10%)

December In-Person Exam (20%)

April In-Person Exam (20%)