

# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *Spotlight Theory 1:History of Criticism - 44735*

*Last update 07-08-2023*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)*

*Responsible Department: English*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 1st Semester*

*Teaching Languages: English*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Micha Lazarus*

*Coordinator Email: [micha.lazarus@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:micha.lazarus@mail.huji.ac.il)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: Mondays, 14:30-15:30*

*Teaching Staff:*

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Dr. Micha Lazarus

Course/Module description:

'Theory' first began to be used as a proper noun in literature departments in the early 1980s, and 'theory' courses rarely look back much further than that. But the questions of what literature is, how it works, what it is good for—and whether it should be allowed at all—have been perennial concerns from the moment the first song was heard. Why have philosophers and poets always been mortal enemies? Is there a place for poetry in an ideal society? Can there be a 'science' of poetics, or is it all just a flash of feeling? What is the difference between a theory, a defence, and an art of poetry? Why does poetry need defending, and how might we defend it? How do we sort good poets from bad? Does literary history matter? Should we read the poetry of ages past, and how do we deal with its differences from our own? What is the relationship between word and sign, myth and allegory, tragic and comic, truth and fiction, imitation and originality, licence and decorum? How do modern poets compare to ancient, and are we winning? How does one write the sound of a wave crashing onto shore? This theory course covers the first two and a half thousand years.

Course/Module aims:

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Recognise the major topics in literary thought from antiquity to the present.
2. Identify continuities and differences in the history of criticism.
3. Place critical ideas and practices, including their own, in historical context.

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Reading and discussion.

Course/Module Content:

1. The Ancient Quarrel  
Plato, Republic (4c BC)

2. Mimesis  
Aristotle, Poetics (4c BC)

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### 3. The Lightning Bolt

*Longinus, On the Sublime (1c AD)*

### 4. Crisis

*Horace, Art of Poetry (19 BC)*

*Readings from Aristophanes, Dionysios of Halicarnassos, Philodemus, 'Demetrios', Quintilian*

### 5. Deconstruction

*Augustine, De doctrina Christiana (397-426)*

### 6. Safe Reading

*Plutarch, How Young Men Should Read Poetry (1c AD)*

*St Basil, Address to Young Men, on How They Might Derive Benefit from Greek Literature (4c AD)*

*Readings from Fulgentius, Tzetzes, and Eustathios*

### 7. Fabula

*Boccaccio, Genealogy of the Pagan Gods, bks 14-15 (1360-74)*

*Dante, Letter to Cangrande della Scala (c.1316-22)*

*Readings from Macrobius and William of Conches in Peter Dronke, Fabula: Explorations into the Uses of Myth in Medieval Platonism (Leiden, 1985)*

### 8. The Eternal Mind

*Philip Melanchthon, first preface to Hesiod (1532)*

*Philip Melanchthon, Exhortation to the reading of tragedies and comedies (1545)*

*Alexander Nowell, Dramatic prologues (1541-46)*

### 9. Golden Worlds

*Stephen Gosson, The Schoole of Abuse (1579)*

*Sir Philip Sidney, The Defence of Poesy (c.1579-83)*

### 10. Ancients and Moderns

*Michael Psellos, To One Asking 'Who Wrote Verse Better, Euripides or Pisides?' (11c)*

*Samuel Daniel, Defence of Ryme (1603)*

*Jonathan Swift, Battle of the Books (1704)*

### 11. Taste

*Alexander Pope, Essay on Criticism (1711)*

*Joseph Addison, 'The Pleasures of the Imagination' (1712)*

*Samuel Johnson, Rambler 4 (1750)*

### 12. Continuity and its Discontents

*William Wordsworth, Preface to Lyrical Ballads (1800)*

*J. E. Spingarn, 'The New Criticism' (1911)*

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Required Reading:

*Texts will be made available online or in a course reader.*

Additional Reading Material:

Grading Scheme:

*Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 70 %*

*Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports  
/ Forum / Simulation / others 20 %*

*Presentation / Poster Presentation / Lecture 10 %*

Additional information: