The following is a reading list for doctoral candidates to use as a guide in preparing for the comprehensive examination in Literary Criticism and Theory. The list is suggestive rather than definitive. Students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the major works and writers, to have a solid understanding of the way these works contribute to the development of literary studies and can be used to produce complex interpretations of literary texts and their relation to the world. Because literary theory divides into many sub-fields, students are encouraged to work with their exam chair to focus and supplement this list with works pertinent to their line of research. Hence, the following reading list should provide the basis for individual discussions with the Committee on Studies about breadth and focus. The list, of course, may be—should be—supplemented by works aligned with the major emphasis of the students’ research interests.

The list has four sections:
- History of Literary Criticism (Classical to Nineteenth Century)
- Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism
- Literary Theory
- Contemporary Criticism and Theory

**History of Literary Criticism (Classical to Nineteenth Century)**


*Ion*

*Phaedrus*.

Aristotle. *Poetics*.

*Rhetoric*, Book I: Chapters 2 & 3; Book II: Chapter 1, Book 3: Chapter 2

Horace. *Ars Poetica*.


Longinus. *On Sublimity*


*Lives of the Poets*. 1825.


Coleridge, Samuel Taylor.
   *Biographia Literaria*. 1817.
Emerson, Ralph Waldo.
Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich.
   *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, Introduction
Nietzsche, Friedrich.
   *The Birth of Tragedy*. 1872.
   “On Truth and Lying in an Extra-moral Sense”
Arnold, Matthew.
   *Culture and Anarchy, Chapter 1*. 1869.

**Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism**

**Histories of the Discipline**
Leitch, Vincent B. *American Literary Criticism Since the 1930s*. 2009.

**New Criticism**
Richards, I. A. *Principles of Literary Criticism*. 1924.
Leavis, Q.D. *Fiction and the Reading Public*. 1939.

**Formalisms**
Shklovsky, Viktor. “Art as Technique.” 1925.

**Politics, Readers, and Historicism**
Fish, Stanley. *Is There a Text in this Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. 1980.

**Literary Theory**

**Theories of Language**
“Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances.”
Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. 1975.

**Marxism**
*The German Ideology*. 1846.
*Capital*, Volume 1, Chapter 1. 1867.
“The Author as Producer.” 1934.
“Critique of Violence.” 1921.

### Psychoanalysis

“The Uncanny.” 1919.  
“Creative Writers and Daydreaming.” 1907.  
*The Interpretation of Dreams*. 1899. Chapters 5 and 6.  

### Narrative Theory, Semiotics, and Post-Structuralism

*Plato’s Pharmacy*. 1972.  

### Power and the Public Sphere

“What is an Author?” 1969.  

**Feminism, Gender, and Queer Theory**
Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One’s Own*. 1929.
Halberstam, Judith. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. 2005.

**Critical Race Theory and Postcolonialism**
Marti, Jose. “Our America.” 1891.

**Contemporary Criticism and Theory (NB: This section should be explicitly tailored to reflect the student’s interests.)**


*Last Updated December 2013*