

# **Approaches to Literature**

In this honors class we will attempt academic literary criticism. Basically, it is the comparison, analysis, interpretation, and/or evaluation of works of literature.

It is similar to looking at literature through different glasses. Each pair of glasses has a different lens in which to view the piece of writing. It is essentially an opinion supported by evidence relating to theme, style, setting, or historical or political context.

## **Traditional Approach to Literature**

Analyzes a work of art as the mirror of the author and the society of the period in which it is written. Studying the historical events of the period, getting information about the author's life and experiences could help us understand what the text explains and what the author intends.

## **Formalistic Approach to Literature**

Focuses on the stylistic purity of a work of literature rather than its social contexts and authorial intent by studying not only grammar and syntax, but also literary devices such as meters or figures of speech.

According to formalism, it is possible to interpret a text without having any information on its author or its social or historical background.

## **Psychological Approach to Literature**

Psychological criticism involves analyzing a literary work through the lens of a psychological theory, exploring characters' motivations, behaviors, and the author's psychological influences.

Unless you have studied Socrates, Plato, Freud, Descartes, or some other philosopher, this is not the best one to use.

## **Archetypal Approach to Literature**

Archetypal literary criticism is a type of analytical theory that interprets a text by focusing on recurring myths and archetypes by using symbols, images, and character types.

## **Feminist Approach to Literature**

Recognizes literature's cultural stereotypes. Thus, feminist literary criticism examines how works of literature embody patriarchal attitudes and re-examines canonical works to show how gender stereotypes are involved in their functioning. It examines (and often rediscovers) works by women for a possible alternative voice.

## **Cultural Studies Approach to Literature**

Analyze meaning by looking at the text in combination with the economic, social, and cultural context in which the text was produced. This includes considering military power, race, gender, class, sexuality, and power dynamics.

## **Marxist Approach to Literature**

Marxist criticism attempts to show the relationship between literature and the economic condition.

Marxism shows the struggle between social classes—specifically between the bourgeoisie/capitalists, and the proletariat/workers

**Traditional Approach to Literature**

**Formalistic Approach to Literature**

**Psychological Approach to Literature**

**Archetypal Approach to Literature**

**Feminist Approach to Literature**

**Cultural Studies Approach to Literature**

**Marxist Approach to Literature**