

Dr Natalie Houston

ENGL 3323: Development of Literary Criticism and Theory

Why do we read literature? Should we be expecting instruction, entertainment, beauty, or philosophy from our reading? What should we be noticing as we read? How do we know what's important? How do we define good, beautiful, or important literature? These questions have been the focus of literary criticism and commentary since the ancient world, and have been answered in many different ways by philosophers, critics, and theorists. This course introduces students to the long history of literary criticism and theory from Plato to the present, covering major ideas and writers in the field. Particular attention will be paid to literary criticism after 1900 and the development of modern and contemporary theoretical movements. The central course text is *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*.