Literary Analysis and Interpretation

Student Learning Outcome: Students will be able to analyze <u>texts</u> through <u>close reading</u>, and demonstrate an understanding of the text's underlying historical, social, political, and cultural contexts, in pursuit of an individually-developed, well-argued analysis and interpretation.

The Value of Literary Analysis and Interpretation

Literary analysis and its interpretation are essential skills in understanding the nuance of the texts all around us. These texts may be literary, filmic, musical, or artistic in nature—classic or experimental—and/or may include TV reports, news, shows, posters, social media threads, and the like. All these texts convey meaning rooted in culture and history, be it local or international. Furthermore, texts move the world: they change laws, start revolutions, decry injustice, and admire beauty. Consequently, humanistic learning and the analysis of literature and its various interpretations are essential in cultivating inclusive communities, <u>critical thinking</u>, and the demystification of interested discourses. These skills require a knowledge of culture, history, and/or various social and political theories. They also require students to evaluate and use <u>primary</u> and <u>secondary sources</u> to formulate a <u>thesis</u> and sustain it throughout their analysis.

Supporting Skills

1. Students will identify texts by form, genre, type, and/or tradition using language specific to the discipline.
2. Students will contextualize relevant texts in their historical and/or cultural frameworks.
3. Students will offer an analysis and interpretation, through close reading, of a primary text using a specific <u>critical approach</u>.

Course Content Criteria

1. Courses in this category have as a primary focus the study of texts of different genres and traditions.
2. Courses in this category approach texts through an identified critical approach.
3. Courses in this category make use of primary and secondary sources in order to analyze texts.
4. Courses in this category expose students to <u>canonical</u> and/or <u>experimental texts</u>.
5. Courses in this category foster the development of critical thinking, reading comprehension, and textual analysis and interpretation.
6. Courses in this category include an assessment assignment that requires students to demonstrate each of the skills in the Literary Analysis and Interpretation Assessment Rubric (below). This assessment assignment should be one of the following: a research paper, a short form essay, or an essay question on an exam.

Glossary

1. **Canonical texts**: Texts that, however generic or experimental in their inception, are now widely recognized and accepted as representative of an author, genre, or place.
2. **Close reading**: The detail-oriented analysis of a text or a portion of a text, scrutinizing rhetorical and structural elements as well as cultural and historical references, with the goal of constructing a coherent meaning or function of the text.
3. **Critical approach**: A framework of interpretation that is recognized and supported by a body of secondary works, e.g., formalism, gender studies, psychoanalysis, post-colonial studies, and/or cultural studies.
4. **Critical thinking**: The scrutiny and informed evaluation of facts. Critical thinking assumes that texts must be interpreted in context and in relation to previous interpretations.
5. **Experimental texts**: Texts that break from the canon, expand or transform genre, and provoke a strong response. Some experimental texts later become canonical (e.g., works in the avant-garde movement).
6. **Primary source**: The text of immediate concern, analysis, and interpretation.
7. **Secondary source**: Other texts that aid in the analysis and interpretation of the primary source. They can be academic, peer-reviewed, or otherwise. They may be theoretical, historical, philosophical, political, or journalistic.
8. **Texts**: Anything that conveys a set of meanings to a person who engages with it. Texts can include but are not limited to books, poems, lyrics, plays, scripts, films, reports, news, posters, and tweets.
9. **Thesis**: A statement supported by an argument.

Literary Analysis and Interpretation Assessment Rubric

Supporting Skills	Exemplary 5	Accomplished 4	Developing 3	Beginning 2	Absent 1
Identify texts by form, genre, type, and/or tradition using language specific to the discipline.	Demonstrates an advanced knowledge of terms and superior understanding of different forms, genres, types, and/or traditions.	Demonstrates a clear knowledge of terms and a sufficient understanding of different forms, genres, types, and/or traditions.	Demonstrates a basic knowledge of terms and a limited understanding of different forms, genres, types, and/or traditions.	Demonstrates an insufficient knowledge of terms and an insufficient understanding of different forms, genres, types, and/or traditions.	Demonstrates no knowledge of terms and no understanding of different forms, genres, types, and/or traditions.
Contextualize relevant texts in their historical and/or cultural frameworks.	Demonstrates a superior ability to contextualize texts in their historical and/or cultural frameworks.	Demonstrates a clear ability to contextualize texts in their historical and/or cultural frameworks.	Demonstrates a basic ability to contextualize texts in their historical and/or cultural frameworks.	Demonstrates an insufficient ability to contextualize texts in their historical and/or cultural frameworks.	Demonstrates no ability to contextualize texts in their historical and/or cultural frameworks.
Offer an analysis and interpretation, through close reading, of a primary text using a specific critical approach.	Demonstrates a superior ability to analyze and interpret texts using close reading and a specific critical approach.	Demonstrates clear ability to analyze and interpret texts using close reading and a specific critical approach.	Demonstrates a basic ability to analyze and interpret texts using close reading and a specific critical approach.	Demonstrates an insufficient ability to analyze and interpret texts using close reading and a specific critical approach.	Demonstrates no ability to analyze and interpret texts using close reading and a specific critical approach.