

LT 182 CLOSE READING SKILLS

This module runs in both the autumn term and the spring term. It lasts for ten weeks and is seminar based. There are no lectures, no list of primary texts to read, and no preparation for seminars beforehand.

Each week the seminar addresses a specified topic that the department has identified as essential to an understanding of what is required to read a literary text well, something that will be expected of all students in all modules that they take in the course of their undergraduate degree and beyond. Although no preparation is required before the individual seminars, emphasis will be placed upon the accumulative acquisition of knowledge, that is to say, successive seminars build upon what has been learnt in previous ones. For that reason alone, regular attendance is most important. You will not be able to 'catch up' adequately by reading any supporting notes published after the seminars. In the seminar, you will be presented with short 'unseen' texts, each of which fits on to one side of A4 paper. The focus of the seminar will be on *how to read a text closely*. The class teacher will introduce the topic for the seminar, providing some guidance and advice on how to approach different kinds of text, including film, and then set you tasks in close reading, which you will be given time to complete in small groups and then asked to report on to the class. It will include reading the literary work aloud and presenting an analysis of it based on your group collaboration. This will contribute to the participation mark for this module.

The seminar will be organised in two parts, with one part more topic-focussed and tutor-led and the other part more text-focussed and student-led. The emphasis is upon students actively doing the close reading. To this end, the students will be split up into pairs or small groups to prepare close readings, which will subsequently be presented to the whole class, of short pieces of unseen text. The presentation will include reading the texts aloud to promote an understanding that language is connected to voice and speech, with the aim of achieving an enhanced level of writing as well as encouraging a slower pace of reading when scrutinizing the detail of words and phrases.

You will be asked each week to consider how particular devices and techniques are used in the texts that you read. Image, metaphor, symbol, metrics and the use of figurative language are amongst the means used to convey meaning in literary texts. These terms will be explained and a glossary of film terms provided.

The weekly topics are:

1. Genre and literary texts
2. Narrative poetry (verse forms include epic and ballad)
3. Lyric poetry (verse forms include ode, conversation poem, sonnet)
4. Narration and motifs*
5. Prose fiction and non fiction
6. Characterisation
7. Persona and voice*
8. Style
9. Following an argument, reading an academic text.
10. Genre in film*

(An asterisk indicates 'film as integral'. Literary texts may also be used in these weeks)