

Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies
The University of Warwick
Modes of Reading 2010-11: First Assessed Essay for ERASMUS

General Guidelines

Write a 3,000 word essay on ONE of the topics listed below. You should normally make reference to both primary and secondary sources. Pay special attention to organisation and conceptual clarity. If you have questions about any of the topics, don't hesitate to approach your tutors or the module convenor. Your tutor may not, though, read and comment on a draft.

Refer to the [departmental guidelines](#) for essay submission. Refer to the [MLA guidelines](#) for referencing. Refer to our regulations governing plagiarism and [cheating](#).

Due Date

The essay is due on Friday week 10, Term 1 by 3:00pm. Electronic copies are due on the same day by 3:00pm.

Submit ONE copy of your essay to the office, with the appropriate cover sheets. There will be penalties for late submission.

If for extenuating circumstances (e.g. illness) you feel you may be unable to submit the essay on time, you may apply for an extension from the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Michael Gardiner. **You must apply in advance of the due date**, using the form posted on module webpage. Note that under no circumstances do seminar tutors grant extensions.

Useful Links

- [E-submission](#)
- [Undergraduate Handbook \(pdf\)](#)
- [MLA handbook](#)
- [Extension form](#)
- [Library's online resources for English Lit. students](#)
- [Information on RLF fellows](#)

Titles

Text-specific titles

1. Consider the relationship between literature and feeling; how does poetic form work to evoke response from readers?
2. At its obscenity trial, 'Howl' was adjudged to have 'redeeming social importance'. Assess this verdict.
How would you define 'redeeming social importance', and is there evidence in the poem to support a reading along these lines? Also, is 'redeeming social importance' a condition of our enjoyment of the work as poetry?
3. Women's lives are governed by a "paradox of their situation: they belong at one and the same time to the male world and to a sphere in which that world is challenged; shut up in their world, surrounded by the other, they can settle down nowhere in peace" (Lodge 102). Examine **the extent to which** Carter's novel engages with this statement.
4. "The social order, our culture, want it this way: the mother must remain forbidden, excluded." What role do mothers / mother figures play in Carter's novel?
5. Examine the representation of masculine figures in Carter's novel.

Theory-specific titles

1. "The Myth of woman plays a considerable part in literature; but what is its importance in daily life?" (Lodge 95) Explain, in your own words, **Simone de Beauvoir's** approach to answering this question in her essay "Myth and Reality"; then assess the extent to which you agree with her.
2. "Anything can happen when womanhood has ceased to be a protected occupation" (Lodge 92). Explain, in your own

words, and with reference to **Virginia Woolf's** essay in "Chapter 2" of *A room of one's own* what this statement could mean; then assess the extent to which you agree with it.

3. "By distinguishing between the language itself and speech, we distinguish at the same time: (1) what is social from what is individual, and (2) what is essential from what is ancillary and more or less accidental" (Lodge 47). How do you understand **Ferdinand de Saussure's** distinction between language and speech? And to what extent do you think it is useful in reading literary texts?
4. "Once the author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile" (Lodge 315). Explain, in your own words, how you understand **Roland Barthes'** idea of the "death of the author" then assess the scope and limitations of such an attitude.
5. "There have always been those uncertain, poetic beings, who have not let themselves be reduced to the state of coded mannequins" (Lodge 364). How do you interpret **Hélène Cixous's** statement? To what extent do you agree with it?
6. **Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels** maintain that "The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life." Explain, in your own words, what this statement could mean? Assess the extent to which you find it useful in interpreting literary texts.
7. With reference to **Michel Foucault's** essay "What is an author?" explain in your own words why it is not possible to rid texts of their authors and assess the consequences of such a position. (see for example the statement on page 288 "The text always contains a certain number of signs referring to the author).