

A Practical Introduction to Literary Study

By James S. Brown, Scott D. Yarbrough

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This brief, practical book addresses how and why people read literature, and then shows different ways of thinking about the literature they are reading¿teaching users to read critically and analytically, to write thoughtful and concise papers of literary analysis, and to perform competent literary research. The book¿s comprehensive coverage offers a detailed description of practical research methods, an understanding of criticism and how to use it in papers, and a complete section on MLA documentation. The main topics address: what is literature and what is critical thinking?; reading critically; understanding literary language; explication and analysis; and secondary sources, research, and critical theory. For those new to literary study.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

A PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY STUDY is a brief guide designed for any literature course. Written to be useful and accessible, this text focuses on critical reading with a concentration on the literary canon. The text also introduces you to the tools, terms, and methods you need for discussing literature and incorporating critical thinking into your writing. It will guide you through the research process from beginning to end.

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As English professors with large teaching loads at small colleges, we have had the opportunity to teach a considerable number of literature courses at every level of college education, from first-year introductory courses through graduate seminars. Although many of our sophomore students may have been exposed to the rudiments of literary study as first-year students, it has become apparent to us that a good many students seem to have difficulty retaining what they have learned about critical reading, analytical writing, and research and documentation methods into their second-year literature surveys. We have also begun encountering transfer students from schools that do not require literature and composition courses for first-year students. Such students have upon occasion been thrust into college-level literature courses where they are expected to read critically and analytically, to write thoughtful and concise papers of literary analysis, and to perform competent literary research. These expectations are difficult enough to meet for sophomores who have had the benefit of first-year instruction in literature but exceedingly difficult to meet for students like the transfers we noted or students who have exempted their first-year class through placement exams.

At the same time, like many other professors, we have become somewhat dissatisfied with many standard first-year literary texts. Although some of the pedagogical apparatus included in such texts is very fine, often the anthology of included works doesn't live up to the sections on writing. Similarly, several excellent anthologies seem to contain very little in the way of useful pedagogy. A text containing very good notes on critical theory, for example, may contain nothing on Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation. Finding supplemental texts that let us teach literature from a variety of anthologies and primary sources while at the same time not sacrificing any of the pedagogy proved quite difficult. We have also had problems in finding texts that were suitable for students who were still learning to read critically and to write analytically or who needed to be refreshed on the fundamental rules of literary research before being asked to make use of theory in a paper.

Our goal in this book, then, is to provide a practical guide for students entering literary study This text is intended as a supplementary text for survey of literature courses and is written and designed to be useful and accessible for the undergraduate student. We have particularly focused on sophomores and on first-year students who are taking courses that use literature anthologies or other texts without pedagogical apparatus.

A Practical Introduction to Literary Study begins by focusing on critical reading and the literary canon and introduces students to the tools, terms, and methods they need for discussing literature. It also contains chapters on practical research methods, on understanding criticism and using it in papers, and on MLA documentation. We have also included a brief overview of critical theory that should prove useful in courses designed for introducing new upper-division students to the English major. We have used **boldface** to

indicate important literary terms throughout the text that are defined in the glossary at the back of the book.

Although *A Practical Introduction to Literary Study* does include a small number of readings to help illustrate various points throughout the text, this book is not intended to function as an anthology or to replace any of the excellent anthologies instructors use in their classes. Instead, we have for the most part chosen short, commonly taught or relatively straightforward texts in order to facilitate classroom instruction. The readings have been kept to a minimum because the text is intended to be supplemental to other literature texts; we realize that instructors may often wish to choose alternative works to teach the lesson at hand. Some readings are incorporated into the chapter for the convenience of the instructor and students; others are contained in Part Six of the book.

Above all else, this book is intended to be understandable and useful to the beginning student as well as to the more advanced student. We have included Thinking Exercises throughout the book that instructors may assign if they wish; these exercises are tailored to provoke further thought in students who are learning how exciting and stimulating literary studies can truly be.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jose Scott:

Do you one of people who can't read enjoyable if the sentence chained inside the straightway, hold on guys that aren't like that. This A Practical Introduction to Literary Study book is readable through you who hate those straight word style. You will find the facts here are arrange for enjoyable examining experience without leaving even decrease the knowledge that want to deliver to you. The writer of A Practical Introduction to Literary Study content conveys prospect easily to understand by many people. The printed and e-book are not different in the content but it just different as it. So , do you still thinking A Practical Introduction to Literary Study is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

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Wesley Powell:

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