

Literary criticism records opinions about an author's work. Critics interpret, describe, summarize, or evaluate the literature, and their comments can help you define and express your own views. Literary criticism often discusses a work's historical context, which may give you better insight into an author's purpose.

Rhetoric is the study of using language effectively. It can refer to many different subject areas (legal rhetoric, philosophical rhetoric, rhetoric and composition, etc.)

If you are completely in the dark about a topic, consult a general encyclopedia such as World Book or Britannica to get this basic information.

Portal: Bell Library's Online Catalog

Books on a single author

Books about specific authors are listed in the subject section of the library's online catalog under the author's last name. For example:

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM 1564-1616

You might also want to try a WORD search in Portal using your author's name and the term "criticism." This will increase the number of titles retrieved, and will include books that discuss several authors, including yours, which is useful if you are comparing your author to others writing in the same genre.

Books on several authors

Books on more than one author may be listed in several places in the subject catalog. You can look under broad topics such as criticism, fiction, or poetry and find books of criticism listed there. Looking under more specific headings, such as English Literature, American Poetry, or Spanish Literature is often very helpful.

Electronic Databases

Academic Search Complete

Coverage: from 1865 to present

Full Text: Yes

Description: This comprehensive, scholarly, multi-disciplinary full-text database which features journal articles also includes monographs, reports, and conference proceedings. Subjects covered include: area studies, astronomy, biology, chemistry, engineering, ethnic & cultural studies, general science, geography, geology, mathematics, music, physics, psychology, theology, women's studies and other fields.

Communication & Mass Media Complete

Coverage: Varies

Full-Text: Some

Description: Provides research in areas related to communication and mass media. Incorporates CommSearch and Mass Media Articles Index, along with numerous other journals. Offers indexing and abstracts for 300 journals, and coverage of 100 more. Includes full text for 200 journals. (Several of the Rhetoric journals are indexed in this database)

Jstor

Coverage: from the 1800s up until 5 years ago. JSTOR is not a current issues database. Because of the JSTOR's archival mission, there is a gap, typically from 1 to 5 years, between the most recently published journal issue and the back issues available in JSTOR Full Image: Yes

Description: The Arts & Sciences I Collection includes the complete back runs of 119 titles in fifteen disciplines. This collection includes many of the core research and society published journals in economics, history, political science, and sociology, as well as in other key fields in the humanities and social sciences. This collection also includes a selection of titles in the more science-oriented fields of ecology, mathematics, and statistics.

Literature Resource Center

(includes 3 databases: Contemporary Authors, Contemporary Literary Criticism Select, and Dictionary of Literary Biography)

Coverage: from 1926 to present.

Full Text: Yes

Description: Contains information on classical and contemporary authors and their works. Obtain biographies of authors, bibliographies of all they have written, critical essays and contextual information. Search by the author, title of the work, or title of the periodical or journal. The database includes an online “**Guide to Conducting Literary Research.**”

Contemporary Authors provides complete biographical and bibliographic information on more than 120,000 U.S. and international authors, including excerpts from published criticism. Also available in print (Ref Z 1224 C6) with cumulative index to the series.

Contemporary Literary Criticism Select collects thousands of essays on contemporary authors, which include biographical and critical information, bibliographies of principle works, and resources for further study. Also available in print (Ref PN 771 .C59).

Dictionary of Literary Biography provides thousands of biographical and critical essays on the lives, works, and careers of influential literary figures from all eras and genres.

Project Muse

Coverage: from the 1990s to present.

Full-text: Yes

Description: Provides full text of academic journals covering literature and criticism, history, the visual and performing arts, cultural studies, education, political science, gender studies, and many others.

MLA International Bibliography

Coverage: 1926 to present

Full Text: Some

Description: Indexes journal articles, books, conference proceedings, working papers, dissertations, and bibliographies covering rhetoric and composition, literary theory & criticism, linguistics, folklore, dramatic arts, as well as the historical aspects of printing and publishing, and the history, theory, and practice of teaching language and literature. Coverage is international. Also available in print (Ref Z 7006 .M64).

Interplay

Coverage: 19th century to present

Full Text: No

Description: An index to plays in collections, anthologies, and periodicals. The call numbers cited are those assigned by the Portland State University Library and do not necessarily correspond to the holdings at Bell Library.

WorldCat The largest online catalog in the world. You can find out what thousands of libraries own in the way of books, journals, media, and so on. You can limit search results to **Internet Resources** that have been selected because of their quality.

Print Resources

Bibliographies and Checklists

The Contemporary Novel, a Checklist of Critical Literature on the British and American Novel Since 1945

(Ref Z 1231 F4 A34)

Handbook of Latin American Studies (Ref Z 1605 .H26)

Hispanic American Periodicals Index (HAPI) (Ref Z 1605 .H16)

Longman Bibliography of Composition and Rhetoric (Ref Z 5818 .E5 L66 1986)

Poetry Explication: A Checklist of Interpretation Since 1925 of British and American Poems Past and Present

(Ref Z 2014 .P7 K8 1980)

Research in Composition and Rhetoric: A Bibliographic Sourcebook (Z 2015 .R5 R47 1984)

The Present State of Scholarship in Historical and Contemporary Rhetoric (PN 183 .P7 1990)

Twentieth Century Short Story Explication: Interpretations...of Short Fiction Since 1800 (Ref Z 5917 .S5 W33)

World Drama from Aeschylus to Anouilh (PN 2101 .N55 1976)

Encyclopedias

Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature (Ref PQ 7081 .A1 E56 1997)

Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition (PN 172 .E53 1996)

Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century (Ref PN 771 .E5 1999)

Other Print Resources

African American Rhetoric(s): Interdisciplinary Perspectives (PS 153 .N5 A69 2004)

British Prose Writers of the Early Seventeenth Century - Vol. 151 (Ref PR 769 .B75 1995)

Critical Survey of Short Fiction (Ref PN 3321 .C7)
Critical Survey of Long Fiction (Ref PR 821 .C7 2000)
Critical Survey of Poetry (Ref PR 502 .C85 1982)
Critical Survey of Drama (Ref PR 623 .C75 1994)
Defining the New Rhetorics (PN 183 .D44 1993)
Hispanic Literature Criticism (Ref PQ 7081 .A1 H573)
Literary Research Guide: An Annotated Listing of Reference Sources in English Literary Studies (Ref Z 2011 .H34 2002)
Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism (Ref PN 761 .N56)
Old and Middle English Literature - Vol. 146 (Ref PR 166 .O43 1994)
The Reader's Adviser; a Layman's Guide to Literature (Ref Z 1035 .R42 1994)
Shakespearean Criticism (Ref PR 2965 .S44)
Short Story Criticism (Ref PN 3373 .S386)
Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies (Ref PN 172 .J37 2001 c. 2)
The St. Martin's Guide to Writing (PE 1408 .A94 2001)
Twentieth Century Literary Criticism (Ref PN 771 .G27)
Twentieth Century Spanish Poets – Vol. 134 (Ref PQ 6085 .T88 1994)

Internet Resources

Internet Public Library: Literary Criticism < <http://www.ipl.org/div/litcrit/> >

Based at the University of Michigan's School of Information, the Internet Public Library includes links to Reference materials, Subject Collections, including those in Arts & Humanities, Special Collections, a Reading Room, and Searching Tools. This link is to their Literary Criticism page.

Librarians' Index to the Internet < <http://lii.org> >

LI, a project of the Library of California, is a searchable, annotated subject guide to thousands of Internet resources selected and evaluated by librarians. Hosting is provided by the UC Berkeley SunSITE.

The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism

< <http://litguide.press.jhu.edu/> >

This full-text searchable database provides articles on individual critics and theorists, critical and theoretical schools and movements, and more. Each entry includes a selective primary and secondary bibliography.

Literary Resources on the Net < <http://www.andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Lit/> >

A searchable collection of links to sites on the Internet dealing with English and American literature, limited to information useful to academics. Maintained by Jack Lynch at Rutgers.

LitLinks < <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/litlinks/litlinks.html> >

This site from Bedford St. Martin's categorizes information by genre (poetry, drama, fiction, essays and critical theory). Information arranged by chronological list of literary periods or alphabetical author links. Author information includes a biography and any relevant Internet links about the author, specific works and cultural/historical influences. Also includes a "research room", a collection of research aids useful for students, instructors, and writers.

For More Information:

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