

# COM Library's Literature & Criticism Guide

COM LIBRARY, INFORMATION FOR LIFE...

This COM Library Guide describes resources available for Literary Criticism. Find [books](#), [eBooks](#), [articles](#), or [Internet resources](#). Available online (most current version) at <http://library.com.edu/help/LiteraryCriticism.pdf>.



## Books

### *How to find print books and eBooks*

To find books, search COM Library's catalog, COMCat: <http://comcat.com.edu/>. COMCat is Web based and may be searched on any computer in the world with Internet access.

### ***Best COMCat Search for books on an author, including criticism***

To search for resources on specific literature, the most effective search is to enter the name of your author with the last name first and select Subject Browse like this: hawthorne, nathaniel. The result is a list of subjects about your author that get increasingly specific:

- **HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL, 1804-1864.** The first subject listed should look like this. Clicking on this subject in COMCat will give you a list of general books about your author. These are usually good for background information.
- **HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL, 1804-1864--CRITICISM AND INTERPRETATION.** Further down the list you may find a subject that looks like this. These books will have criticism about the authors works OR may be books that help interpret the authors works OR a combination of both. These books may cover multiple works by your author and are good for assignments that require criticism or to help you understand the author's works.
- **HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL, 1804-1864. SCARLET LETTER.** Further down the list you may also find books that are about individual works by an author. These books may cover just one work by your author and include very specific details about the work, such as background, criticism and interpretation.

### ***More COMCat Searches for literature***

- **Find books that interpret literature**  
Of course you now know how to find books about interpreting literature by specific authors, but there are also books that can help you interpret literature in general. To find these books, type in *literature* and select subject browse. Click on the first entry, LITERATURE, to get a list of books that will help you read literature. This will retrieve books like *The literature student's survival kit : what every reader*

*needs to know OR How to read literature like a professor : a lively and entertaining guide to reading between the lines.*

- **Find books that define literary terms**

Type in *literature terminology* and select subject browse. Click on the first entry, *literature--terminology*, to get a list of books that will help you define literary terms. This will retrieve books like *Bedford glossary of critical and literary terms* and *Glossary of contemporary literary theory*.

- **Find books on themes in literature**

To search for resources on themes in literature, the easiest search is to type in your theme with the phrase "in literature" in quotes. For instance, if you wanted to find books on heroes, you would type in "heroes in literature". There are many themes for which you can search in this way. Here are a few more examples of themes you could search for:

- "archetype (Psychology) in literature"
- "death in literature"
- "family in literature"
- "love in literature"
- "gender identity in literature"
- "myth in literature"
- "women in literature"

- **Find books that give you context for literature**

Understanding what life was like during which a work was written can help you understand the work. To do this, combine a time period with terms like history, life, society, religion, women, customs, social, philosophy, thought or culture.

For instance, if you wanted to have a better understanding of Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* you could combine the time period "middle ages" with women to learn more about women's roles in the middle ages. Use quotes for phrases and the plus sign for a more effective search.

- "middle ages" +women

Here are some more examples:

- ancient +religion
- "colonial period" +society
- "civil war" +culture
- renaissance +philosophy
- reformation +life
- "Elizabethan age" +history
- "20th century" +customs
- "21st century" +social
- Enlightenment +thought

## ***Subject Headings***

When you want general books on literary criticism and related topics, search the Library Catalog for the following subject headings using *subject browse*. There are many more subject headings available. Try the Library of Congress Subject Headings books for even more.

- Criticism--Authorship--Handbooks, Manuals, etc.
- Criticism--Dictionaries
- Criticism--Great Britain--History
- Criticism--History
- Criticism--History--20<sup>th</sup> Century
- Criticism--Indexes
- Criticism--Terminology
- Criticism--United States
- Literature
- Literature--Terminology

## ***Call Numbers***

If you want to browse the shelves, try the following call numbers in reference and the main collection.

- PA- Criticism in Antiquity
- PN- History of Criticism, Principles of Criticism, Terminology
- PR- 20<sup>th</sup> Century Criticism
- PS- American

## ***Reference Books***

Literary criticism can be hard to find. If you can't find any articles or books that have literary criticism on your author or literary work, try COM Library's collections of literary criticism in Reference. The easiest way to find if any of the titles below cover your author/story is to search Gale's Literary Index

(<http://www.galenet.com/servlet/LitIndex>). The index covers more volumes than the library owns, so make it matches the titles below, within the range of volumes listed.

Note: Additional content from Gale is available through Gale: Literature Resource Center listed under Literature on COM Library's Database page.

- *Black Literature Criticism* PS 153 N5 B556 1992 Ref
- *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism* PN 681.5 C57 Ref (v. 1-40)
- *Contemporary Literary Criticism* PN 771 C59 Ref (v. 1-141)
- *Drama Criticism* PN 1721 D72 Ref (v. 1-21)
- *Literature Criticism from 1400-1800* PN 86 L56 Ref (v. 1-76)
- *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism* PN 761 N5 Ref (v. 1- 126)
- *Poetry Criticism* PN 1010 P499 Ref (v. 1-53)
- *Shakespearean Criticism* PR 2965 S44 Ref (v. 1-77)
- *Short Story Criticism* PN 3373 S386 Ref (v. 1- 67)
- *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* PN 771 T9 Ref (v. 1- 137)
- *World Literature Criticism* PN 523 W67 1992 Ref

## Reference Databases

In addition to print reference resources, COM Library provides access to several reference databases. The best ones for literature are listed below:

- [Encyclopædia Britannica](#)  
If you type in the phrase *American literature* in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* search box and select *American literature* from the result list, you'll be looking at a fantastic overview of American literature, complete with timeline, or you can go there directly [right now!](#) Note that you can expand the full contents of the article on the left hand side of the page, under *This Article's Table of Contents*, or you can choose to go directly to another section, such as *The 18th century*.
- [Oxford Reference](#)  
To access information on literature, scroll down the Oxford Reference home page until you see *Literature* and click on it. You'll see a list of all the Oxford Reference full text books on literature listed, like *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*. All the books are both searchable and browsable. Go directly to the [Literature](#) section now.

## Series Books

COM Library has several series of books that focus on literary criticism. You can access a list of all of the books in the series in the library catalog by performing a series search using the phrases below:

- *Cambridge Companions to Literature*
- *Critical Essays*
- *Twayne's*
- *Modern Critical View*

## eBooks

COM Library has access to eBooks, electronic versions of printed books. To access them, go to *Find Books* and click on *eBooks*. From this page you can access both free eBooks and eBooks only available to COM Library users. Through *netLibrary* you can access thousands of full textbooks. Please note the special instructions on the *eBooks* page for accessing the *netLibrary* collection: <http://library.com.edu/books/ebooks.htm#COM>.



### Tip

Searching NetLibrary using the same terms as the *Best COMCat Search* terms will usually retrieve good results.



## Articles

### ***How to find articles from print journals and online databases.***

The COM Library has online databases that can help you locate articles on literary criticism. That's the good news. The bad news is it can be a little more complicated to

search for criticism in the databases than for other subjects, and since there is not as much written on criticism as there is on many other subjects, sometimes you'll find the same articles in different databases.

## **Online Databases**

COM Library has access to many online databases that have full text articles.

### **Best Bet Databases**

To access the COM Library databases that are your best bets for articles and information on literary criticism, go to COM Library's *Databases*:

<http://library.com.edu/articles/databases.htm#Literature>

### **Tip**



Because the literature databases can be more difficult to use than some of the others, the library has created the *Literature Databases Guide*. The guide has good tips and useful information on how to get articles from the databases:

<http://library.com.edu/help/LiteratureDatabases.htm> .

## **Literature in context**

There are some database that have information that can give context to help you better understand a work. The databases listed below and COM Library's history site have information on many different eras, but for purposes of an example we'll use the middle ages. If you wanted to understand Chaucer's work *The Canterbury Tales*, you could try the following:

- **Databases: History & Genealogy category**  
[http://library.com.edu/Find\\_Articles/Databases.htm#History](http://library.com.edu/Find_Articles/Databases.htm#History)
  - **Proquest: History Study Center**
    - Select study units
    - Type Medieval in subject field (or another historical era)
    - Also try it in multimedia for images and audio
  - **EBSCO: World History Collection**
    - "middle ages"
- **Websites: History**  
[http://library.com.edu/Find\\_Internet/History/index.html](http://library.com.edu/Find_Internet/History/index.html)
  - EyeWitnessstoHistory.com
  - The Labyrinth
  - The Online Medieval and Classical Library (OMACL)

## **Online Periodicals**

The Library has many more full text literature periodicals available online than in print. Access lists of some of the online periodicals available through our literature databases:

- LION Full Text Journals (over 100)  
<https://ezproxy.com.edu/login?url=http://lionreference.chadwyck.com/html/content.htm#full>

- Gale LRC Journal Title list (240) <http://www.galegroup.com/tlist/sb5102.html>
- EBSCO Full Text Literature and Literary Criticism Journals (256)  
[http://library.com.edu/help/ebSCO\\_full\\_text\\_literature\\_and\\_l.htm](http://library.com.edu/help/ebSCO_full_text_literature_and_l.htm)

### **Print Periodicals**

The list below reflects literature periodicals currently available in print at COM Library. The most recent issues are on our periodicals shelves located by the front entrance; older issues are upstairs on the mezzanine:

- Nineteenth Century Literature
- SAF: Studies in American Fiction
- *The Sewanee Review*
- The Southern Literary Journal



## **Internet Resources**

### ***How to find resources from the Web.***

Although an excellent resource for full text literature and biographical information, the Internet is not the best resource for literary criticism. COM Library does have a *Literary Criticism* page that has links to some of the best Internet resources, but these resources can't compete with the books, eBooks and databases available through the library.

### **COM Library Pages**

- American Literature: [http://library.com.edu/internet/WebSites/eng\\_am.htm](http://library.com.edu/internet/WebSites/eng_am.htm)
- British Literature: [http://library.com.edu/internet/WebSites/eng\\_br.htm](http://library.com.edu/internet/WebSites/eng_br.htm)
- English: <http://library.com.edu/internet/WebSites/eng.htm>
- Literary Criticism: [http://library.com.edu/internet/WebSites/eng\\_lc.htm](http://library.com.edu/internet/WebSites/eng_lc.htm)



### **Tip**

Use COM Library's *MLA Style Guide* for real citation examples from COM Library resources. <http://library.com.edu/help/MLAStyleGuide.pdf>.

### **Reserves**

Material placed on reserve by your instructor should be requested at the circulation desk. Some library items are placed on permanent reserve and also must be requested at the circulation desk. You may check for reserves by clicking on the *Course Reserves* tab in the Library Catalog at: <http://comcat.com.edu/> and searching by *Instructor*, *Department* or *Course*.

### **Questions?**

If you still have questions after reading this guide, try some of COM Library's *FAQs* (<http://library.com.edu/faqs/FAQs.htm>), access *Library Jargon* (<http://library.com.edu/help/jargon.htm>) for definitions of library terms, or you may ask the Reference Librarian for assistance. The Reference Office is located on the ground floor of the library near the Online Library.