

Pierce College Library

Guide to Literary Criticism

- Before you begin, make sure you know the full name of the author of the work, when the work was written, and what form of literature it is (novel, drama, short story, poetry, etc.)
- There are three main areas in the library where you can find literary criticism: in the **Reference Collection**, in the **Book Stacks** and through the library's **Online Article Databases**.

Reference Collection

The main source for literary criticism in the reference collection is the Gale Literary Criticism series, a collection of literary criticisms arranged by time period or format.

| Title of Series | Reference Call # |
|---|------------------|
| Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism (for authors who lived from antiquity through 1399) | PN86 .C55 |
| Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800 * | PN86 .L56 |
| Shakespearean Criticism | PR2965 .S44 |
| Nineteenth Century Literature Criticism (for authors who died between 1800 -1899)* | PN761 .N5 |
| Twentieth Century Literary Criticism (for authors who died between 1900 -1959) * | PN771 .T94 |
| Contemporary Literary Criticism (for authors who are now living or died after 1959)* | PN771 .C59 |
| Short Story Criticism * | PN3373 .S386 |
| Poetry Criticism * | PN1010 .P62 |
| Drama Criticism | PN1601 .D59 |

*Use the [Cumulative Title Index](#) located at the end of the series to look up the title of your work. For those series without a separate index, look up the title of your work in the last volume of the series.

Above titles in green are now also available through Literature Criticism Online.

Other sources for literary criticism within the reference collection:

| Title of Series | Reference Call # |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Critical Survey of Drama | PN1625 .C73 |
| Critical Survey of Poetry | PN86 .L56 |
| Critical Survey of Long Fiction | PN3451 .C74 |
| Critical Survey of Short Fiction | PN3321 .C7 |

Book Stacks

To locate books on your topic in the book stacks, you will need to use the online book catalog.

1. Click on the link that says books on the Pierce College Library web page.

2. Type in the name of the author of your work, and the word criticism, then press search. For example, if you were looking for criticism on *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, you would type in: steinbeck and criticism.
3. Write down the call numbers of the books you are interested in. The call number will be listed at the bottom of the item information under Holdings. Go find the book in the book stacks. If the book is an e-book, click on the URL link to read the book online.
4. Once you have found the book on the shelf or online, try looking in the table of contents or index of the book to see if there is any information on your specific topic.

Online Databases

Academic One File (AONE)

Academic One File is a multi-subject database, but you will find many literary criticism articles within. Once you are in the database, click on “subject guide search” near the top of the screen. Type in your author’s name and press enter. Another screen will appear that should have your author’s name and a link underneath that says subdivisions. Click on the subdivisions link and on the next page choose the option that says “criticism, interpretation, etc.” This will take you to a list of critical articles about your author’s works.

Not all of the articles will necessarily be about the work you are writing on, so you will need to go through them all. Articles that say “text” can be viewed on the computer where you can either print the article out here in the library or e-mail the article to yourself. If the article link says either “abstract” or “citation” you will need to click on the *Periodicals Portal* link on the library’s homepage, type in the title of the magazine, newspaper or journal, and check to see if that title is carried full-text in either one of our other databases or in the periodicals section of the library.

JSTOR

JSTOR is an archive of hundreds of academic journals, many relating to literature. Try a basic search by just typing in the title of the work you are looking for. If you obtain too many results, add some other key words such as the author’s name or the word criticism. Choose English under the language pull-down menu to limit your results to just English.

Literature Criticism Online

Literature Criticism Online contains the full-text of three of Gale’s most popular literary criticism series: Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC), Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC) and Short Story Criticism (SSC). Search by author, named work (the title of your book), or search within the full-text of the series of books. All of the articles can be printed or emailed to yourself.

Literature Resource Center (LRC)

LRC contains some of the articles that would appear in the literary criticism series that are in the reference section of the library and listed above. Once you are in the LRC database, click on title search, type in the title of the work, choose the exact title button, and click on the search button. From the results page, choose the tab that says Literary Criticism, Articles, and Work Overviews. You can print or email any of the articles listed. For more information on using this database, click on the tutorial button next to the link for the database on the library’s homepage.

Note: To use the online article databases from off campus, you will first need to show your Pierce ID card at the circulation desk of the library to obtain the remote access passwords.