Recommended Reading in Theory and Criticism

Where available, refer to selections in the Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism

History of Literary Criticism
Plato (ca. 427-ca. 347 B.C.E.) excerpts from Republic
Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.) Poetics
Horace (65-8 B.C.E.) Ars Poetica
Longinus (first century C.E.) from On Sublimity
Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) The Defense of Poesy (or An Apology for Poetry)
John Dryden (1631-1700) excerpt from “An Essay of Dramatic Poesy”
Joseph Addison (1672-1719) Spectator Papers on Milton and on Taste
Alexander Pope (1688-1744) “An Essay on Criticism”
Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) “On Fiction” in The Rambler No. 4 and Chapter X of Rasselas
Edmund Burke (1729-1797) A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful
Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) excerpts from Biographia Literaria
Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) excerpts from A Defence of Poetry
Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) “The American Scholar,” “The Poet”
Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) “The Philosophy of Composition”
Karl Marx & Freidrich Engels (1818-1883) “The Communist Manifesto”
Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” excerpt from Culture and Anarchy
Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) excerpts from The Birth of Tragedy
Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) excerpts from A Room of One’s Own
Cleanth Brooks The Well-Wrought Urn

Contemporary Theory and Criticism
Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) excerpts from The Interpretation of Dreams, “The ‘Uncanny’” and “Fetishism”
Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) “Course in General Linguistics”
W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963) preface to The Souls of Black Folk
Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”
Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) excerpts from Discourse in the Novel
J. L. Austin (1911-1960) “Performatve Utterances”
Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) “What is Literature”
Roland Barthes (1915-1980) “The Death of the Author” and “From Work to Text”
Louis Althusser (1918-1990) from Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses
Raymond Williams (1921-1988) Marxism and Literature
Franz Fanon (1925-1961) The Wretched of the Earth or Black Skin, White Masks
Michel Foucault (1926-1984) “What Is an Author?” and excerpts from The History of Sexuality
Adrienne Rich (1929-) excerpt from Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence
Chinua Achebe (1930-) “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness”
Jane P. Tompkins Sensational Designs (chapter on Stowe)
Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) excerpts from Of Grammatology and Dissemination
Stuart Hall (1932-) “Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies”
Frederic Jameson (1934-) excerpts from The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act
Sandra Gilbert & Susan Gubar (1936-) & (1944-) excerpt from The Madwoman in the Attic
Stanley Fish (1938-) “Interpreting the Variorum,” Is There a Text in This Class
Julia Kristeva (1941-) Essay on Abjection from Powers of Horror
Gayatri Spivak (1942-) excerpt from A Critique of Postcolonial Reason
Gloria Anzaldúa (1942-) excerpt from Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza
Stephen Greenblatt (1943-) Introduction to The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance
Barbara Smith (1946-) “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism”
Homi K. Bhabha (1949-) “The Commitment to Theory”
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1950-) Introduction to Between Men
Judith Butler (1956-) excerpts from Gender Trouble, introduction to Bodies that Matter

Modern and Contemporary Critical Schools and Movements
Either read the brief summary at the back of the Norton (2532-2552) or read about all of the following in any good glossary or handbook of literary terms:
Formalism
New Criticism
Structuralism and Semiotics
Reader-Response Criticism
Deconstructive Criticism
Marxism
New Historicism
Historical Criticism
Postcolonial Criticism
Cultural Studies
Race and Ethnicity Studies
Psychological Criticism
Feminist Criticism
Queer Theory