

# **Máster en Estudios Textuales y Culturales en Lengua Inglesa**

## **60700 - Approaches to the Study of the Literary Text in English**

**Course 2014 - 2015**

**Curso: 1, Semestre: 1, Créditos: 7.5**

---

### **Basic information**

---

#### **Teachers**

- **Constanza Del Río Alvaro** crio@unizar.es
- **Susana Onega Jaén** sonega@unizar.es

#### **Recommendations to attend this course**

The main aim of this course is to offer the students an introduction to some of the most relevant approaches to the study of the literary text and to analyse a selection of readings in English from the perspective of the various critical and theoretical perspectives. Given its in-depth character, this aim cannot be achieved in the Degree courses. The students should therefore bear in mind the fact that they are expected to be familiar with basic literary concepts and texts in English before taking this course

This course complements the first-term compulsory course, Issues in Film Studies, in that it offers several theoretical approaches to the critical analysis of literary texts and is aimed at developing the students' critical acumen. It also complements the other first-term compulsory course, "How to Write a Research Article in English" in that it teaches how to apply basic critical tools to the comprehension and analysis of texts, thus contributing to the improvement of the use of English in a critical and analytical context. This subject also procures a theoretical basis for the study of the second-term optional subjects "Main Trends in Contemporary English Fiction", "Main Trends in Contemporary U.S. Fiction" and "Alternatives to the English Canon".

Basic knowledge of the workings of literary narratives and of literary analysis is advisable but not indispensable. Students who have never done literary criticism will be provided with a basic bibliography on request.

#### **Course Schedule and Deadlines**

Presentation and discussion of the theoretical approaches included in the programme and application of the main tenets of these approaches to the analysis of various types of literary narrative texts (see course planning).

Group analysis of a selection of literary texts from the perspective of the critical approaches and methods presented in the theory sessions (see course planning).

Presentation of 3,000 words essay: last day of the first semester.

---

### **Home**

---

## Learning outcomes that define this course

**The student, in order to pass the course, will have to show her/his competence in the following skills:**

- 1:** The student can use the basic critical tools to understand and analyse literary texts in English.
- 2:** The student is capable of testing the explanatory power of the most relevant critical approaches to literary texts through their application to a corpus of literary texts in English.
- 3:** The student is capable of developing skills in the use of English in a scholarly and critical environment.
- 4:** The student can provide a critical response to literary texts.

## Introduction

### Brief presentation of the course

This course provides an introduction to some of the most relevant approaches to literary texts and close analysis of a selection of literary texts in English from the various theoretical perspectives presented to the students.

### Course programme

- 1. Myth criticism.** Introduction. From myth to literature: The classical concepts of *mythos* and *logos* and of *poiesis* and *mimesis*. 1.a) Natural cults: Creation and fertility myths. The dying god. 1.b) Mystery cults: The Holy Grail and the hero's quest. Mythical time and the structure of the quest. The poet/prophet as shaman. Adaptations of the quest myth: the *Bildungsroman*.
- 2. Narrative poetics:** The structure of fictional narrative: horizontal and vertical levels of analysis (text, story, fabula) and textual figures (textual author / textual reader; narrator / narratee: focaliser / implied spectator; characters). Temporal aspects (order, duration, frequency) and narrative embedding (the *mise en abyme*).
- 3. Literature and ideology:** Textual politics. Literature as reflection of reality, interpellation of the subject or articulation of political and socio-cultural values. The classical text, the polyphonic text, the writerly text and the subversive text.
- 4. Literature and identity:** The construction of subject positions through textual strategies. Stereotypes and representation. Gender identities, national identities, ethnic identities. Feminisms and Postfeminisms. Postcolonial criticism.
- 5. Reading against the grain:** The text as symptom. The hermeneutics of suspicion. Deconstructing and psychoanalysing the text.

## Bibliographical resources

### Unit 1

- Anon., Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Translated by Jessie L. Weston. Accessible at: <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/sggk.htm> . The Middle-English text is also accessible at: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/AnoGawa.html>
- Eliot, T. S., "The Burial of the Dead", The Waste Land (1922). Accessible at <http://eliotswasteland.tripod.com/>
- Fowles, John, A Maggot: Chapters 1-5 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985), pp. 58.
- Winterson, Jeanette, Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit (1985, London: Pandora; 1987).

### Unit 2

- Dickens, Charles, Great Expectations. Vol I. Chapter I. (1861). Accessible at <http://www.online-literature.com/dickens/greatexpectations/>
- Eliot, George, Middlemarch. Book I. "Miss Brooks". Vol I. Accessible at <http://www.classicreader.com/read.php/sid.1/bookid.1212/sec.2/>

- Hughes, Ted, "The Thought Fox". Accessible at  
<http://www.poemhunter.com/p/m/poem.asp?poet=6616&poem=31435>
- Joyce, James, Ulysses, Episode 2: "Nestor". Accessible at  
[http://www.online-literature.com/james\\_joyce/ulysses/2](http://www.online-literature.com/james_joyce/ulysses/2)
- Joyce, James, Ulysses, Episode 18: "Penelope": First paragraph. Accessible at  
[http://www.online-literature.com/james\\_joyce/ulysses/18/](http://www.online-literature.com/james_joyce/ulysses/18/)

### **Unit 3**

- Logue, Christopher, "Foreword to New Numbers". In New Numbers (1969).
- Blake, William, "London". In Songs of Experience (1794). Accessible at  
<http://www-personal.ksu.edu/~lyman/english233/Blake-London.htm>
- Trevor, William, "The Ballroom of Romance" (1972). In William Trevor: The Collected Stories (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), pp. 189-204.
- Wilson, Robert McLiam, "It Begins" and Chapters One, Two and Three. Ripley Bogle, (New York: Ballantine, 1989), pp. 1-25.

### **Unit 4**

- Donoghue, Emma, "The Tale of the Shoe", "The Tale of the Bird" and "The Tale of the Rose". In Kissing the Witch (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), pp. 3-37.
- Friel, Brian, Translations (1980). In The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. F, The Twentieth Century and After (eighth edition) (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2006), pp. 2475-523.
- Rhys, Jean, "Let Them Call it Jazz" (1961). In The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. F, The Twentieth Century and After (eighth edition) (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2006), pp. 2361-72. Accessible at  
<http://www.poetrymagazines.org.uk/magazine/record.asp?id=10828>

### **Unit 5**

- Marvell, Andrew, "To His Coy Mistress". Accessible at <http://www.bartleby.com/105/62.html>
- Maugham, W. Somerset, "The Force of Circumstance" (1953). In The Penguin Book of English Short Stories (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp. 129-55.
- Oates, Joyce Carol, "Haunted". In Haunted: Tales of the Grotesque (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), pp. 3-25.

## **E-learning platform**

<http://moodle.unizar.es/>

## **Competences**

## **General aims of the course**

### **The expected results of the course respond to the following general aims**

The main aim of this subject is to provide students with an introduction to some of the most relevant approaches to literary texts and to test their explanatory power through the close analysis of a selection of literary texts in English from the various theoretical perspectives presented. The specific aims of this subject are the following:

- to provide the students with basic critical tools to understand and analyse literary texts in English.
- to familiarise the students with the most relevant critical approaches to literary texts.
- to test the explanatory power of these approaches through their application to a corpus of literary texts in English.
- to improve the students' skills in the use of English in a scholarly and critical environment.
- to reinforce the students' critical response to literary texts.

## **Context/Importance of the course for the master degree**

This subject is the compulsory component of the Literary Studies itinerary and is therefore linked with the three optional courses related to Literary Studies: "Main Trends in Contemporary British Fiction", "Main Trends in Contemporary US Fiction" and "Alternatives to the English Canon".

## **After completing the course, the student will be competent in the following skills:**

- 1:** Developing and applying original ideas in a professional as well as in a research context.
- 2:** Understanding and applying acquired knowledge to solve problems related to professional and social contexts as well as to broader multidisciplinary contexts.
- 3:** Being able to interrelate knowledge from different subjects, handle complex information, apply the proper methodology and frameworks, express informed critical views and provide conclusions in the form of written essays and oral presentations, in clear and appropriate English, aimed at both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- 4:** After acquiring the required critical and methodological skills, students are expected to possess the ability to carry out a piece of research in an autonomous way.

## **Relevance of the skills acquired in the course**

The proposed aims of this course are crucial to provide students with a sound theoretical and methodological background that will allow them to conduct research in English successfully. Similarly, the specific aims of this subject are essential skills to carry out the research process (i.e. using critical tools for understanding and analysing literary texts in English, applying critical approaches to a corpus of literary texts and developing a critical response to these texts).

The ability to develop and apply original ideas in a professional as well as in a research context is a fundamental skill to conduct successful research in the field of English studies. The same applies to the ability to interrelate knowledge from different subjects, handle complex information, apply the proper methodology and frameworks, express a critical view and provide conclusions in both written essays and oral presentations, in clear and appropriate English, aimed at both specialised and non-specialised audiences, and the ability to conduct work (research) in an autonomous way.

---

## **Evaluation**

---

## **Assessment tasks**

**The student will prove that he/she has achieved the expected learning results by means of the following assessment tasks:**

- 1:**  
**I. FIRST OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**A) ONGOING ASSESSMENT**

-----

**B) GLOBAL EXAMINATION (to be determined in the academic calendar):**

Assessment task 1. Students are required to write **short critical essays** on literary works or films and present them orally in the class. In these essays students are expected to understand theoretical concepts and apply them to the texts under analysis. Correct use of academic spoken and written English (at a C1 level) is expected. These activities will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. Short essays will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **10%** of the final score of the student.

Assessment task 2. Students will also be required to write a **3,000 word essay** in correct academic English on a specific aspect of the course contents, on a topic previously agreed on with one of the teachers. With this essay the students are expected to demonstrate that they have assimilated the critical approaches presented by the teachers and to prove their ability to use those approaches in the analysis of specific texts. The textual

analysis and critical discussion of the readings will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **90%** of the final score of the student in the course. A pass mark in this essay is a *sine qua non* condition to pass the subject.

#### **Assessment criteria:**

Definition of key concepts. Initial hypothesis. Use of a theoretical framework and a methodology. Use of primary sources. Literature review. Argumentation and conclusions = 70%

Independence, originality and critical examination = 10%

Information organization structure of the essay. Layout of the text. Accuracy in the use of language and appropriateness of style = 20%

**2:**

#### **II. SECOND OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

##### **GLOBAL EXAMINATION** (to be determined in the academic calendar):

Assessment task 1. Students will be required to write a **3,000 word essay** in correct academic English on a specific aspect of the course contents, on a topic previously agreed on with one of the teachers. In this essay the students are expected to assimilate the critical approaches to literary texts, films or corpus of texts presented by the teachers and to prove their ability to use those approaches in the analysis of those texts. The textual analysis and critical discussion will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **70%** of the final score of the student in the course. A pass mark in this essay is a *sine qua non* condition to pass the subject.

Assessment task 2. **Interview in English.** The student will debate with the teachers relevant aspects of the analysis and interpretation of the compulsory readings. In the interview, the students are expected to apply the theoretical approaches and the analytical methods studied to the analysis of various types of literary or filmic texts. The textual analysis and the critical discussion of the readings will prove that the students have achieved learning objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4. The interview will be assessed following the established assessment criteria and the established level of exigency. It will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **30%** of the final score of the student in this subject.

##### **Assessment criteria for Global Examination** (both for essay and for the interview):

Use a C1 level of English (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically, in analyses, explanations and discussions of aspects and issues related to the subject/discipline = 30%

Use relevant theoretical frameworks critically and apply methodological approaches appropriately to a corpus of texts in English = 40%

Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustrations, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims and defend critically one's point of view = 30%

## **Guidelines**

### **Guidelines for preparing the essay and participating in seminars**

#### **The students may find it useful to follow the following guidelines:**

##### **"Documento de referencia para la elaboración del ensayo"/"Guidelines for writing the essay"**

1. Define appropriate key concepts and apply them appropriately to the field of research.
2. Prepare the literature review (i.e. what other scholars have stated about the topic of the essay, or about related topics). Make sure that the literature review is sufficient in scope and relevant regarding the topic under investigation.
3. Define a thesis statement / Define the research questions.
4. State and justify the theoretical framework.
5. Define clearly the analytical categories (where appropriate, indicating overlapping or problematisation of those categories).
6. Describe the analytical methodology used for the study of the topic of the essay.

7. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
8. State a conclusion in accordance with your arguments and relate it to a wider context.
9. Show independence in reading and researching, originality and critical examination.
10. Follow the information and style conventions of the subdisciplinary field (literature, film studies, cultural studies or linguistics).

**"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de los seminarios teóricos y analíticos/"Guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars"**

1. The theoretical part of the seminar, imparted by the teacher, will provide an active learning environment in which students can develop the ability to read/view/analyze critically and conceptually, and therefore to speak and write in the classroom.
2. The seminar will provide general introductions to theoretical frameworks or an application of a given research methodology/framework to a selection of texts/films.
3. Students should bring to the seminar a draft or notes on the text or film under analysis and participate actively in the classroom discussion.
4. Questions can be posed to improve the quality of discussion.
5. Assignment of formal presentations and critical comment may also be requested for stimulating discussion.

(Adapted from [www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cutf/cutfguidelines.doc](http://www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cutf/cutfguidelines.doc))

## Guidelines

**The students may find it useful to use the following guidelines:**

**"Documento de referencia para la elaboración del ensayo"/"Guidelines for writing the essay"**

1. Use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically.
2. Define appropriate key concepts and apply them adequately to the field of research.
3. Prepare the literature review (i.e. what other scholars have stated about the topic of the essay, or about related topics). Make sure that the literature review is sufficient in scope and relevant regarding the topic under investigation.
4. Define a thesis statement / Define the research questions.
5. State and justify the theoretical framework.
6. Define clearly the analytical categories (where appropriate, indicating overlapping or problematisation of those categories).
7. Describe the analytical methodology used for the study of the topic of the essay.
8. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
9. State a conclusion in accordance with your arguments and relate it to a wider context
10. Show independence in reading and researching, originality and critical examination.
11. Follow the information and style conventions of the subdisciplinary field (literature, film studies, cultural studies or linguistics).
12. Participants are expected to use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically.

**"Documento de referencia para el análisis y la discusión de las lecturas obligatorias" / "Guidelines for the analysis and discussion of compulsory readings"**

1. The theoretical part of the seminar, taught by the teacher will provide an active learning environment in which students can develop the ability to read/view/analyse critically and conceptually and, therefore, to speak and write in the classroom.
2. The seminar will provide general introductions to theoretical frameworks or an application of a given research methodology/framework to a selection of texts.
3. Students should bring to the seminar a draft or notes on the text or film under analysis and participate actively in the classroom discussion.
4. Questions can be posed to improve the quality of the discussion.
5. Assignment of formal presentations and critical comment may also be requested for stimulating discussion.
6. Participants are expected to use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically.

(Adapted from [www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cutf/cutfguidelines.doc](http://www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cutf/cutfguidelines.doc))

**"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de los seminarios teóricos y analíticos/"Guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars"**

1. Use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically, in analyses, explanations and discussions of aspects and issues related to the subject/discipline.
2. Deal effectively with the most relevant critical approaches through their application to a corpus of texts in English.
3. Address and apply critical theories and methodologies relevant to the analysis of texts in English.
4. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
5. Approach the analysis of different texts critically.

**"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de entrevistas/"Guidelines for interviews"**

1. Use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically, in analyses, explanations and discussions of aspects and issues related to the subject/discipline.
2. Deal effectively with the most relevant critical approaches through their application to a corpus of texts in English.
3. Address and apply critical theories and methodologies relevant to the analysis of texts in English.
4. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
5. Approach the analysis of different texts critically.

---

## **Activities and resources**

---

### **Course methodology**

**The learning process that has been designed for this course is based on the following activities:**

This course has been specifically designed to train researchers in literary criticism and theory in the field of English Literature. For this reason, the proposed activities (the analysis of literary texts by means of critical tools and the comments on, presentation of, and reflections on these analyses from various theoretical perspectives) are aimed at the application of the fundamental principles of the most relevant critical and theoretical approaches to the analysis of various sorts of representative literary texts in English.

The course is organized in three stages: 1. Learning of the critical approaches and analytical tools; 2. Application of the learnt concepts through the analysis and collective discussion of the selected texts in English; and 3. Writing of an individual critical essay, applying the theoretical approaches and methods learnt, as well as the specific tools employed for the development of the selected topic of research.

### **Outline of the Programme**

**The programme offered to the students to help them achieve the learning results includes the following activities :**

**1:**

Seminars on "Approaches to the literary texts" 0.4 credits. Onsite.

Theoretical and analytical seminars aimed at introducing the main theoretical approaches and critical techniques for the analysis of literary texts in English. The seminar will also revise the key concepts of literature studies in English.

These seminars will be conducted following the "guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars"

**2:**

Tasks/activities. 3 credits. Onsite.

Classroom activities will provide students with models for textual and critical analysis. In these tasks students will discuss both individually and in group the textual and critical analyses of a selection of literary texts. The

aim of the tasks/activities is to learn how to use/apply the critical and textual analytical tools and theoretical approaches dealt with in the course.

These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for the analysis and discussion of compulsory and recommended readings”.

**3:**

Individual and group tasks. 5.8 credits. Onsite.

Analysis of a selection of literary texts, which will be later discussed in class from the perspective of the theoretical frameworks proposed.

These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for activities on the analysis and discussion of compulsory and recommended readings”.

**4:**

Tutorial activities. 0.6 credits. Onsite and online.

Assessment tasks/activities and self-assessment of classroom work. 0.2 credits.

These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for activities on the analysis and discussion of compulsory and recommended readings”.

**5:**

Assessment tasks/activities and self-assessment of classroom work. 0.2 credits. Offsite.

These activities will be conducted following the “Guidelines for preparing the essay”.

## Course planning

### Calendar of actual sessions and presentation of works

#### **Prof. Susana Onega Jaén**

Session 1-session 8: These sessions will be devoted to the approaches of myth criticism and narrative poetics. Coinciding with these sessions, classroom activities will involve discussion of these theoretical approaches and application of the main tenets of these approaches to the analysis of various types of literary narrative texts.

The individual assignments will be presented in sessions 3-4 (Myth Criticism) and 7-8 (Narrative Poetics)

#### **Dr Constanza del Río**

Session 9-session 20: These sessions will be devoted to the approaches of textual politics, identity politics (feminism, postfeminism and postcolonialism) and hermeneutics of suspicion (deconstruction and psychoanalysis). Coinciding with these sessions, classroom activities will involve discussion of these theoretical approaches and application of the main tenets of these approaches to the analysis of various types of literary narrative texts.

The individual assignments will be presented in sessions 11-12 (Literature and Ideology 1), 15-16 (Literature and Ideology 2) and 19-20 (Reading against the Grain).

### Bibliographic references of the recommended readings