

61657 - Issues in representation: forms, methods and problems

Información del Plan Docente

Academic Year	2016/17
Academic center	103 - Facultad de Filosofía y Letras
Degree	552 - Master's in Advanced Studies in English-language Literature and Cinema
ECTS	7.5
Course	1
Period	Second semester
Subject Type	Optional
Module	---

1.Basic info

1.1.Recommendations to take this course

The main aim of this course is to provide students with specialized knowledge on the most relevant theoretical and critical approaches to the study of representation, focusing more specifically on some filmic texts in English. Due to its advanced character, it is advisable for the student to be familiar with the basic concepts of literature, film theory and cultural criticism, as they apply to relevant filmic texts in English. It is also to be expected that students should be knowledgeable about the historical and cultural context of English-speaking cultures. It is also important that the students familiarize themselves with the texts to be discussed prior to each session, to ensure an active participation in class.

1.2.Activities and key dates for the course

1. Presentation and discussion of the theoretical approaches included in the programme during the class sessions.
2. Application of the main tenets of these approaches to the analysis of various types of narrative filmic texts (see course planning).
3. Group analysis of a selection of film texts from the perspective of the critical approaches presented in the theory sessions (see course planning).
4. Presentation of short essays and of a final 3,000-word essay. Deadline for the submission of the essays: as per exam schedule of the Faculty.

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2.Initiation

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2.1. Learning outcomes that define the subject

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

The student can recognize, understand and perform a critical analysis in English, on present-day society and culture in English-speaking countries, as shown in a number of filmic representations

The student is able to formulate critical views and reach critical conclusions using English in a correct and appropriate way, addressing both specialized and non-specialized audiences

The student is able to integrate knowledge from different sources and apply the methodological and theoretical approaches relevant to the interpretation of a corpus of filmic texts in English

The student knows the meaning and implications of the term 'representation' and its modes

The student is able to understand and assimilate the most relevant concepts of a number of aesthetic, ideological and film criticism

The student is able to develop his/her own critical perspectives on representation through the integration of ideas and concepts coming from a multidisciplinary field of study

The student is able to evaluate the issues faced by the author in the process of representation, and develop critical perspectives allowing them an adequate understanding of the same

The student is familiar with the main theories and critical concepts developed in the field of representation studies, in reference to both the cognitive and the socio-cultural level

2.2. Introduction

Brief presentation of the course

This course provides specialized knowledge both on some of the most relevant issues in the analysis of representation through cultural texts, and on the way to apply these concepts in depth to a selection of significant films in English. Therefore, the course expands some of the theoretical issues dealt with in the compulsory courses of the first semester, "Working with Literature in English" and "Working with Film in English." There is an analytical emphasis on the semiotics and ideology of representation and on individual identities in a context of social transformation. The sessions and activities in the syllabus will contribute to developing the students' critical discursive ability in dealing with representation and its application to the analysis and critical interpretation of a selection of relevant filmic texts. As in the other courses in this programme, the use of English language in a critical context is implemented. The students are likewise provided with an advanced theoretical and applied background preparing them for their work on the MA dissertation.

3. Context and competences

3.1. Goals

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

The main aim of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the concept of representation in its different senses, and to the main critical/ideological issues associated to it. The course addresses some of the theoretical approaches most relevant to the study of representation, to be applied to a selection of filmic texts with a view to critical analysis in the student's course work. The specific aims of the course are the following: i) To provide the students with the basic critical tools to understand and analyse representation through film and visual texts in English. ii) To familiarize students with the modes, forms and genres of representation. iii) To introduce students to the social semiotics of

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representation, its cognitive aspects, and its ideological implications. iv) To evaluate these interpretive frames through their application to a corpus of filmic and audiovisual texts in English. v) To improve the students' skills in the use of English in an critical academic context. vi) To enhance the students' critical response to filmic texts and socio-cultural context.

3.2.Context and meaning of the subject in the degree

This course provides specialized knowledge of some of the most relevant theoretical and critical perspectives in the study of representation, as they apply to an in-depth study of a selection of significant filmic texts in English. The course expands some of the theoretical issues dealt with in the compulsory courses of the first semester and complements those courses. To begin with, the course is complementary with "Working with Literature in English", since it offers a variety of theoretical vantage points on the critical analysis of texts, while also encouraging a critical attitude on the part of the student. The course is especially complementary with "Working with Film in English" inasmuch as it focuses on the semiotic-ideological analysis of multimodal representation, individual identities, and social transformation. It also complements the third compulsory course of the first semester, "Research Methods and Academic Communication" as it promotes reading, composition, the analysis of academic texts and the use of English in an academic critical context. Like the other optional courses in film studies in the MA, this course deals with the study of filmic texts in English as cultural representations, and with use of ideological discourses in the same. Its main emphasis lies in the definition and theoretical study of the concept and modes of representation, as they apply to a selection of filmic texts specifically related to the syllabus.

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3.3.Competences

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

CG6: Once students have acquired the necessary methodological and critical skills, they will be able to carry out research work on their own in the fields of literature and film studies

CE1: To understand the meaning and implications of the term 'representation'

CE2: To understand the main theories and critical concepts used in representation studies, both in the socio-cultural and the cognitive levels

CE3: To understand the meaning and implications of the terms 'mediality' and 'intermediality'

CE4: To be able to bring together knowledge on different subjects and apply the methodology and the theoretical approaches to representation to the analysis of filmic texts in English

CE5: To integrate concepts from different fields of study within a critical perspective on the different forms of

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representation in English-speaking films

CE6: To understand the meaning and implications of reflexive structures and meta-representation in filmic texts

3.4. Importance of learning outcomes

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 studies successfully. Similarly, the specific aims of this course (as detailed above) enables the students to carry out research projects on representation in literary and filmic texts in English, in an autonomous and rigorous way. The development of these skills will prove essential to successfully complete a research project in the field of English studies.

4. Evaluation

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

I. First Official Announcement

- a) Ongoing assessment (if applicable)
- b) Global examination (to be determined in the academic calendar)

Assessment Task 1: Prepare and write brief critical essays on the required readings and films that have been set during the course. Students will be assessed on their capacity to understand theoretical concepts and to apply them to the texts to be analysed, as well as on their correct use of academic English (at a C1 level). These activities are directed towards achieving learning objectives 1, 2, and 3 = 10%.

Deadline for the submission of the brief written essays: as per exams schedule of the Faculty.

Assessment Task 2: Write an essay in English. Students are required to write a 3,000 word essay on an aspect related to the contents of the course using correct English (at a C1 level). The topic of the essay will be previously agreed on with the teacher. This essay is expected to demonstrate that the students have achieved the course's global objectives (1, 2, 3, and 4). The essay will be graded 0-10, and will account for 90% of the student's final mark.

Deadline for the submission of the essay: as per exam schedule of the Faculty.

Assessment criteria

- Definition of key concepts. Initial hypothesis. Use of a theoretical framework and methodology. Use of primary sources. Literature review. Well-argued discourse and relevant conclusions = 40%.
- Independence, originality and critical examination = 10%.
- Information structure and organization of the essay. Text layout. Correct use of English language and style appropriateness = 20%.

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- Reasoning capacity to exemplify, illustrate, propose textual evidence and defend the student's own point of view critically = 30%.

II. Second Official Announcement

Assessment Task 1: Prepare and write brief critical essays on the required readings and films that have been set during the course. Students will be assessed on their capacity to understand theoretical concepts and to apply them to the texts to be analysed, as well as on their correct use of academic English (at a C1 level). These activities are directed towards achieving learning objectives 1, 2, and 3 = 10%.

Deadline for the submission of the brief written essays: as per exams schedule of the Faculty.

Assessment Task 2: Write an essay in English. Students are required to write a 3,000 word essay on an aspect related to the contents of the course using correct English (at a C1 level). The topic of the essay will be previously agreed on with the teacher. This essay is expected to demonstrate that the students have achieved the course's global objectives (1, 2, 3, and 4). The essay will be graded 0-10, and will account for 90% of the student's final mark.

Deadline for the submission of the essay: as per exam schedule of the Faculty.

Assessment criteria

- Definition of key concepts. Initial hypothesis. Use of a theoretical framework and methodology. Use of primary sources. Literature review. Well-argued discourse and relevant conclusions = 40%.

- Independence, originality and critical examination = 10%.

- Information structure and organization of the essay. Text layout. Correct use of English language and style appropriateness = 20%.

- Reasoning capacity to exemplify, illustrate, propose textual evidence and defend the student's own point of view critically = 30%.

5. Activities and resources

5.1. General methodological presentation

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

The course is fundamentally oriented towards the study of filmic texts as cultural representations, and their use of ideological discourses. The contents of this course provide specialized knowledge on the most relevant approaches to representation and their application to the critical analysis of a selection of filmic texts. Therefore, the course comprises three phases: 1) Learning the critical approaches and the handling of critical tools. 2) Application of the concepts through the analysis and the commentary of films in English; 3) Writing a research project in the form of an individual essay, applying the theory and the specific conceptual tools acquired in the course to the subject of choice.

5.2. Learning activities

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

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1) Class activities:

- Lectures (30 hours / 1,2 credits) in which the instructor will present a number of theoretical approaches and critical analyses of the filmic texts.
- Problem-solving and case studies (30 hours/1,2 credits of classroom work) in which the instructor and the students will carry out the analysis and commentary on the compulsory readings and films included in the syllabus. Each of the students will select the films and theoretical approaches most relevant to their project, under the instructor's supervision. Part of their work on the texts will be presented in the course sessions. There will be different kinds of textual commentary: collective discussion guided by the instructor, group or pair work by the students discussing specific aspects to be presented to the rest of the class, and individual written work in response to questions asked by the instructor (some of which will be presented orally by the students to involve the rest of the class). These activities presuppose that the student has read the proposed readings and watched the films before the sessions.

2) Guided activities:

Students' written work (45 hours / 1,8 credits); online guidance and homework.

3) Autonomous activities:

Individual work, 82,5 hours, 3,3 credits (online and homework).

Syllabus

1. Representation: Its definition and modes: 1.a. Cognitive representation and public representations.
1.b. Representation systems and structures (verbal and non-verbal).
1.c. Mediality and intermediality.
2. Art and cinema. The aesthetic function of the filmic text.
2.a. Art cinema vs. commercial films. Socio-semiotic functions of film.
3. Cinematic representations of social identity.
3.a. Group dynamic: the parameters of gender, class, ethnicity. The construction of identities and communities.
3.b. Accommodation theory and socio-cultural stereotypes.
4. Politics and representation.
4.a. Historical processes and social transformations.
4.b. Conflicts, violence, and censorship.
4.c. Utopias and dystopias. Versions of the future. Control and sustainability.
5. The representation of consciousness and cognition.
5.a. Mental activity as a process of world-building.
5.b. Reflexive structures and meta-representation in the filmic text.

1) Class activities:

- Lectures (30 hours / 1,2 credits) in which the instructor will present a number of theoretical approaches and critical analyses of the filmic texts.

- Problem-solving and case studies (30 hours/1,2 credits of classroom work) in which the instructor and the students will carry out the analysis and commentary on the compulsory readings and films included in the syllabus. Each of the students will select the films and theoretical approaches most relevant to their project, under the instructor's supervision. Part of their work on the texts will be presented in the course sessions. There will be different kinds of textual commentary: collective discussion guided by the instructor, group or pair work by the students discussing specific aspects to be presented to the rest of the class, and individual written work in response to questions asked by the instructor (some of which will be presented orally by the students to involve the rest of the class). These activities presuppose that the student has read the proposed readings and watched the films before the sessions.

2) Guided activities:

Students' written work: 45 hours / 1,8 credits

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3) Autonomous activities:

Individual work: 82,5 hours / 3,3 credits

5.3.Program

Syllabus

1. Representation: Its definition and modes: 1.a. Cognitive representation and public representations. 1.b. Representation systems and structures (verbal and non-verbal). 1.c. Mediality and intermediality.
2. Art and cinema. The aesthetic function of the filmic text. 2.a. Art cinema vs. commercial films. Socio-semiotic functions of film.
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5. The representation of consciousness and cognition. 5.a. Mental activity as a process of world-building. 5.b. Reflexive structures and metarepresentation in the filmic text.

5.4.Planning and scheduling

Calendar of actual sessions and presentation of works

In a typical ten-week-course, two weeks, i.e. four two-hour sessions, will be allotted to each of the five topics in the programme. Deadline for the submission of the essays: as per exam schedule of the Faculty.

5.5.Bibliography and recomended resources