



Máster en Estudios Textuales y Culturales en Lengua Inglesa 60703 - Trends in Contemporary British fiction

Course 2010 - 2011

Curso: 1, Semestre: 2, Créditos: 7.5

Basic information

Teachers

- **María Dolores Herrero Granado** dherrero@unizar.es

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Recommendations to attend this course

The main aim of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the main writers and narrative trends in the field of contemporary British/ Postcolonial fiction. Together with the optional courses “Main Trends in Contemporary US Fiction” and “Alternatives to the Canon”, this subject introduces students to relevant critical approaches and the critical analysis of English texts belonging in different geographical and cultural backgrounds. It also seeks to develop students’ critical response to these texts.

Course Schedule and Deadlines

Presentation and discussion of the narrative trends included in the programme and application of the main tenets of these trends to the analysis of various types of literary texts (see course planning). 1.30 hours

Group analysis of a selection of literary texts from the perspective of the critical approaches presented in the theory sessions (see course planning). 1.30 hours

Presentation of a 3,000-word essay: last day of the second 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 in English.

Introduction

Brief presentation of the course

The main aim of this subject is to offer students an introduction to the main writers and trends in the field of contemporary British and postcolonial narrative in English.

Competences

General aims of the course

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 main writers and narrative trends in the field of contemporary British/ postcolonial fiction. The specific aims of this subject are the following: i) to provide the students with a good understanding of the main trends in contemporary British and postcolonial fiction. ii) to familiarise the students with the most relevant writers and works within these trends; iii) to situate these trends against the background of earlier trends in British literature; iv) to improve the students' skills in the use of English in a scholarly and critical environment, v) to reinforce the students' critical response to literary texts.

Context/Importance of the course for the master degree

The main aim of this subject is to provide students with basic knowledge on the main writers and narrative trends in the field of contemporary British/ Postcolonial literature in English. Together with the subjects "Main Trends in Contemporary US Narrative" and "Alternatives to the Canon", this subject introduces several theoretical approaches for the analysis of texts of various kinds so that students can produce their own critical interpretations.

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

- 1:** Developing and applying original ideas in both a professional and 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:

Throughout the course, students will be given a list of **compulsory and recommended readings** for analysis and discussion in the practical sessions. Students may also be required to write a number of short essays as a way to monitor their progress. The aim of the compulsory and recommended readings in the course syllabus, is to provide students with the critical tools they will be expected to use in the analysis of various types of literary narrative texts.

The textual analysis and the critical discussion of the readings will show that the students have achieved learning objectives 1, 2 and 3. These activities will be assessed following the assessment criteria and the established level of exigency. The activities will be graded from 0 to 10 and represent 10% of the final grade of the student in this subject.

The analysis and discussion of textual models should follow the "Guidelines for the analysis and discussion of textual models".

1:

Before the end of the course, 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 with one of the teachers. In this essay the students are expected to assimilate the different narrative trends and critical terms presented by the teachers so that they can prove their ability to use them in the analysis of specific literary 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 and this grade represents **90%** of the final score of the student in this subject. A pass mark in this essay is a *sine qua non* condition to pass the subject.

This 3,000-word essay must follow the norms and format specified in the "Guidelines for preparing the essay".

Reference documents

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)

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 a theoretical perspective) 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 "the main trends in contemporary narrative in English" (30h, 15 sessions, 1,2 cr.).

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 (30h, 15 sessions, 1,2 cr.)

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: Writing of the essay (40h, 1,6 cr.).

The concepts explained and developed in the theoretical sessions will be revised so that the student can write an essay by applying them to the analysis of specific texts from the program. The topic will have been previously discussed with the teacher, who will offer the student constant assistance in the elaboration of the essay.

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

4: Individual study (87,5h, 3,5 cr.).

The student will read/ study the compulsory (printed/ online) texts in the program. The teacher will advise her/him how to use them. Some of these texts will also be available on the subject’s Moodle site.

Course planning

Calendar of actual sessions and presentation of works

Dr. Susana Onega Jaén
Session 1-18: These sessions will be devoted to: the study of the change of world-view in the 1960s, the transition to postmodernism, and the birth of British historiographic metafiction (John Fowles’ <i>The French Lieutenant’s Woman</i> ; story-telling, parody and the making of the (lesbian) self (Jeanette Winterson’s <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i>); creative plagiarism, collective authorship and the world-as-book (Peter Ackroyd’s <i>Chatterton</i>). The individual assignments will be presented during the sessions of practice, following the sessions on theory.
Dr. María Dolores Herrero Granado
Session 19-30: These sessions will be devoted to: Coming to Terms with the Antipodean dream/ nightmare (David Malouf’s <i>An Imaginary Life</i>): Ethics, Memory, History and the Multicultural Self; the Empire writes back: postcolonial aesthetic forms and socio-political issues as reflected in Meena Alexander’s “Stone-Eating Girl” and a selection of short stories from Ben Okri’s <i>Stars of the New Curfew</i> and Merlinda Bobis’s <i>White Turtle</i> . The individual assignments will be presented during the sessions of practice, following the sessions on theory.

PROGRAMME OF THE SUBJECT

1. Introduction: The change of world-view in the 1960s and the transition to postmodernism. The birth of British historiographic metafiction: John Fowles’ *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*.
2. Story-telling, parody and the making of the (lesbian) self: Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.
3. Creative plagiarism, collective authorship and the world-as-book: Peter Ackroyd’s *Chatterton*.
4. Coming to Terms with the Antipodean dream/ nightmare. David Malouf’s *An Imaginary Life*: Ethics, Memory, History and the Multicultural Self.
5. The Empire writes back: Postcolonial aesthetic forms and socio-political issues as reflected in Meena Alexander’s “Stone-Eating Girl” and a selection of short stories from Ben Okri’s *Stars of the New Curfew* and Merlinda Bobis’s *White*

Turtle.

COMPULSORY AND SUPPLEMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

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COMPULSORY READINGS:

Unit 1

- Barth, John, 1967 "The Literature of Exhaustion", *The Atlantic Monthly* (August), pp. 28-34.
- Barth, John, 1980 "The Literature of Replenishment: Postmodernist Fiction", *The Atlantic Monthly* (January), pp. 65-71.
- Fowles, John, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969).
- Hutcheon, Linda, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*: Chapters I "Theorizing the Postmodern", pp. 3-21; Chapter VII "Historiographic Metafiction: The Pastime of Past Time" and Chapter VIII "Intertextuality, Parody and the Discourses of History" (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), pp. 106-123; pp. 124-140.

Unit 2

- Cosslett, Tess, "Intertextuality in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*: The Bible, Malory, and Jane Eyre". In Helena Grice and Tim Woods (eds), *'I'm Telling You Stories': Jeanette Winterson and the Politics of Reading*. Postmodern Studies 25 (Amsterdam-Atlanta, G. A.: Rodopi 1998), pp. 15-28.
- Onega, Susana, *Jeanette Winterson: "Introduction"*, pp. 1-16; and Chapter 1, pp. 17-34 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).
- Winterson, Jeanette, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (London: Pandora, 1985).
- Winterson, Jeanette, "Introduction" to the Vintage edition of *Oranges* (London: Vintage, 1990), pp. xi-xv.

Unit 3

- Ackroyd, Peter, *Chatterton* (1987, London: Abacus, 1988).
- Barthes, Roland, "The Death of the Author" and "From Work to Text", in *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana (1987 [1977]), pp. 142-48 and 155-64.
- Martínez Alfaro, María Jesús, "Intertextuality: Origin and Development of the Concept", *Atlantis* Vol. 18. no.1-2 (1996), pp. 268-285. Accessible at http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/listaarticulos?tipo_busqueda=VOLUMEN&revista_busqueda=176&clave_busqueda=18
- Onega, Susana, *Metafiction and Myth in the Novels of Peter Ackroyd* (Columbia: Camden House, 1999): "Introduction", pp. 1-11; and Chapter 2, pp. 59-73.

Unit 4

- Malouf, David, *An Imaginary Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978, 1996)
- Griffiths, Gareth, "An Imaginary Life: The Post-Colonial Text as Transformative Representation". *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, 19 93 Spring, 16:2: 61-69.
- Morton, Peter, "Problems of Historicity in David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life*", *Classical and Modern Literature*, 20:1 (2000): 1-17.
- Stephens, John, "Beyond the Limits of our Speech ... David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life*", *Commonwealth Novel in English*, 1990 Fall, 3:2: 160-169.

Unit 5

- Okri, Ben, *Stars of the New Curfew* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989).
- Bobis, Merlinda, *White Turtle* (Melbourne: Spinifex, 1999).

- Alexander, Meena, "Stone-Eating Girl". In *Fault Lines: A Memoir* (The Feminist Press at the University of New York [1993] 2003): 77-89.
- Bhabha, Homi K., "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism". In *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 66-84.
- Bhabha, Homi K., "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse". In *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 85-92.
- Armstrong, Andrew, "Speaking through the Wound: Irruption and memory in the Writing of Ben Okri and Festus Iyayi", *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 2000, 13:2: 173-183.
- Slemon, Stephen, "Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse". In Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, eds., *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (Durham and London: Duke U.P., 1995), pp. 407-426.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989).
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).
- Bertens, Hans and Joseph Natoli, eds., *Postmodernism: The Key Figures* (Malden, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).
- Boehmer, Elleke, *Colonial and Post-Colonial Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- Childs, Peter and Patrick Williams, *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory* (Prentice-Hall: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997).
- Connor, Stephen, *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989).
- Foster, Hall, ed., *Postmodern Culture* (1983; London and Sydney: Pluto Press, 1989).
- Guignery, Vanessa, *The Fiction of Julian Barnes: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
- Herrero, Dolores, "Meena Alexander's Transgressive/ Diasporic Female Characters: Healing Wounds and Fracturing the Iconic Feminine and the Language of the Colonizer". *South Asian Review* (University of Pittsburg) 28. 2 (2007): 27-46.
- Herrero, Dolores, "I know now that this is the way ... the final metamorphosis. I must drive out my old self and let the universe in": The Ethics of Place in David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life*. In *On the Turn: The Ethics of Fiction in Contemporary Narrative in English*. Ed. and Intro. Bárbara Arizti and Silvia Martínez-Falquina. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2007: 170-190.
- Herrero, Dolores, "'Ay, siyempre, Gran, of course, Oz is -multicultural!': Merlinda Bobis's Crossing to the Other Side as Reflected in Her Short Stories". *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 36. 1-2 (2005): 111-134.
- Herrero, Dolores, "Merlinda Bobis's use of magic realism as reflected in "White Turtle": Moving across cultures, redefining the multicultural self. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 16 (2003): 147-163.
- Hutcheon, Linda, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (London and New York: Routledge, 1980).
- Hutcheon, Linda, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York and London: Methuen, 1985).
- Hutcheon, Linda, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989).
- Jackson, Rosemary, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London and New York: Methuen, 1981). Chapter II "The Fantastic as a Mode", pp. 13-60.
- McHalle, Brian, *Postmodernist Fiction* (New York and London: Methuen, 1987).
- Nnolim, Charles E. "The Time Is Out of Joint: Ben Okri as a Social Critic". *Commonwealth Novel in English* 6.1-2 (1993), pp. 61-68.
- Onega, Susana, *Form and Meaning in the Novels of John Fowles* (U.M.I. Research Press: Ann Arbor and London, 1989).

- Onega, Susana, "An Interview with Peter Ackroyd". *Twentieth-Century Literature* XLII, 1 (Summer 1996), pp. 208-20.
- Onega, Susana, "Self, Text and World in British Historiographic Metafiction". *Anglistik. Mitteilungen des Deutschen Anglistenverbandes* VI, 2 (1995), pp. 93-105.
- Onega, Susana, "Self, World, and Art in the Fiction of John Fowles". *Twentieth Century Literature* (Special John Fowles Issue), XLII, 1 (Spring 1996), pp. 29-56.
- Onega, Susana, "The Mythical Impulse in British Historiographic Metafiction". *European Journal of English Studies*. 1, 2 (August) 1997: 184-204.
- Onega, Susana, *Peter Ackroyd. The Writer and His Work*. Writers and Their Work Series. Northcote House Publishers and the British Council: Plymouth, 1998.
- Onega, Susana, "Jeanette Winterson's Visionary Fictions: An Art of Cultural Translation and Effrontery". In Jürgen Schlaeger, ed., *Structures of Cultural Transformation. Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* (REAL) 20 (Gunter Narr Verlag: Tübingen, 2004), pp. 421-440.
- Onega, Susana, ed., "John Fowles in Focus" *Anglistik. Mitteilungen des Deutschen Anglistenverbandes* 13. 1 (March 2002), pp. 45-110.
- Veeseer, H. Aram, "Introduction", in *The New Historicism*, ed. Adam Veeseer (New York & London: Routledge, 1989), pp. ix-xvi.
- Vipond, Dianne L., ed. *Conversations with John Fowles* (Michigan University Press: Michigan, 1999), pp. 168-179.
- Waugh, Patricia, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (Methuen: London and New York, 1984).
- Waugh, Patricia, *Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989)
- Waugh, Patricia, *Harvest of the Sixties: English Literature and its Background 1960 to 1990* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- Waugh, Patricia, ed., *Postmodernism: A Reader* (London and New York: Edward Arnold, 1992).
- Wilkinson, Jane. "Ben Okri". In Jane Wilkinson, ed., *Talking with African Writers* (London: Heinemann, 1991), pp. 76-89.
- Williams, Patrick and Laura Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. A Reader* (Harvester Wheatsheaf: Prentice-Hall, 1993).
- Young, Robert, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (Routledge, 1990).

E-LEARNING PLATFORM

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The basic contents and bibliographical resources of the subject will be available on this e-learning platform.

Bibliographic references of the recommended readings