

Máster en Estudios Avanzados de Literatura y Cine en Lengua Inglesa 61651 - Working with literature in English

Course 2015 - 2016

Curso: 1, Semestre: 1, Créditos: 7.5

Basic information

Teachers

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Recommendations to attend this course

The main aim of this course is to offer the students a specialised knowledge of the most relevant approaches to the study of the literary text and to the analysis of a selection of readings in English from the perspective of the various critical and theoretical interpretive frameworks. 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. They are also expected to have some knowledge of the historical and cultural contexts of English-speaking countries.

Secondly, and most importantly, the student should have read and worked on the compulsory readings before each session and bring them to class so as to be able to participate actively in the ensuing debates.

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Course Schedule and Deadlines

1. 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).
2. 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).
3. Presentation of 3,000 words essays. Deadline for the submission of these essays: as per exam schedule of the Faculty.

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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 is capable of analysing critically and synthesising literary texts in English
- 2:** The student is capable of making a critical analysis of the current cultural and social reality of English-speaking countries through their literary textual manifestations
- 3:** The student is capable of understanding and assimilating the key concepts of various literary critical approaches
- 4:** The student is capable of applying correctly the critical concepts and theoretical frames employed in the analysis of a literary text
- 5:** The student is capable of arguing for the relevance of the critical concepts employed in the analysis of a concrete literary text
- 6:** The student knows how to use the literary text under analysis as the primary source of textual information and interpretation
- 7:** The student is able to assume the necessary contingent character of a specific textual approximation and the possibility of different readings and interpretations of literary texts in English
- 8:** The student has the capacity to establish relations between different critical concepts and/or theoretical frames that are relevant in English Studies

Introduction

Brief presentation of the course

This course provides a specialised knowledge of some of the most relevant approaches to literary texts and the way of applying them in depth to a selection of representative literary texts in English. This course is complementary to the compulsory course taught in the first term, "Working with Film in English", in the sense that it offers several theoretical approaches to the critical analysis of texts and is aimed at developing the students' critical acumen. It also complements the other first-term compulsory course, "Research Methods and Academic Communication" 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 British Fiction", "Main Trends in Contemporary U.S. Fiction" and "New Literatures in English".

Competences

General aims of the course

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

The main aims of this course are crucial to provide students with a sound theoretical and methodological background that will allow them to conduct successful research in the field of English Studies. Similarly, the specific aims of the course (namely, making use of critical tools for the understanding, the analysis and the interpretation of a corpus of literary texts; applying critical approaches to a corpus of literary texts; and developing critical responses to these texts) are essential skills for developing a research piece in the field of English Studies successfully.

The capacity to develop and apply original ideas in an academic and research context is also fundamental for conducting research in literary studies in English. Further, specific skills such as the capacity to relate concepts deriving from different themes, to make use of complex information, reach relevant conclusions making use of the English language clearly and adequately (both for a specialised and a non-specialised audience) and to be able to develop a research line in an autonomous way are crucial skills for the researcher to be.

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Context/Importance of the course for the master degree

“Working with Literature in English” is one of the three compulsory subjects the student must pass in the third term of the Master in Advanced Studies on Literature and Film in English. The other two are “Working with Film in English” and “Research Methods and Academic Communication”. The main aim of these three subjects, which are complementary, is the acquisition of specialised knowledge allowing the student to carry out a critical analysis of literary texts (first subject), a critical analysis of filmic texts (second subject), and to learn the research techniques and oral and written communication strategies required for the making of research pieces in the field of English Studies (third subject). Given the fact that this is the compulsory course as regards the specialisation in literary studies within the Master, “Working with Literature in English” is also coordinated with the second-term optional courses, “Main Trends in Contemporary British Fiction”; “Main Trends in Contemporary US Fiction”, and “New Literatures in English”.

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

- 1:
CG1: To find, analyse critically and synthesise specialised (literary) texts in English
- 2:
CG2: To know, understand and analyse critically the present-day social and cultural reality of English-speaking countries through their literary textual manifestations
- 3:
CE1: To understand and assimilate the main concepts of the various critical approaches to literature
- 4:
CE2: Apply correctly critical concepts and theoretical frames to the analysis of a literary text
- 5:
CE3: Argue for the relevance of the critical concepts employed in the concrete analysis of a given literary text

6: CE4: Employ the text to be analysed as the main source of textual information and interpretation

7:
CE5: Assume the necessarily contingent character of a specific textual approach and the possibility of various readings and interpretations of literary texts in English

8:
CE6: Establish relations between various critical concepts and/or theoretical frames that are relevant for English Studies

Relevance of the skills acquired in the course

The aims proposed in this course are crucial to provide students with a sound theoretical and methodological background that will allow them to conduct successful research in the field of English Studies. Similarly, the specific aims of the course (namely, making use of critical tools for the understanding, analysis and interpretation of literary texts in English; applying critical approaches to a corpus of literary texts by contemporary British authors; and developing critical responses to these texts) are essential for the development of a research piece in the field of English Studies successfully.

The capacity to develop and apply original ideas in an academic and research context is also fundamental for conducting research in literary studies in English. Furthermore, specific skills such as the capacity to relate concepts starting from different themes, to make use of complex information, reach relevant conclusions making use of the English language clearly and adequately (both for a specialised and a non-specialised audience) and to be able to develop a research line in an autonomous way are crucial skills for the researcher to be.

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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 (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 3000 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%.

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 3000 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.

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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 main principles of the most relevant critical and theoretical approaches to the analysis of various types of representative literary texts in English.

Consequently, the course is organised 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 on a research topic (in the form 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.

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Outline of the Programme

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

1:

1. Class activities:

- Onsite lectures (30 hours, 1,2 credits) in which the teacher will make a presentation of the main critical approaches to literature.

- Onsite resolution of problems and case studies (30 hours, 1,2 credits). In these classroom activities teacher and students will carry out the close reading and critical analysis of a selection of literary texts from the corpus of compulsory readings under the supervision of the teacher. This activity includes the following tasks:

collective comments guided by the teacher; discussion by small student groups of some given aspects of the analyses to be later presented to the rest of the class; or the writing of individual responses to questions posed by the teacher to be later presented by the student to the rest of the class as a basis for further discussion. It goes without saying that every student must have read and worked on the texts before attending the classes.

2) Guided activities:

Essays: 45 hours/1.8 credits (on line and offsite)

3. Autonomous activities:

Study: 82,5 hours/3,3 credits (online and offsite)

Syllabus

1. Myth criticism. Introduction. From myth to literature: The classical concepts of mythos and logos and of poesis 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.

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b) Guided activities:

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Course planning

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.

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)

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).

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Bibliographic references of the recommended readings