

Literature in English: Interdisciplinary Approaches (A006665)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 1) English Gent seminar 0.0h

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Craps, Stef LW07 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Linguistics and Literature)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - English)	5	A
Micro-credential Environmental Humanities	5	A
Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Anthropocene, environmental crisis, literature in English, environmental humanities, ecocriticism, climate change, mass extinction, environmental justice

Position of the course

This advanced MA course explores how literature in English engages with pressing ecological challenges in the Anthropocene. Students will critically examine the narrative strategies, ethical questions, and affective responses that arise in literary representations of planetary crisis, particularly as these pertain to climate change, mass extinction, and pollution. Emphasis will be placed on how such texts contribute to shaping cultural imaginaries of resilience, justice, and responsibility. Exchange students are welcome, provided they possess the necessary knowledge and skills (see *Initial competences*). No knowledge of Dutch is required.

Contents

Writing the Anthropocene: Literature and Environmental Crisis

In recent years, the Anthropocene – the proposed name for a new geological epoch defined by humanity's profound impact on the Earth system – has become a central concept in the environmental humanities. It signals a time of ecological crisis that not only threatens the conditions of life on the planet but also raises pressing questions about temporality, responsibility, inequality, and justice. As the scale and complexity of environmental breakdown outstrip inherited ways of thinking and feeling, literature and culture have begun to grapple with the challenge of representing and responding to this altered reality.

This course explores how contemporary writers from across the English-speaking world engage with the aesthetics, ethics, and politics of ecological crisis. We will examine how literary and cultural texts narrate the interconnected phenomena of climate change, biodiversity loss, and widespread pollution, and how they help us understand shifting relations between humans and the more-than-human world. Particular attention will be paid to the formal and aesthetic strategies used to represent environmental degradation and multispecies entanglement – strategies that often strain or exceed conventional storytelling. At the same time, the course foregrounds questions of environmental justice and uneven vulnerability, attending to the ways in which ecological crisis intersects with histories of colonialism, capitalism, and structural inequality.

Students will engage with a wide range of genres and media, including novels, plays, poetry, graphic fiction, and film, supported by key theoretical and critical texts from the environmental humanities. Bringing together close reading and conceptual enquiry, the course invites students to reflect on the cultural work of storytelling in times of planetary crisis – its power to unsettle, to provoke, and to imagine alternatives.

Initial competences

Students must be highly proficient in English (at least CEFR level C1) and familiar with key concepts and methods in literary analysis and theory.

Final competences

- 1 Have a nuanced understanding of key environmental challenges in the Anthropocene and how they are represented in contemporary literature in English.
- 2 Be able to critically engage with concepts and debates in the environmental humanities, especially around climate change, mass extinction, pollution, and environmental justice.
- 3 Demonstrate analytical and interpretive skills in close reading of literary and cultural texts.
- 4 Formulate original arguments that connect textual analysis with conceptual and ethical enquiry.
- 5 Reflect insightfully on one's own intellectual development in response to course materials and discussions.
- 6 Translate course insights into both academic and creative forms of expression.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar

Extra information on the teaching methods

Interactive class discussions form the core of the course. Students engage in close reading of the assigned texts and group analysis of key passages. Short introductory lectures by the instructor situate each week's materials, but the emphasis is on seminar-style dialogue, debate, and collaborative interpretation.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Slides

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

Type: Reader

Name: Shorter literary and theoretical readings

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

Type: Other

Name: Longer literary texts

Indicative price: € 90

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : No

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : No

Additional information: List to be posted on Ufora at least one week before the first class.

References

A detailed course description, including the list of literary texts to be discussed and purchased (estimated total cost: €90), will be posted on Ufora at least one week before the first class. Shorter readings (such as articles, poems, and stories) will be made available in digital form via Ufora.

Course content-related study coaching

Students will have the opportunity to receive individual feedback and guidance.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

- **Oral exam** – Students will respond to questions about the course content during an oral exam. Questions will test both detailed textual knowledge and the ability to synthesize theoretical insights. The oral exam is “closed book,” but students will be given prep time. They will also be invited to reflect on their written and creative assignments.
- **Continuous assessment**
 - **Reflection paper** – A short personal essay in which students critically reflect on their intellectual development over the course of the semester. Students are encouraged to focus on specific works, concepts, or class discussions that shaped their thinking and to foreground their own point of view.
 - **Creative project** – A piece of creative writing or multimedia storytelling inspired by the themes, tropes, or forms discussed in the course. Possible formats include a story, poem, short play, podcast, video, or digital narrative. The project should be accompanied by a brief rationale outlining its relevance to course objectives and documenting the student's creative process.

Calculation of the examination mark

- Oral exam: 50%
- Continuous assessment: 50%

In the case of a resit, a partial mark may be carried over, but only within the same academic year.

If students do not participate in all components of the assessment, they cannot pass the course as a whole. In that case, if the final calculated mark exceeds 7/20, it will be reduced to the highest non-compensable mark (7/20).

Facilities for Working Students

- Attendance is not compulsory but recommended.
- Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time during the regular examination period.
- Feedback can be given at a different time: by appointment.