

Literature in English: Global Texts (A006666)

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 2)

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

Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context

5

A

Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature

5

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

trauma narratives, trauma theory, intergenerational trauma, insidious trauma, perpetrator trauma, comparative trauma, pre-trauma, Anglophone literature

Position of the course

This is an advanced MA-level course in English literature. It builds on skills acquired in undergraduate literature courses, challenging students to apply and refine their analytical and critical abilities at a higher level. The seminar format and global focus complement other literature courses by examining trauma narratives in a transnational, cross-genre context, thereby enhancing students' research skills and enhancing their literary-critical and cultural understanding.

Exchange students are welcome, provided they possess the necessary knowledge and skills (see *Initial competences*). No knowledge of Dutch is required.

Contents

Words for Wounds: Narrating Trauma

This MA-level course explores how literature gives form to the experience of trauma and bears witness to its enduring aftermath. Focusing on works from across the English-speaking world, the course considers the aesthetic, ethical, and political challenges of representing suffering – especially when that suffering exceeds comprehension, resists narration, or reverberates across generations. Students will examine how writers grapple with a range of traumatic experiences, including slavery, genocide, war, colonialism, and environmental collapse, and how such representations shape, challenge, and expand cultural understandings of psychological and collective wounding.

The course engages with diverse modes of trauma – such as inherited or

intergenerational trauma, insidious trauma, perpetrator trauma, and anticipatory or pre-trauma – while introducing students to foundational and emerging work in trauma theory. It asks how trauma is remembered, how it circulates in culture, and what it means to bear witness in contexts of historical injustice and ongoing harm. At stake in these enquiries is not only the question of how trauma is represented, but also who is authorized to speak, whose suffering is acknowledged, and how memory is mediated through narrative.

Through close readings and critical discussion, students will develop a nuanced understanding of the ways in which storytelling can serve as a form of testimony, resistance, and care. By drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives from psychology, cultural memory studies, postcolonial theory, and the environmental humanities, the course encourages students to reflect on the ethics of representation and the potential of narrative to engage both personal and collective wounds. In doing so, *Words for Wounds* prepares students to navigate the complex entanglements of trauma, memory, and literature, and to think critically about the role of storytelling in making sense of suffering, cultivating ethical awareness, and imagining repair.

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 Demonstrate insight into a broad range of Anglophone trauma narratives across different genres, media, and cultural contexts, understanding their themes and historical backgrounds.
- 2 Critically assess key theories and concepts in trauma studies, from the seminal work of the 1990s to more recent approaches, and evaluate how these theories apply to literary texts.
- 3 Apply trauma theory and related critical frameworks in the close analysis of literary and cultural texts, producing interpretations that link narrative form and content to trauma concepts.
- 4 Analyse and compare the narrative strategies and ethical challenges involved in representing trauma in various forms, and recognize how different cultural or historical contexts affect the depiction of trauma and memory.
- 5 Independently formulate an original research question or position related to trauma and narrative, and develop a coherent argument or enquiry that engages with both primary texts and theoretical ideas.
- 6 Communicate ideas and research findings effectively in English, both orally and in writing, in an academically appropriate register – for instance, articulating insights in class discussions, writing well-argued short papers, and competently discussing course material in an oral exam setting.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

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: Handbook

Name: Trauma (New Critical Idiom)

Indicative price: € 20

Optional: no

Language : English

Author : Lucy Bond and Stef Craps

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : No

Additional information: Also available as an ebook (free) from the university library.

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: € 70

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, 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.

Main theoretical text:

- Lucy Bond and Stef Craps, *Trauma* (Routledge, 2020)

Note that the ebook version of *Trauma* is available from the university library.

Course content-related study coaching

Students 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 in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

- **Oral exam** – A comprehensive oral examination at the end of the semester will assess students' grasp of the course content. Students will be expected to discuss selected primary works and theoretical concepts in an integrative manner: for example, analysing a passage from one of the texts in the light of trauma theories, comparing two works' approaches to trauma, or reflecting on

an overarching question. They will also be invited to reflect on their written assignments. The oral exam is "closed book," but students will be given prep time.

- **Continuous assessment** – Students are expected to engage actively in the online forum, which complements the seminar discussions and fosters a collaborative learning environment. The continuous assessment mark will be based on the quality of three concise writing tasks, which will be evaluated for clarity, coherence, critical insight, and engagement with course content:
 - **Position paper:** During the semester, each student will post a brief argumentative essay responding to a specific primary text or theoretical issue. The paper should articulate a clear position, engage critically with relevant readings, and demonstrate independent thinking.
 - **Response:** Each student will also respond to one of their peers' position papers. The response should offer constructive feedback, raise questions, or propose an alternative perspective, thereby contributing to an ongoing, respectful intellectual dialogue.
 - **Reflection paper:** Due shortly before the start of the examination period, this assignment invites students to reflect on how their thinking about (an aspect of) the course topic has evolved – or not – over the course of the semester. Students are encouraged to highlight specific works, concepts, and classroom discussions they found particularly inspiring, challenging, or thought-provoking. The tone may be more personal than that of a standard academic paper, but the reflection should remain intellectually rigorous and demonstrate sustained engagement with the course materials. The goal is not to summarize but to critically reflect on your intellectual journey throughout the course, offering insight into how the material has challenged, refined, or affirmed your way of thinking.

Students who fail the continuous assessment component of the course will be given a second chance in the form of a make-up assignment due by the start of the resit examination period.

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.