GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2025-2026

Poetics (A000389)

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

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2027-2028

Lecturers in academic year 2027-2028

Pieters, Jurgen	LW07	lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2027-2028	**crdts**	**offering**

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Literature, medicine, bibliotherapy, consolation

Position of the course

In this advanced course, a historical survey of the poetical debates that have governed the development of Western literature is given. How did one reflect on literature and how does one try to understand and explain the importance of literary texts in the intellectual development of individuals and groups. The historical approach is meant to result in a deeper understanding of our ideas on literature today. The focus of this year's (25-26) course is on the idea that the reading of literary texts can have therapeutic effects in specific contexts of care - illness, mental suffering, grief.

Contents

Bibliotherapy is an age-old practice and conviction: the idea that the reading of texts can have a wholesome effect - c.q. a highly negative impact - is a central point of discussion in Antiquity. Plato famoulsy points out the dangers of poetry, while Aristotle is convinced of its positive, kathartic outcome.
The 'Greek' debate is the starting point of this course in which we will try to identify a number of arguments that have been central in the recent flourishing of bibliotherapy and in the work of a number of literary scholars who have helped give rise to the field of the so-called 'health humanities', a field of research in which a plea is being held for the importance of a humane and holistic form of care, in which patients and people in need of care are not being reduced to the illness or condition from which they suffer.
In this course we will read a number of key texts from different historical periods that have been central to the development of this rich field and that have shaped the specific position assumed by literary writings in this interdisciplinary field. We will read and discuss essays and other literary writings which allow for a deeper reflection on topics like illness, grief and mental instability.

Initial competences

To have a basic knowledge of literary theory and analysis.

Final competences

1 To have a thorough understanding of the poetical debates that determined and shaped Western conceptions of literary culture.
2 To be able to situate poetical texts in their cultural historical context.
3 To be able to analyse the rhetorical structure of poetical texts.

4 To be able to relate poetical debates to literary-historical developments.
5 To be able to connect poetical arguments to artistic debates.

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

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Students are expected to come prepared to the course meetings as the course is in pat structured around classroom discussion. To that end, students will be expected to read the texts that will be used in class beforehand.

Study material

Type: Other

Name: Reader en 3 romans op lectuurlijst
Indicative price: € 60
Optional: no
Available on Ufora : Yes
Available in the Library : Yes
Additional information: A reader is available online through UFORA; students will read 3 novels which can be bought by the students but which are also available at libraries.

References

We will read fragments of texts by (a.o.) Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare (Hamlet), Virginia Woolf (On Being Ill, Mrs. Dalloway), Proust (Sur la lecture, A la recherche du temps perdu), Tolstoj (The death of Ivan Iljitsj).

Course content-related study coaching

The teacher is available for supervisory sessions.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

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

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Oral assessment, Participation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Students will receive a number of assignments that will result in a personal portfolio. The assessment of the portfolio counts for 30% of the final result.
The students are expected to discuss at the occasion of their oral exam a selection of the texts that have been read during the course. The topic of the conversation can be discussed beforehand with the teacher.

Calculation of the examination mark

30% portfolio and collaboration during class
70% oral exam on the basis of a written preparation

Facilities for Working Students

1. Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
3. Feedback can be given by email or during an appointment during office hours
For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy