GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2026-2027

Literature and Care (A005566)

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

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2027-2028

A (Year)	Dutch, English	Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2027-2028

Pieters, Jurgen	LW07	lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2027-2028	**crdts**	**offering**
Master of Arts in Comparative Modern Literature	5	A
Micro-credential Literature and Care	5	A
Micro-credential Literature and Health Humanities	5	A

Teaching languages

English, Dutch

Keywords

Literature, medicine, practices of care, narrative medicine, bibliotherapy, health humanities, shared reading, vulnerability

Position of the course

This course is meant as an introduction to the budding interdisciplinary field of narrative medicine and related intersections between literary studies and medicine. The course will focus on the one hand on the representation of issues of care, illness, health and death in literary writings and on the other hand on the therapeutic function of literature in diverse contexts of care, (psycho-)medical and other. The reading of literature increasingly proves to have a healing and caring function in diverse contexts of care: hospitals, retirement homes, psychiatric wards, prisons. In this course, we want to confront students with literary reflections on what it means to be ill/a patient/in need of care and to bring them in touch with the practice of literary care in one of the above mentioned care-facilities.

Contents

The course is organised as a seminar (for reading and discussion) in which the students are introduced in the broad domain of 'narrative medicine'. Each year we will single out a number of contexts of care (for instance, a retirement home, the palliative wing of a hospital, the cultural service of private organisations such as the Majin-house, ...). In a first phase, we will work on the in-depth reading of a number of texts that deal with the basic principles of literary care. In the second half of the course, the students will get to know the functioning of literature in specific contexts of care on a first-hand basis: they will be offered, for instance, the possibility of leading shared reading sessions in a retirement home or of having conversations about literature with less mobile readers to whom they bring library requests. They will thus develop their own professional experience in the use of literary writings in a specific context of care.

Initial competences

The student is familiar with the basic principles of literary theory and comparative literature (as taught in such courses as *Algemene Literatuurwetenschap* and *Vergelijkende Literatuurwetenschap*) and has basic notions of the concrete analysis of literary texts and their functioning in specific literary traditions.

Final competences

1 To acquire insight in the therapeutic relevance of reading literary texts is different contexts of care
2 To be able to communicate, orally and in writing, about therapeutic relevance of reading literary texts is different contexts of care
3 To acquire and practise skills that exemplify the usefulness of literature in specific contexts of care
4 To be able to relate specific literary texts to contemporary debates and issues of care
5 To be able to transfer the analysis of literary writings to a specific context of care
6 To be able to relate knowledge derived from different courses and study-domains to the analysis of therapeutic functions of literature in specific contexts of care and to acquire the means for life-long learning in this area

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

Group work, Seminar, Lecture, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lecture 5h: introduction to the course and the selected themes
Seminar 35h: discussions on and interpretations of the materials in the reader
Microteaching 5h: presentation of personal portfolio

The lectures are recorded, the recordings are open to all students enrolled in the course.

Study material

Type: Reader

Name: Reader Literature and Care
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Available on Ufora : Yes

References

Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine. Honoring the stories of illness*
Arthur Frank, *The Wounded storyteller: body, illness and ethics*
Stephanie Hilger (ed.), *New Directions in Literature and Medicine Studies*
Virginia Woolf, 'On Being Ill'
Lev Tolstoi, 'The death of Ivan Iljitsj'
Sophocles, Filoktetes

Course content-related study coaching

During the lectures there is the opportunity to ask questions, and discussion moments are included.
The independent work and the microteaching are supervised via (online or on campus) contact moments.
The lessons by actors from the literary field are supported by microteaching.

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

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Process evaluation on the one hand (participation during the course) and product evaluation on the other hand (the students are expected to produce output in the form of a presentation and a portfolio.
There is also an oral exam during the exam period.

Calculation of the examination mark

Permanent evaluation (70%), exam (30%)

Facilities for Working Students

1 Absence is allowed provided that a replacement task is submitted (in consultation with the teacher)
2 It is possible to take the exam at a different time within/outside the regular exam period (in consultation with the teacher)
3 Possibility to receive feedback at another time: by appointment (via bongo virtual classroom)