

Theory and Methods of the History of Literature (A000271)

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 2026-2027

A (semester 1)

Dutch

Gent

seminar

independent work

lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Desplenter, Youri

LW07

lecturer-in-charge

Nemegeer, Guylian

LW07

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	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)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - French)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Spanish)	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)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Historical Perspectives)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Iberian-Romance Languages)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin)	5	A

Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Historical Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Literary history, historiography, theory, method

Position of the course

This advanced course provides an insight into the theory and the application of the historical study of literary texts and the problems of literary history.

Contents

In this course, students are made familiar with several basic concepts from the historical study of literary texts and the historiography of literature. Following questions are dealt with: What is the object of 'historical literature'? What are the (dis)advantages of a cultural-historical reading? Which shape can that kind of reading take? How can we define the concept 'context'? How are literary texts different from other historical sources? Students are thus briefly introduced into recent developed reading practices such as a.o. 'Cultural Materialism' and 'New Historicism'. Transnational literary history and developments within the 'digital turn' will be discussed as well.

At the same time, students are introduced into the methodology of historical research of literature. This part focuses on the material aspects of text carriers (especially manuscripts and early prints), and on the editing technique, insofar as this has implications for the textual history. This is all embedded in a history of the book. Concerning manuscript literature, the consequences of the perspectives of the New/Material Philology for the study of historical literature are examined. The object of this course is that the students are making a comparative analysis of how a literary work or an author is presented in different literary histories in the course of time. They will do this along the information given in the lectures, guided reading of secondary texts, and exercises.

Initial competences

- having introductory knowledge of literary studies / theories
- being able to work with scientific literature

Final competences

- 1 To apply knowledge of the literary traditions to the analysis of texts and to the placing in a literary-historical and stylistic context.
- 2 To have an insight into the historical functions of literature.
- 3 To have an insight into the problems of literary historiography.
- 4 To be able to recognise different models of periodisation.
- 5 To have an insight into the state of affairs of literary research.
- 6 To activate insight into the historical aspects in the study of texts.
- 7 To have an eye for the relations between languages, literatures and cultures.
- 8 To have an insight in related and supporting disciplines and to be able to indicate their importance for the literary research.
- 9 To contextualize sources and studies on literature and culture and to assimilate them critically.
- 10 To reproduce and apply literary paradigms, methods of analysis and techniques of interpretation.
- 11 To be aware of the historical and ideological determination of problems of research and of the necessity to question the research process.
- 12 To have a strong linguistic awareness: valuing the crucial role of language in human interaction and cultural production and handling language according to that awareness.
- 13 Showing an attitude of intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning.
- 14 To have an eye for social problems, and to be conscious of the use of the field.
- 15 To design independently a research question and to solve it in a scientifically

sound way, under supervision.

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, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

This course assumes the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI). During the lessons, what this means will be explained.

All study materials are provided free of charge on Ufora.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: /

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Type: Reader

Name: /

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Type: Handouts

Name: /

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

References

Course content-related study coaching

Guidance by the lecturer's for the independent work.

Assessment moments

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

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Assessment moment: non-periodical (100%)

Assessment form: The students will have to make a number of exercises or will have to solve some questions, which will help them with the making and writing of an analysis of a case from literary history. The analysis will have the form of a paper.

Calculation of the examination mark

Exercises: 40% of the total score

Analysis (paper): 60% of the total score

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

- 1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance; a task is imposed in substitution after discussion with the lecturer
- 2 Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year

3 Feedback can be given during an appointment during and after office hours

Extra information:

Please contact the lecturer to make an agreement.

For more information contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy: [https://www.ugent.](https://www.ugent.be/lw/nl/student/studiestudentenbegeleiding/trajectbegeleiding.htm)

[be/lw/nl/student/studiestudentenbegeleiding/trajectbegeleiding.htm](https://www.ugent.be/lw/nl/student/studiestudentenbegeleiding/trajectbegeleiding.htm)