Literature in English: Modern Period II (A005257)

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

    Credits 5.0   **Study time**   150 h

Course offerings in academic year 2024-2025

     A (semester 1)   English   Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2024-2025

     Busi Rizzi, Giorgio   LW07   lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2024-2025	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

     literature in English, narratology, unreliable narrator, contemporary literature, literary history

Position of the course

     This advanced course focuses on unreliable narrators, analysing a corpus of English-language works, mainly written in the second half of the 20th century. A formal analysis that will distinguish different types of unreliability will be accompanied by an examination of several possible reasons for narratorial unreliability and a historicisation of the use of this narrative technique.

Contents

     The course thread follows the idea of narrative unreliability along three directions:
- from a formal point of view, it wants to investigate the interstices of the reliability and truth value of a narration, focusing on the unsaid, on gaps, contradictions, tensions, and what all this entails for the reader's reception. The reliability of texts that do not formally rest on this narrative device will also be investigated and challenged.
- from a historical point of view, it wants to historicise the idea of the unreliable narrator, as a narrative device that sees its zenith between modernism and postmodernism and that instead loses prominence (or is restructured into new forms) in contemporary artistic and literary production. This "death" (which certainly does not mean that the device of unreliability is no longer used) is problematised and related to the historical and socio-cultural context in which narrative production evolves.
- from a thematic point of view, the unreliable narrator is examined by focusing on the reasons for their unreliability: the relationship between memory and emotions, traumatic mechanisms, psychological processes of denial, repression and displacement, historical investigation (also in a broad sense), the search for meaning and truth and the relative role of false, paranoid and

conspiratorial narratives.

Initial competences

Having successfully completed at least one of the "English Literature III" courses or having acquired the competencies envisioned therein by others means. Students must be highly proficient in English and familiar with the terminology of literary theory or other disciplines concerning narrative media.

Final competences

1 Having a thorough knowledge of the most important textual mechanisms concerning unreliability and related concepts, from both a narratological and a psychological point of view.

2 Being able to relate the theoretical framework to the texts analysed with critical thinking, taking into account the different effects they create and the diverse production contexts in which they originated.

3 Being able to provide in-depth analyses of the texts discussed in class, and reflect critically upon the similarities and differences between texts from various authors, periods, genres, and areas.

4 Being able to explain, argue, present, and take a critical stance in academic English both orally and in writing.

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, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

Individual sessions will combine lecture and seminar methods, with opportunities for students to participate in class discussions. Each session will examine the assigned texts and situate them in their relevant literary and cultural contexts. If necessary, some classes may be taught online or through alternative means.
Students are expected to come to class prepared, and encouraged to take notes, ask questions during class, discuss and answer each other's questions, and think actively.

Study material

None

References

Secondary literature will be made available at the beginning of the course via Ufora. Nonetheless, two general references are:

- Elke D'hoker, Gunther Martens, *Narrative Unreliability in the Twentieth-Century First-Person Novel* (2008)
- Vera Nünning, *Unreliable Narration and Trustworthiness* (2015)

Course content-related study coaching

Possibility of feedback and counselling on an individual basis.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Written assessment with open-ended questions

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

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Presentation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Participation (30%):

- attendance (5%)
- feedback (5%)
- presentation (20%)

Written exam (35%):
- Three open-ended questions related to the theoretical framework and the texts analysed

Final paper (35%):
- one short essay (1750 words) on a specific aspect concerning one book from the corpus (the title will be communicated on Ufora at the beginning of the course). Students must combine the theoretical framework with original thinking and additional references retrieved independently.

Non-attending students (less than 75% attendance) will have to submit a recorded or written presentation (20%), write a longer paper (2500 words) (40%), and take the written exam (40%).

Calculation of the examination mark

1 Participation: 30% (attendance: 5%; feedback: 5%; presentations: 20%)
2 Written exam: 35%
3 Final paper: 35%

To pass the course, students need a grade of at least 9.5/20 on both the paper and the written exam. In case of resit, students will have to retake only the component they failed (only applies within the same academic year).

Non-attending students (less than 75% attendance) will have to submit a recorded or written presentation (20%), write a longer paper (2500 words) (40%), and take the written exam (40%).

Facilities for Working Students

- Exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
- Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
- Feedback can be given by email or at an alternative time (by appointment).