

## 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
<a href="#">Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Linguistics and Literature)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Greek)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Italian)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Latin)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Scandinavian Studies)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Spanish)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - English)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature</a>	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 by analyzing a body of English-language works written primarily during the 20th century. The course will position and contextualize, historically and culturally, the technique of narrative unreliability, while at the same time delving into its formal characteristics and constantly reflecting on its ideological implications. The course will thus combine a historical and critical overview of key literary movements from the late 19th to the early 21st century with the operationalization of key concepts in narrative theory.

**Contents**

***That's what they said: analyzing and deconstructing unreliable narration in English-speaking literature***

The course thread follows the idea of narrative unreliability along three directions:

- from a formal point of view, it builds a critical framework through which to read and detect unreliable narrators. It investigates 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 historicises the idea of the unreliable narrator, as a narrative device that becomes consistent in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, sees its

zenith between modernism and postmodernism, and 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, mental health, repression and displacement, historical investigation and the search for meaning and truth, and purportedly 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 Having a clear understanding of the main lines of the historical unfolding of English language literature from the late 19th century to the present.
- 3 Being able to apply the theoretical framework to the texts analysed with critical thinking, taking into account the different effects these texts create and the diverse production contexts in which they originated.
- 4 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.
- 5 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. Sessions will examine the assigned texts and situate them in their relevant literary and cultural contexts. Some activities may be conducted 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**

Type: Slides

Name: Slides

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: yes

Language : English

Number of Slides : 120

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

Type: Handouts

Name: various essays  
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty  
Optional: no  
Language : English  
Number of Pages : 300  
Available on Ufora : Yes  
Online Available : No  
Available in the Library : No  
Available through Student Association : No  
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : intensive  
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : regularly  
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally

Type: Other

Name: The Reluctant Fundamentalist (novel)  
Indicative price: € 13  
Optional: no  
Language : English  
Author : Mohsin Hamid  
ISBN : 978-0-24198-138-2  
Number of Pages : 224  
Available on Ufora : Yes  
Online Available : No  
Available in the Library : No  
Available through Student Association : No  
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly  
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time  
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally  
Additional information: A cheaper price can be found online; any edition will do.

Type: Other

Name: The Murder of Roger Ackroyd (novel)  
Indicative price: € 12  
Optional: no  
Language : English  
Author : Agatha Christie  
ISBN : 978-0-00752-752-6  
Number of Pages : 304  
Available on Ufora : Yes  
Online Available : No  
Available in the Library : Yes  
Available through Student Association : No  
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly  
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time  
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : regularly  
Additional information: A cheaper price can be found online; any edition will do.

Type: Other

Name: Atonement (novel)  
Indicative price: € 15  
Optional: no  
Language : English  
Author : Ian McEwan  
ISBN : 978-0-09942-979-1  
Number of Pages : 384  
Available on Ufora : Yes  
Online Available : No  
Available in the Library : Yes  
Available through Student Association : No  
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly  
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time  
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally  
Additional information: A cheaper price can be found online; any edition will do.

Type: Other

Name: Fun home: a family tragicomic (graphic novel)  
Indicative price: € 13  
Optional: no  
Language : English  
Author : Alison Bechdel  
ISBN : 978-0-22408-051-4  
Number of Pages : 232  
Available on Ufora : Yes  
Online Available : No  
Available in the Library : No  
Available through Student Association : No  
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly  
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time  
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally  
Additional information: A cheaper price can be found online; any edition will do.

Type: Other

Name: A Pale View of Hills (novel)  
Indicative price: € 15  
Optional: no  
Language : English  
Author : Kazuo Ishiguro  
ISBN : 978-0-57125-825-3  
Number of Pages : 192  
Available on Ufora : Yes  
Online Available : No  
Available in the Library : Yes  
Available through Student Association : No  
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly  
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time  
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally  
Additional information: A cheaper price can be found online; any edition will do.

Type: Other

Name: Elizabeth Is Missing (novel)  
Indicative price: € 14  
Optional: no  
Language : English  
Author : Emma Healey  
ISBN : 978-0-24196-818-5  
Number of Pages : 304  
Available on Ufora : Yes  
Online Available : No  
Available in the Library : No  
Available through Student Association : No  
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly  
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time  
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally  
Additional information: A cheaper price can be found online; any edition will do.

Type: Other

Name: The Turn of the Screw (novella)  
Indicative price: € 7  
Optional: no  
Language : English  
Author : Henry James  
ISBN : 978-0-09951-123-6  
Number of Pages : 134  
Available on Ufora : Yes  
Online Available : Yes  
Available in the Library : Yes  
Available through Student Association : No

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly  
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time  
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally  
Additional information: The whole book is 256 pages, but we are only going to read *The Turn of the Screw*; any edition will do.

## 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 (10%):*

- attendance will be taken. Feedback will concern both the course and your peers' assignments

*Assignments (40%):*

- individual presentations on a movie from a given list (15%)
- mini-essay (around 1000 words) on a novel from the course syllabus/a given list (15%)
- collective presentations (10%)

*Written exam (50%):*

- five open-ended questions related to the theoretical framework discussed and the texts analyzed

Non-attending students (less than 2/3 attendance) will have to submit a recorded or written presentation on a movie from a given list (15%), write a paper on a novel from the course syllabus/a given list (2750 words) (35%), and take the written exam (50%).

## Calculation of the examination mark

*Attending students:*

- 1 participation: 10% (attendance and feedback)
- 2 assignments: 40% (individual presentations: 15%; mini-essay: 15%; collective presentation: 10%)
- 3 written exam: 50%

*Non-attending students:*

- 1 recorded or written presentation: 15%
- 2 paper: 35%
- 3 written exam: 50%

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

## Facilities for Working Students

- Exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
- Feedback can be provided by the teacher via e-mail or by appointment

