

Literature in English: Older Period II (A005258)

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

Forestier, Eloïse 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
Master of Arts in Historical Linguistics and Literature	5	A
Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Feminism, 19C literature, literary genres, Victorian marriages, cultural reception, periodical culture, transnational networks.

Position of the course

This course provides a contextual knowledge of the development of feminism in the late 19C through the lens of literary history in general, and the marriage institution in particular. It answers the following two-fold research question: how did the women's movement manifest itself in anglophone literature and (periodical) culture, and how did literary genres, from Idealism to Modernism and Realism, shape themselves around changes in women's legal status, and concepts ranging from the "Angel in the House" to the "New Woman"? The aim of the course is to provide students with a more thorough understanding of the relationship between early feminism and literature, while offering a transnational perspective on the women's movement. The corpus is centred on anglophone literature, yet it opens on the reception and translation of foreign, especially Nordic, works.

Contents

The term feminism was coined at the end of the 19C. It originated from the ideas of the Enlightenment (Rousseau), and the concept of (male) citizenship established after the American War of independence, and during the French Revolution. At the peak of the British Empire, under the reign of Victoria, while men had acquired more legal rights, liberties, and a measure of political equality, women were subjected to coverture law upon their marriage, which meant that the husband and

wife became one in law (the husband): wives had no independent legal existence. Both women and men campaigned for women's rights in different literary media (novels, pamphlets, plays, periodicals). Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) came out the same year as the first women's rights convention (Seneca Falls) in the United States. A few years later, the publication and translation of Fredrika Bremer's *Hertha* (1856) affected the course of social and political history, bringing about changes in the legal status of women in Scandinavia. Towards the end of the century, the Scandinavian Modern Breakthrough opened a door to women's perception of themselves as human beings rather than society constructs (Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, 1879). Back in Britain, and also affecting the whole of Europe, the Married Women's Property Acts (1882) gave wives some protection and economic rights, but this did not automatically alleviate the dependence they experienced within marriage, while remaining unmarried was economically challenging and socially frowned upon, as we will see in George Gissing's *The Odd Women* (1893). Gissing's novels also pave the way to understand women's role in late 19C periodical culture. Finally, as the "New Woman" movement shook Victorian standards, Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) shows us another aspect of women's liberation, by broaching the taboo of emotional freedom and sexual/body awakening. Here we will touch upon notions of "difference" as opposed to "equality" feminism. While students will be introduced to important theoretical works on feminism and women's networks, a key objective of the course will be to study the impact of the women's movement on literature and literary genres, by looking at characterization and plot development, with at its core a reflection on the central institution of marriage in the 19C.

Compulsory reading:

- Bremer, Fredrika – *Hertha* (1856) translated into English by M. Howitt. Digitized. Selected chapters only.
- Brontë, Anne – *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848)
- Chopin, Kate – *The Awakening* (1899)
- Gissing, George – *The Odd Women* (1893)
- Ibsen, Henrik – *A Doll's House* (1879)

Recommended reading/contextual knowledge (a selection):

- McFadden, Margaret – *Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-Century Feminism* (1999)
- Michie, Helena – *Victorian Honeymoons: Journeys to the Conjugal* (2006)
- Rose, Phillis – *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages* (1983)
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques – *Emile, or On Education* (1762)
- Stuart Mill, John – *The Subjection of Women* (1869)
- Toril, Moi – *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism* (2006)
- Wallach Scott, Joan – *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (1996)

Initial competences

To have successfully completed at least one of the "English Literature III" courses or to have acquired the necessary skills by other means. Students must be highly proficient in English and competent in analyzing literary texts. Knowledge of Scandinavian, French, or German languages are welcome though not necessary.

Final competences

- 1 Relating literary works to different stages of the women's rights campaign, not only in Britain but also in other European places.
- 2 Developing research skills and formulating an original research question.
- 3 Applying (feminist) theory to literary analyses.
- 4 To develop advanced oral and written communication skills.
- 5 Acquiring experience working in a team, relying on one another's strengths to produce the best research results (group presentation).
- 6 Giving constructive and academic feedback.
- 7 To acquire the academic research and writing competence necessary to produce a high-quality written assignment showcasing original research.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar

Extra information on the teaching methods

The lessons take the form of an in-person seminar with class discussion. Students are expected to come to class having done the assigned reading. Please note that students are not permitted to use cell phones during in-person classes.

Study material

Type: Other

Name: The Awakening
Indicative price: € 11
Optional: no
Author : Kate Chopin
Number of Pages : 208

Type: Other

Name: The Tenant of Wildfell Hall
Indicative price: € 13
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Anne Brontë
Number of Pages : 416

Type: Other

Name: Hertha
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Fredrika Bremer
Additional information: We will only look at a selection of chapters, reading the entire book is recommended but not compulsory. This book is only available in English translation in digitized version
(https://www.google.se/books/edition/Hertha/L_4NAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover)

Type: Other

Name: A Doll's House
Indicative price: € 5
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Henrik Ibsen
Number of Pages : 80

Type: Other

Name: The Odd Women
Indicative price: € 16
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : George Gissing
Number of Pages : 432

References

A list of references will be made available on Ufora.

Course content-related study coaching

Lecture: prepare for each lecture and study sources prior to the lecture. Students are more than encouraged to ask questions during class, to answer each other's questions and to actively think along.

Independent work: Students work individually on their essay.

Seminar: Students share their presentation projects in small groups. They give feedback on each other's (pre- circulated) work and discuss their ideas collectively.

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

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

Your grade will be based on participation, one in-class presentation, and one final written paper.

Participation

All students are expected to complete all assigned readings in advance of class and to contribute in a routine, productive and positive way to conversation and discussion. Students must communicate promptly and professionally with the instructor.

Conversation Leader

Students in groups of two or three will lead a group discussion once during the semester. The basic idea is that you serve as a co-teacher for about 20-30 minutes. The discussion should focus on our assigned materials for the week. The goal is that you stimulate conversation, pose questions, knit answers together, ask for clarifications, pose follow-up questions, summarize relevant points, identify conflicting responses and ideas, etc. The end result is simple: keep conversation flowing in interesting and productive ways.

Written Assignment

The written assignment should be 3,000 words in length (10% variance) and should be formatted using MLA or Chicago style. Some further specifications:

1. The essay should include high-quality, peer-reviewed scholarly sources, from academic journals and books. Students are expected to select the best and most relevant secondary resources (and not simply the first secondary resources they find). Note: seminar notes or slides should not be used as sources.
2. The essay must focus on one or more of our primary texts from the course, unless otherwise approved by the instructor. Other relevant texts may be discussed in relation to the primary text.

Each student should devise their own essay topic. Early in the semester, you will be required to submit a brief research proposal for your assignment (max. 1 page). You will receive brief feedback on your essay proposal. The goal of the proposal is to make sure you are on the right track with your essay topic: that it is viable for the scope of the assignment, and that you are approaching it in an analytical, argumentative way.

Following the proposal, you will be required to submit an annotated bibliography listing and describing five scholarly sources you intend to consult to complete your paper. You will receive feedback on this bibliography as well.

Calculation of the examination mark

10% of the grade: participation (participation in seminars)

30% of the grade: conversation leader

60% of the grade: written assignment (essay)

Facilities for Working Students

Possible rescheduling of the oral exam and feedback. Students can talk to the teacher after class. They can ask questions via the digital learning platform Ufora or make an appointment via email.