

Literature in English: Modern Period III (A005259)

Course size	<i>(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)</i>		
Credits 5.0	Study time 150 h	Contact hrs	45.0 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2023-2024

A (semester 2)	English	Gent	seminar independent work
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Lecturers in academic year 2023-2024

Craps, Stef	LW07	lecturer-in-charge
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Offered in the following programmes in 2023-2024

	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
Micro-credential Environmental Humanities	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Climate change, ecocriticism, contemporary literature in English

Position of the course

This advanced course aims to explore how contemporary literature in English addresses the aesthetic, ethical, and existential challenges posed by climate change.

Position of the course in terms of language proficiency: In the master programme in English, students are expected to progress from an initial CEFR C1 level to a first-stage C2 level ("Mastery").

Exchange students may take this course. Knowledge of Dutch is not required.

Contents

Imagining Climate Change

Climate change, arguably the defining issue of our time, is usually treated as a strictly scientific, economic, or technological problem. However, it also raises profound questions of meaning, value, and justice, as it challenges taken-for-granted ways of seeing and inhabiting the world.

The early twenty-first century has witnessed the emergence of a wave of literary texts that reject or reinvent conventional modes of representation in an attempt to capture and convey the nature and meaning of climate change and the urgency required to tackle it. This course

explores how contemporary literature in English is grappling with the challenges posed by a warming planet. It pays particular attention to the formal innovations demanded by climate change, a phenomenon whose sheer magnitude and complexity defy familiar forms of narrative, and to the ways in which creative writers address inequalities in the global distribution of responsibility for and vulnerability to climate change in their work. A selection of recent humanities scholarship theorizing climate change and its cultural framings and impacts will provide a background for the discussion of a wide range of literary responses across different genres, from novels and short stories to graphic novels, poems, and plays.

Initial competences

Students must be highly proficient in English (CEFR C1 level ("Expert"/"Effective operational" proficiency)) and familiar with literary-analytical methods.

Final competences

- 1 To have acquired insight into literature about climate change.
- 2 To critically assess different theories, concepts, and approaches proposed in humanities scholarship to make sense of (literary responses to) climate change.
- 3 To apply climate change criticism to analyse literary texts.
- 4 To be thoroughly familiar with the inner workings of a range of literary responses to climate change.
- 5 To independently formulate an original research question in relation to climate change literature and to answer it.
- 6 To report insights and research results orally and in writing in an academically appropriate form.

Conditions for credit contract

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

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Guided self-study, online discussion group, seminar, online seminar

Extra information on the teaching methods

Interactive classes. Students are expected to come to class having done the assigned reading. Collaborative learning through ongoing engagement with an online discussion forum.

Learning materials and price

- Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*
- Caryl Churchill, *Escaped Alone*
- Ian McEwan, *Solar*
- Richard McGuire, *Here*
- Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Ministry for the Future*

Possibly one additional book, to be announced before the start of the second semester. These literary works will be on sale from Standaard Boekhandel (Kouter 31). Estimated total cost: 75 euros.

Shorter texts (such as articles, poems, and stories) will be made available in digital form via Ufora by the start of the second semester.

References

Course content-related study coaching

Interactive teaching in the classroom, office hours

Evaluation methods

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Oral examination

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

Oral examination

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation

Participation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

(Approved)

Extra information on the examination methods

Periodic evaluation: oral examination. Students answer two questions testing their knowledge and understanding of the course content and give a short presentation on a text not discussed in class, chosen in advance in consultation with the instructor.

Non-periodic evaluation: over the course of the semester students post two response pieces on an online discussion forum. In these responses they engage substantively with key concepts and ideas from the primary or secondary readings, identify and analyse striking passages or motifs, raise questions or topics for discussion, and/or respond to posts by others. In addition, they post either a piece of creative climate storytelling of their own or a short concluding reflection paper in which they describe how their thinking about (an aspect of) the topic of this course has evolved (or not) in the course of the semester. Non-participation will result in a fail for this part of the evaluation. Students who fail the non-periodic evaluation will be given a second chance in the form of an alternative assignment due by the start of the resit examination period.

Calculation of the examination mark

Periodic evaluation counts towards 60% of the final mark, non-periodic evaluation towards 40%.

Facilities for Working Students

Attendance is not compulsory but recommended.

Classes will be livestreamed and recorded via Opencast (if available).

Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time during the regular examination period.

Feedback can be given at a different time: by appointment.

For more information concerning flexible learning, contact the tutoring service of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy.