

World Literature and Globalisation (A005564)

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

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 1)

English

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Janssen, Caroline

LW21

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

[Master of Arts in Comparative Modern Literature](#)

[Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature](#)

crdts

offering

5

A

5

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

world literatures, identity and intersectionality, in-betweenness, contemporary fiction, literature and migration, trauma, diversity, refugees, inequality, human rights, trans- and multilingualism postcolonial contexts, ecocriticism of the Global South

Position of the course

While in programmes of 'Language and Literatures' and 'Languages and Cultures' the study of literature is usually geographically and linguistically (de)limited and focused on representativeness and canonisation, and while in such contexts most often a distinction is made between the center and the periphery, world literatures, as conceived here, breaks away from this pattern.

The course zooms in on contemporary writers from all over the world who engage with the world and its issues today. It also highlights hybridity and diversity and is built on the idea that 'no culture can be represented by a single voice' (cf. Chimananda Ngozi Adichie).

In this course special attention is paid to 'in-betweenness' and hybrid identities as well as the literary expression of such experiences.

Contents

The course starts with a discussion of the floating signifiers that make up the title of this course, and a short reflection on the concept of world literature vs. world literatures. The largely Western, white and often male perspective that has been dominating the literary field and academic debates is problematised. By broadening the scope and by listening to other voices, often suppressed ones, we explore the functions and expressions of literature in diverse social settings and (sub)cultures of the contemporary world.

Cultures are not static but dynamic, and those who wish to engage in contemporary debates would do well to be aware of the captivating networks and intercultural exchanges that take place.

This is a course about finding empathy, creating a sense of belonging, connectedness to humanity, indignation about inequality and environmental disasters, inclusion and exclusion, and their expression in literary creations. It comprises examples of fiction and non-fiction, prose and poetry and everything in between.

Contemporary issues and backgrounds are explored through books that have just appeared (there is a time window of 0-10 years for books in focus). The student will

see texts about themes like (post)colonial issues, mother tongue and fatherland, expression and repression, intergenerational trauma, diversity and ecocritical voices from the 'global South'.

Initial competences

The student is familiar with the basic concepts of literary studies as taught in Literary Studies and Comparative Literature. There is a basic insight in text analysis and historical aspects of literary traditions.

Final competences

- 1 Having a critical insight in the relevance of reading literary texts written in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts
- 2 Being able to communicate, orally and in writing, about the impact of globalisation on literatures today
- 3 To have acquired the skills that are necessary to understand texts written from other cultural backgrounds and to appreciate them, which, in many cases, enhances the pleasure of reading such works. To find and use audiovisual materials such as recitations, interviews with authors, artistic interpretations, ... to gain more insight into the value of literature in diverse contexts.
- 4 To be able to reflect on themes that are connected to literary expression and identity, in the understanding that the connection between language, culture and identity is not always straightforward or self-evident
- 5 To be able to connect, independently and critically, texts from world literatures to current issues and debates; to be capable of expanding this knowledge through life-long learning
- 6 To be able to incorporate skills from related fields or courses when analysing complex problems in the field of world literatures
- 7 To be able to show the added value of offering works from contemporary world literatures in contexts like education, libraries, the media or in street art, and to be able to communicate and advise about this, knowledgeably, and with cultural sensitivity, to stakeholders, such as editors, literary organisations, people who assemble reading collections
- 8 To be aware of white and other forms of privilege and their impact on the acceptance, selection, publication, reviewing of literary works. To be able to question such patterns and initiate actions against them; to discern examples of microaggression
- 9 Being able to critically assess the use and limitations of AI for assignments, with special regard to non-Western contexts

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, Excursion, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

The anchor points of this course are taught through lectures and seminars. Because the world starts in the backyard the excursion to Beersel which is organised by the department will be considered as an activity that is connected to this course for students of the department (students who choose this course but do not follow the full programme will be given another activity in replacement). Students prepare discussions through selected readings. They choose a book of their liking to present in class and write a paper about it.

Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: World literature and globalisation

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Number of Pages : 275

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

Additional information: The materials are free and can be downloaded. If one prints the syllabus this will be an additional cost (c. 20 euro).

References

Ashcroft, Bill et al., 2002 (2nd edition), *The empire writes back. Theory and practice in postcolonial literatures*, London and New York, Routledge.

Burns, Lorna (ed.), 2021: *Postcolonialism after World Literature. Relation, equality, dissent*. London: Bloomsbury.

Damrosch, David, 2003: *What is World Literature?* Princeton & Oxford, Oxford University Press.

D'haen, Theo, 2012: *The Routledge Concise History of World Literature*. London: Routledge

D'Haen, Theo, 2021: *World Literature in an age of geopolitics*, Leiden, Brill .

Gupta, Suman, 2009: *Globalization and Literature*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, 2003: *Death of a discipline*, New York, Columbia University Press.

Course content-related study coaching

During the classes there is opportunity to ask questions and discuss matters.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Oral assessment, Written assessment with open-ended questions

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

Oral assessment, Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Presentation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Calculation of the examination mark

Assignments and presentation each 20%.

Oral exam 20%.

Written exam 40%.

Second exam period:

Idem. All the parts of the exam have to be taken; if not, the maximum point is 7/20.