

English Literature: Historical Period (A005761)

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

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2) English Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Forestier, Eloïse LW07 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Italian)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Latin)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Spanish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Swedish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - English)	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Italian)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Spanish)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - English)	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Medicine, science, bodies, fiction, biology, twentieth century, twenty-first century, nonhuman animals, laboratory literature.

Position of the course

This course is an elective, third-year course. It expands on the overviews given in the first two years of the bachelor. It focuses on late nineteenth to contemporary American and British fiction and biomedical science, with a particular interest in the depiction of bodies both human and nonhuman animals.

Contents

This interdisciplinary course will examine how scientific issues related to the body were registered and interrogated across a range of literary genres (essays; novels; short stories; poems) from the 1880s to the present. Areas of interest that will shape our discussions include, for example: evolution and degeneration; theories of race, gender, sexuality and class; interactions of the mind and body; new understandings of illness and disease; animal experimentation; zoonosis and transgenesis; and medical ethics.

The contents of the course is guided by questions such as:

- How is scientific knowledge addressed and transformed in literary writing?
- How do various literary forms influence the communication and reception of scientific theories and concepts?
- How transferable are reading practices and strategies across literary and scientific texts?
- Do fictional engagements transform how we understand knowledge and who, and what, counts in its production?
- Does literature have a role to play in ethical questions related to medical and scientific knowledge and, even, practice?

Initial competences

English literature 1 or acquisition of skills for literary analysis by other means. Some knowledge of 19th century to contemporary literature, and literary theory will be helpful, but is not necessary for enrolment. It is also recommended that students enrolling have experience writing an academic essay.

Final competences

- 1 To read texts in a wide variety of genres (novel, poetry, drama, short story, prose essay), paying close and critical attention to the production of meaning at the level of literary language and form.
- 2 An understanding of the relationship between literature and science and how it has evolved from the late nineteenth century to the present.
- 3 To write about texts analytically, using both close-reading skills and contextual scholarship to offer original critical commentary.
- 4 An understanding of how the biological study of bodies developed in the medical sciences, and how writers of fiction engaged with these sciences.
- 5 Understanding the purpose and benefits of researching 'beyond the canon' and practical skills in researching using online archives.

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

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar

Extra information on the teaching methods

Individual sessions will combine lecture and seminar methods, with opportunities for students to participate in class discussions, and practical workshop elements including researching online archives for historical, literary, and medical texts. Each session will situate the assigned texts in their relevant literary and cultural contexts.

Study material

Type: Handouts

Name: Excerpts from Frank Herbert's Dune (1965)

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : not applicable

Additional information: We will order a copy for the library.

Type: Audiovisual Material

Name: Dune (2021), Denis Villeneuve

Indicative price: € 5

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : No
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : one-time
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : not
Additional information: If possible, we may run a screening so that students can watch if for free.

Type: Other

Name: Toxin (1895)
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Ouida
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : No
Additional information: Free or paid by faculty

Type: Other

Name: Flowers for Algernon (1959)
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Daniel Keyes
Number of Pages : 23
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly
Additional information: Free or paid by faculty

Type: Other

Name: Diary of a Steak
Indicative price: € 15
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Deborah Levy
Available on Ufora : No
Online Available : No

Type: Other

Name: The Tiger Flu (2018)
Indicative price: € 27
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Larissa Lai
ISBN : 978-1-55152-731-4
Number of Pages : 296
Available on Ufora : No
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : Yes
Available through Student Association : No
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : not applicable
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : not

Type: Other

Name: Selection of infection/contagion short stories
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Misc.
Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : No
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No
Additional information: Available through Ufora

Type: Other

Name: The People in the Trees (2013)
Indicative price: € 15
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Hanya Yanagihara
ISBN : 978-1-03503-852-7
Number of Pages : 384
Available on Ufora : No
Online Available : No
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : not
Additional information: Being ordered for the library. Available at Standaard Boekhandel:
<https://www.standaardboekhandel.be/p/the-people-in-the-trees-9781035038527>

Type: Other

Name: Dracula (1897)
Indicative price: € 7
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Bram Stoker
ISBN : 978-0-14143-984-6
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : Yes

Type: Other

Name: Nightwood (1936)
Indicative price: € 10
Optional: no
Author : Djuna Barnes
ISBN : 978-0-57123-528-5
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : Yes

Type: Other

Name: Quicksand (1928)
Indicative price: € 8
Optional: no
Author : Author : Nella Larsen
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : Yes

References

Course content-related study coaching

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, Written assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

Final Research Project/Essay: 40%

Oral Examination on various theories of satire (20-30 minutes): 40%

Participation: 20%

Calculation of the examination mark

To pass the course, each student must receive a passing grade (=10/20) for both the Final Research Project/Essay *and* the Oral Examination. During the Oral Examination, the student must also demonstrate that they take full responsibility for the Final Research Project/Essay. If this is not sufficiently evident, the student will receive a failing grade for the Oral Exam. If the student does not participate in both components of the evaluation (final Research Project/Essay *and* the Oral Examination), they cannot pass the course, and the final mark, if higher than 7/20, will be lowered to the highest non-deliberable mark (7/20).

Facilities for Working Students

1. Working students will be eligible to receive alternative assignments if they cannot attend classes regularly.
2. Working students can make an appointment for feedback on their assignments.