

Literature in English: Text and Context (A006662)

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 1) English Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Navalón Guzmán, Corpus LW07 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	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

American literature and culture; food and eating from early settlement to reconstruction and beyond

Position of the course

This course will look at the cultural significance of food and eating in American literature. We will read texts from Native American oral traditions, Puritan and other religious writings, Gothic and Romantic literature, Realism, and others. We will explore how food and its attendant practices function within the cultural history of the American colonies and the United States and how food--as a theme, a metaphor, a plot device, or a symbol--bridges intersecting questions of "race", class, and gender.

Contents

There are few things that connect the global to the personal like food does. Food is, in the words of Emma-Jayne Abbotts and Anna Lavis (in their introduction to *Why We Eat, How We Eat*) "simultaneously symbolic, economic, political, material and nutritional" (1). Or, as Terry Eagleton stresses, food tends to point beyond itself and its immediate materiality; it invites interpretation. The Routledge International Handbook of Food Studies lists entries on the anthropology of food, the sociology of food, food and communication, food scholarship in psychology, the archaeology of food, culinary history, philosophy and food, linguistics and food studies, food and theology, food and art, food in film, food and law, food justice, food and animal rights, food and ethics, and many more. Food, in short, is everywhere in the

humanities.

How does looking at literature through the lens of food studies change our perception or interpretation? What can we discover in canonical as well as lesser-known texts that other perspectives may eclipse? How have food and eating shaped American literature, and how do they continue to shape it? We will begin with reading texts from Native American oral traditions and from the established American literature canon before moving on to contemporary examples.

The reading list will be finalized closer to the beginning of term. Texts will include excerpts from

Dawn E. Bastian and Judy K. Mitchell, *Handbook of Native American Mythology*

Mary Rowlandson, *The Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*

James Grainger, *The Sugar Cane*

Joel Barlow, *The Hasty Pudding*

Walt Whitman, "This Compost" and "Song of Myself"

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "New England Reformers"

Initial competences

Academic proficiency in writing; B2/C1 English language level in presentations.

To have successfully completed at least one of the English literature courses of the 3rd bachelor year, or to have achieved the intended learning objectives (incl. thorough command of the English language; familiarity with literary and critical theory as well as literary or cultural analysis) by other means.

Final competences

- 1 To have an overview of food studies as well as to theoretical approaches and concepts relevant to the field.
- 2 To have acquired theoretical and historical insights to be used when analysing relevant phenomena and developments in literary texts of the period.
- 3 To possess specialist and critical skills necessary to analyze texts discussed in class as well as relevant texts that are not included in the syllabus
- 4 To be able to formulate a research question independently relevant to the course topic, and to be able to answer that question
- 5 To be able to communicate insights and research results in academic English both orally (by means of a presentation) and in written texts.
- 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: Handbook

Name: *American Indian Myths and Legends*

Indicative price: € 15

Optional: no

Author : Richard Erdoes en Alfonso Ortiz

ISBN : 0-394-74018-1

Oldest Usable Edition : 1984

Available in the Library : No

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly

Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time

Additional information: Edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

Type: Handbook

Name: Crying in H Mart
Indicative price: € 15
Optional: no
Author : Michelle Zauner
ISBN : 1-984-89895-7
Alternative : any paperback edition
Available in the Library : No
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : one-time
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time

Type: Handbook

Name: Moby-Dick or, The Whale
Indicative price: € 25
Optional: no
Author : Herman Melville
ISBN : 0-393-28500-6
Alternative : any other critical edition
Available in the Library : Yes
Additional information: • Melville, Herman. Moby-Dick or, The Whale. Edited by Hershel Parker. Norton Critical Edition, 2017.

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 or creative research project.

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.

Position Paper

Students will be required to write and present a short position paper on one of the assigned texts in the course. A written version of the paper (1,000-1,500 words) will be due on Ufora 24 hours before the presentation. Presenters will lead a group discussion following their presentation.

Written / Creative Assignment

For the final course assignment, students have the option of submitting a traditional research essay or term paper of no more than 5,000 words or a creative research project. The project will also require the submission of a project proposal, which must be submitted before the end of the teaching period.

Calculation of the examination mark

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

40% of the grade: position paper

50% of the grade: written/creative assignment

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.