

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

queer literature; LGBTQIA+ bodies; gender; sexuality; twenty-first century

Position of the course

This elective MA course introduces students to contemporary Anglophone LGBTQIA+ literature. It traces how diverse genres such as poetry, memoir, novels, graphic novels, and short stories imagine queer experiences from trans embodiment and queer desire to temporality, trauma, care, kinship, and human–nonhuman relationships. Students will examine the literary strategies through which these texts challenge assumptions and generate new ways of thinking about queer life. Drawing on the questions and perspectives these texts generate, students will engage with queer theory and related theoretical frameworks to deepen their critical skills.

Contents

Reading Queerness in Contemporary Anglophone Literature.

Few concepts in contemporary theory bring together the personal, the social, and the political as forcefully as queerness. As José Esteban Muñoz suggests, the term queer can be understood as a horizon of possibility that shifts and multiplies across time and space. Literature plays an important role in expanding this conceptual possibility. Literary texts actively engage with the conditions under which queerness becomes ethically and socially meaningful through formal elements and motifs that challenge binary thinking and normative conceptions.

In this course, students will be introduced to contemporary queer literature to

answer the following question: What does it mean to represent queerness today? Novels, poems, short stories, graphic novels, and memoirs are examined as cultural products that explore and shape understandings of queer experience. The course situates these writings within the broader historical struggles and present-day concerns of the LGBTQIA+ community, while also tracing their intersections with pressing contemporary theoretical debates such as trauma, race, care, affects, temporality, and relations with the environment and the more-than-human world.

Seminars are structured around discussion and collaborative analysis. Students are expected to examine the formal, thematic, and conceptual similarities and differences across texts, and to reflect on how literary strategies intersect with theoretical frameworks from queer theory, posthumanism, ecocriticism, affect theory, and temporality, among others. This guided approach to reading and discussion is designed to develop the critical and analytical skills that will be necessary to carry out the assignments of this course. That is, "Reading Queerness" prepares students to approach literary and cultural texts with a sharpened and ethical awareness of how queer life is narratively and aesthetically constructed.

Initial competences

- To have completed at least one of the English Literature III courses or to have acquired the necessary skills by other means.
- To have mastered English at CEFR C1 level.

Final competences

- 1 To engage with a wide range of contemporary Anglophone queer literature across different genres.
- 2 To examine and evaluate key concepts and theoretical debates within queer theory.
- 3 To apply queer theory and complementary methodologies to conduct textual analyses.
- 4 To explore how literary techniques and formal innovations convey queer experiences and perspectives.
- 5 To be able to present research insights in oral and written English with clarity and academic precision.

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: On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous

Indicative price: € 14

Optional: no

Author : Ocean Vuong

ISBN : 0-525-56204-4

Number of Pages : 256

Alternative : any other critical edition

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : Yes

Type: Handbook

Name: Frankissstein: A Love Story
Indicative price: € 14
Optional: no
Author : Jeanette Winterson
ISBN : 1-787-33140-7
Number of Pages : 352
Online Available : Yes
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: The Argonauts
Indicative price: € 15
Optional: no
Author : Maggie Nelson
ISBN : 1-555-97735-9
Number of Pages : 180
Alternative : any paperback edition
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : Yes
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : one-time
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time

Type: Handbook

Name: Homie
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Author : Danez Smith
ISBN : 1-644-45010-0
Number of Pages : 96
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : No

Type: Slides

Name: Slides
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

Type: Other

Name: "Pottluck" from Filthy Animals
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: yes
Language : English
Author : Brandon Taylor
ISBN : 0-525-53892-5
Number of Pages : 288
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : No

Type: Other

Name: This World is Full of Monsters
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Author : Jeff Vandermeer

References

A full reading list will be shared on Ufora at least one week before the first class. Additional texts, including articles, book chapters, poems, and short stories, will be accessible digitally through 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 position paper, peer response, and creative project.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Oral assessment open-book, Assignment

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

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Continuous Assessment (30%):

- **Position paper (15%):** In the course of the semester, each student will post on Ufora a short written reflection (around 500 words) on the assigned literary text of that week. Students are expected to offer a well-reasoned argument, connect it to the recommended readings of that week, and present their own critical interpretation.
- **Peer Response (15%):** Students will also interact with a classmate's position paper by crafting a response of roughly 250 words. Responses should engage critically with the ideas presented by offering new perspectives, raising questions, or exploring implications that the initial reflection did not fully address.

Final Assessment (Please note that if students do not participate in all components of the assessment, they cannot pass the course as a whole)

- **Oral exam (50%):** The oral exam assesses students' understanding of the course through open-ended questions. It evaluates their engagement with the primary readings and their ability to connect and integrate the key theoretical concepts explored throughout the semester. The exam is closed-book. However, students will be given a short preparation period before the examination and will receive a set of sample questions in advance to support their preparation.
- **Creative project (20%):** Students will produce a short creative piece engaging with one or more themes and theoretical approaches from the course. The project is submitted during the week of the oral exam. Permitted formats include creative essay, short fiction, poetry, experimental writing, critical book review, collage, or photographic/image-based composition. Other formats may be accepted if agreed upon in advance. Each submission must be accompanied by a brief rationale (approx. 200 words) outlining the project's conceptual focus and its relation to specific course readings and/or theories. The rationale should also include a reflective component, in which students consider how the project connects to their own learning trajectory. All contributions will be compiled into a collective class zine.

Calculation of the examination mark

30% of the grade: continuous assessment (position paper (15%)+ peer response (10%) + in-class participation (5%))

50% of the grade: oral exam

20% of the grade: 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.