Course Specifications
Valid as from the academic year 2019-2020

Literature in English: Modern Period III (A005259)

Course

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2019-2020

A (semester 2)  
English  
guided self-study  7.5 h  
seminar  30.0 h  
on-line discussion group  7.5 h

Offered in the following programmes in 2019-2020

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  
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").

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, stories, and comics to essays, 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 (cultural 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, evidencing language proficiency at a C2 level.
6. To report insights and research results orally and in writing in an academically appropriate form, evidencing language proficiency at a C2 level.

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, on-line discussion group, 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
- Caryl Churchill, Escaped Alone
- Cormac McCarthy, The Road
- Ian McEwan, Solar
- Richard McGuire, Here
- Jeff VanderMeer, Annihilation
- Alexis Wright, The Swan Book

Possibly some additional books, to be determined. To be announced on Ufora.
Estimated total cost: 90 euros. Shorter texts will be made available in digital form via Ufora.

References
- Timothy Clark, Ecocriticism on the Edge: The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept
- Amitav Ghosh, The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable
- Ursula Heise, Sense of Place and Sense of Planet
- Timothy Morton, Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World
- Rob Nixon, Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor
- Adam Trexler, Anthropocene Fiction: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change

Course content-related study coaching
Interactive teaching in the classroom, office hours

Evaluation methods
end-of-term evaluation 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

(Proposal)
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

Extra information on the examination methods

Periodic evaluation: oral examination with preparation time. 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 a small number of short 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. 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 between the first and second examination periods.

Calculation of the examination mark

Periodic evaluation counts towards 70% of the final mark, non-periodic evaluation towards 30%.

Facilities for Working Students

Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year. Feedback can be given by email or telephone or in a meeting during office hours. For more information concerning flexible learning, contact the tutoring service of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy.