

Comparative Literature: Literary Traditions

Code: 42316
ECTS Credits: 10

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Comparative Literature: Literary and Cultural Studies	OT	0

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

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Prerequisites

Prerequisites:

To be familiar with the analysis of western literary texts prior to 1850 and with basic theoretical and historical-literary categories (periods, genres, themes, motifs, etc.).

To be able to take on the task of reading a significant amount of texts weekly (about 30 pages on a daily basis).

Objectives and Contextualisation

Organized around texts ranging from the Middle Ages to Modernity, this course focuses on long-term literary phenomena and in the manner in which certain literary modes (genres, themes, motifs) articulate in time, in a constant dialectic between continuity and discontinuity. The goal is to demonstrate some of the theoretical and comparative tools for the analysis of works prior to Modernity, without losing sight of the contemporary discourses from which these texts are interrogated and explained, while also considering the institutional maneuvers that guarantee their survival. Finally, the course aims to provide reflection on the history, nature, value, problems, and meaning of what we call "Western literary tradition", always in close relation to the study in detail of specific genres and texts, as well as its updating and rewriting over the centuries.

Competences

- Analyse how literary tradition has been built up and the literary and cultural processes that have played a decisive role in it.
- Analyse the historical processes of theory of literature and comparative literature, basing the analysis on paradigm shifts.
- Apply the different theoretical and generic models to text analysis and interpretation.
- Evaluate current applications of comparative literature based on the historical processes it has followed.
- Examine the main theoretical currents in history of the theory of literature.
- Interpret, in accordance with the principal analysis methodologies, the thematic and symbolic contents of the work in terms of its rhetorical and pragmatic strategies.
- Make creative, original contributions to the comparativist study of literary and cultural texts.
- Organise, plan and manage projects.
- Present research findings to experts and non-experts.
- Reason critically based on analysis and synthesis.
- Work in an interdisciplinary team in different contexts.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyse the concepts of tradition and canon, from different perspectives.
2. Apply the methods of contemporary comparativism to the study of Western literary tradition.
3. Apply the principles and methods of current comparative approaches to the literary tradition previous to 1750.
4. Apply the principles and methods of recent theoretical currents like feminist theories, post-structuralist theories, queer theories, etc.
5. Distinguish the modelling of literary texts by the different canonical genres and describe how these conventional formulae have conditioned actual thematic content in each period.
6. Establish the characteristic modes of signification by analysing the semantic codes of particular literary genres or sub-genres, through examples from tradition.
7. "Identify transformations to epistemic models that besiege notions like ""tradition"", ""canon"", ""classical literature"", ""medieval literature"", or ""European literature"", among others."
8. Link literary manifestations to other kinds of cultural codes (mainly art and music but also philosophy), and to the other cultural practices peculiar to the period or genre in question.
9. Organise, plan and manage projects.
10. Present research findings to experts and non-experts.
11. Reason critically based on analysis and synthesis.
12. Work in an interdisciplinary team in different contexts.

Content

The course 2025-2026 will be devoted to reflect and exemplify a specific theoretical notion: that of rewriting and counter-writing, understood as the dialectical and critical reformulation of the Western canon by other artistic manifestations (literary or not).

The phenomenon of rewriting and counter-writing is a field of study that is especially sensitive to the comparative approach, understood not as an analysis of strict sources or correspondences, nor as mere juxtaposition, but as an interrogation of the successive discourses -including those of the creators- from which literary tradition is constructed, described and interrogated.

Syllabus

1. The problem of tradition: classic, canon, European literary identity, world literature

2. Rewriting and counterwriting the Western literary tradition
3. Medieval space and its aftermath: Arthurian romances and Dante
4. Art and nature, civilization and barbarism: *The Tempest*, by Shakespeare, and its posterity
5. *Don Quixote* in the genealogy of feminist fiction: from Charlotte Lennox and Tabitha Tenney to Doris Lessing and Siri Hustvedt
6. Dantesque rewritings in modern and postmodern times
7. Narrative challenges of modernity and postmodernity: Gustave Flaubert and Julian Barnes, rewriting and creation
8. Venice, the arts, desire, illness and death: from Thomas Mann to Luchino Visconti

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Magisterial classes	15	0.6	1, 3, 5, 7
Seminary-type classes	25	1	5, 6, 11
Type: Supervised			
Tutorials	5	0.2	9
Type: Autonomous			
Reading of literary works	90	3.6	6, 11
Reading theoretical texts	35	1.4	1, 2, 11

Magisterial classes: the professor will present the fundamental concepts in order to provide the students with the basic interpretative and theoretical mechanisms.

Seminary-type classes: students will discuss, under the active direction of the professor, a series of readings (literary and non-literary).

Tutorials: advised by the tutor, the students will structure his hypothesis of the various assignments and, if appropriate, this will lead to further research.

Literary works: central to each session is the reflection on one or a series of literary works, that the students must have read and prepared before class, based on the professor's instructions.

Theoretical texts: the course includes some compulsory reading of theoretical articles, that the students will need to analyse and contrast.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Active participation in class & brief oral presentations in small groups.	10%	5	0.2	1, 10, 5, 11, 8, 12
Written assignments	90%	75	3	2, 4, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11

Students must hand in from 5 short essays (1.000-2.500 words) based on the compulsory reading of literary works. These essays must be closely linked to the seminars and magisterial classes, so that they are integrated into the evolution of the course.

At the beginning of the course the student will be notified about all the deadlines. On carrying out each evaluation activity, lecturers will inform students (on Moodle) of the procedures to be followed for reviewing all grades awarded, and the date on which such a review will take place.

Class participation is voluntary, but there will be occasions in which students (individually or in small groups) must prepare brief oral presentations that present the issue of the day and give rise to collective debate.

ON EVALUATION

It is compulsory to attend at least to 80% of all lectures and seminars. Exceptions will only be accepted if these are fully justified, but will have a negative effect on the final grade.

It is compulsory to attend all the sessions having thoroughly prepared in advance the (literary or theoretical) readings of the day. Otherwise, the professor can penalize the student.

Each paper's value is 20% of the final grade.

Students will obtain a "Not assessed/Not submitted" course grade unless they have submitted more than 30% of the assessment items. It is possible to deliver one assignment passed the deadline, always upon request, and due to justified circumstances.

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

SINGLE EVALUATION

Presentation of all the course papers on the same date, which will be made public at the beginning of the semester. The same assessment method as continuous assessment will be used.

USE OF AI TECHNOLOGIES

This subject entirely prohibits the use of AI technologies in all of its activities. Any submitted work that contains content generated using AI will be considered academic dishonesty; the corresponding grade will be awarded a zero, without the possibility of reassessment. In cases of greater infringement, more serious action may be taken.

Bibliography

LITERARY TRADITION, CANON, CLASSIC, & EUROPEAN LITERATURE

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Gnisci, Armando, *Noialtri europei. Saggi di letteratura comparata su identità e luoghi d'Europa*, Bulzoni, Roma, 1994.

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Sinopoli, Franca, *Il mito della letteratura europea*, Meltemi, Roma, 1999.

RE-WRITING & COUNTER-WRITING

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, *The Empire writes back: theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*, Routledge, Londres i Nova York, 1989.

Bachmann-Medick, Doris, *Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture*, De Gruyter, Berlín, 2016.

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Fallon, Ann-Marie, *Global Crusoe. Comparative Literature, Postcolonial Theory and Transnational Aesthetics*, Routledge, Londres i Nova York, 2016.

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Kristeva, Julia, *Séméiotikè. Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, París, Éditions du Seuil, 1969.

Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*. State University of New York Press, Nueva York, 2001.

Mukherjee, Ankhi. *What is a Classic? Postcolonial Rewriting and Invention of the Canon*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, 2014.

Said, Edward, *Cultura e imperialismo*, Anagrama, Barcelona, 2001.

Spengler, Birgit, *Literary Spinoffs: Rewriting the Classics-Re-Imagining the Community*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2016.

Software

No specifications added.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(TEm) Theory (master)	1	Spanish	second semester	afternoon