

**Conflict, War and Trauma in Anglophone Literature
and Culture**

Code: 45365
ECTS Credits: 5

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
English Studies: Linguistic, Literary and Sociocultural Perspectives	OP	1

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

This optional module is designed for students with a keen interest and enthusiasm for reading and debating contemporary literary works in English related to war and conflict. The course engages with the issue of how past conflicts can be accessed and interpreted from the present, encouraging students to develop both ethical considerations and critical responses. Through an examination of poetry, short stories, fiction, and drama, students will explore how conflict and its traumatic memories are represented, remembered, and reinterpreted. The way in which the selected authors interpret past conflicts and the instances of the past they choose to highlight is significant not only for its individual interest, but also because it can influence students' understanding of "established war narratives" and potentially uncover new perspectives that might otherwise go unnoticed.

To pass this module, students must have a C1 level of English or its equivalent. This is because they will need to produce practical work with advanced texts in the field of literature, which requires a deep understanding of the subject and the use of critical skills.

Objectives and Contextualisation

In examining war, trauma, and their representation within contemporary Anglophone literature, we recognize literature's exceptional capacity to engage with the past meaningfully. While war can be remembered through various mediums like films, photographs, memorials, and personal objects, literature stands out for capturing its emotional and psychological complexities. Literature provides a space for reflection, empathy, and understanding, immortalising individual and collective memories and offering insights that are both historically significant and deeply human. The central aim of this course is to analyse to what extent contemporary

Anglophone literature effectively establishes representational spaces for reconsidering the major wars and conflicts of the 20th and 21st centuries, in contexts removed from the war itself.

Upon completing this module, students will attain an academic understanding of the following topics:

- Ethics and war representation
- Mediated war memories: (Post) memory, melancholy, and nostalgia
- The silences of war
- The post-war cityscape as symbolic "wasteland" and its continuity in contemporary warscapes
- The regimentation of everyday life through militarised structures and routines
- The interplay between personal and collective memories
- Gender Wars: The impact of war on gender identity and relations
- Echoes from the margins: Women writing about war and the feminist critique
- Violence beyond combat: sexual violence in conflict zones
- Ecocide and the environmental consequences of war as emerging sites of cultural memory and ethical debate
- Alienation as a shared cultural and psychological condition in wartime experience
- Displacement and refugee experiences: The ethics of walls, boundaries, and borderlands
- Historical and Contemporary Conflicts
- Interdisciplinary Approaches: The intersection of literature with film and photography
- Continuities and discontinuities in the depiction of war across different periods
- The interplay between literature, culture, and historiography
- Psychological implications of displacement: Trauma, post-traumatic stress, coping mechanisms, and recovery
- First and second-hand narratives from genocide survivors
- The perpetrator psyche: Patterns of representation, omission, and distortion

Learning Outcomes

1. CA12 (Competence) Formulate your own research proposals that investigate how literature and culture can resolve social challenges related to situations of trauma and historical memory processes.
2. CA13 (Competence) Make gender biases visible in cultural and literary representations of war, conflict, and trauma.
3. KA11 (Knowledge) Describe the theories applied to the study of conflict, war, and trauma in various English language literary genres.
4. KA12 (Knowledge) Relate key theoretical notions to the analysis of English-language literary and cultural productions related to conflict, war, and trauma.
5. KA13 (Knowledge) Contrast the epistemological and analytical principles of the various approaches used for the study of representations of conflict, war, and trauma.
6. SA18 (Skill) Construct a personal discourse based on critical reading of academic articles related to literary and cultural representations of conflict, war, and trauma.
7. SA19 (Skill) Examine cultural and literary productions belonging to various fiction and non-fiction genres related to the representation of conflict, war, and trauma.

Content

Through the study of poetry, short stories, a novel, and a play, we will explore the lingering effects that conflicts such as the Great War, World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Iraq War, among others, have on individuals and their families, providing students with a comprehensive knowledge of how contemporary literature captures the emotional and psychological complexities of war trauma.

Professor Andrew Monnickendam will teach Units 1 and 2 and Dr Cristina Pividori will teach Units 3 and 4.

UNIT 1: Poetry

- Eliot, T. S. *The Waste Land and Other Poems*. Edited by Michael North, 2nd ed., Norton, 2001. A *Norton Critical Edition*.

Instruction to students:

It is important that students use this edition of *The Waste Land*, as it includes critical essays and contextual materials that will be discussed in class. While *The Waste Land* (1922) is recognised as a seminal work of modernist poetry, its contemporary relevance is undeniable and it is a key point of departure for our exploration of war, trauma, and cultural memory in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. If you prefer to read online, here is [the link](#).

UNIT 2: Short Story

- "Redeployment" and "Frago" by Phil Klay from *Redeployment* (2014)
- "Fatherland" by Viet Thanh Nguyen from *The Refugees* (2017).
- "Termagant" by Emma Donoghue from *Furies* (2023).

UNIT 3: Novel

In this unit, we will read and discuss *The Things We Do To Make it Home* by Beverly Gologorsky (1999).

UNIT 4: Play

This unit features the play *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage (2008).

Among the topics we will discuss, we can highlight the following:

- How should war be narrated? What values should literature uphold?
- Witnessing, Seeing, and Remembering: What do these concepts mean in the context of war? How do they shape our understanding of conflict?
- How does contemporary literature engage with the commemoration, memory, and understanding of war?
- How should society react to mass slaughter? Should tragedy be the dominant literary form in depicting war?
- In what ways does warfare alter gender roles and sexuality?
- What ethical considerations arise when representing war? How do authors deal with the moral complexities of depicting violence and suffering?
- How is trauma portrayed in contemporary literature? What literary techniques are used to convey the psychological impact of war on individuals and communities
- How is sexual violence during war depicted? What are the implications for understanding the broader impact of conflict on society?
- How do literary works address the themes of displacement and the refugee experience? What ethical and emotional challenges are highlighted?
- How does postmemory influence the representation of war and trauma in literature? What role do second and third-generation narratives play in preserving and interpreting the memories of conflict?

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Class Debate	20	0.8	CA12, CA13, KA11, KA12, KA13, SA18, SA19, CA12
Lectures	11.25	0.45	CA12, CA13, KA11, KA12, KA13, SA18, SA19, CA12
Type: Supervised			

Class participation and oral presentations	22	0.88	CA12, CA13, KA11, KA12, KA13, SA18, SA19, CA12
Type: Autonomous			
Reading and study	46.75	1.87	CA12, CA13, KA11, KA12, KA13, SA18, SA19, CA12

1 ECTS credit = 25 hs; 5 credits = 125 hs

Methodology is based on:

- Guided Activities (31, 25 hours)
- Supervised Activities (22 hours)
- Autonomous Activities (46,75 hours)
- Assessment (25 hours)

This subject relies on the active exchange of ideas between the teacher and students, as well as among the students themselves. This approach necessitates a high level of preparation and active participation from everyone. Additionally, students will be expected to deliver presentations in class.

Mandatory attendance is required, and students are expected to have thoroughly read both the primary and secondary materials. While the course primarily focuses on contemporary literature, it also demands a certain level of historical knowledge. Class discussions will involve relevant historical contexts, and students will be assigned additional readings throughout the course.

All information regarding these additional readings and related tasks will be published on the Virtual Campus.

Additionally, within the schedule set by the center or degree program, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

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Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Oral presentations	20%	3	0.12	CA12, CA13, KA11, KA12, KA13, SA18, SA19
Writing Tasks	80%	22	0.88	CA12, CA13, KA11, KA12, KA13, SA18, SA19

1) CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT WILL BE BASED ON:

- Two Short Essays (20% each): These essays will address specific topics related to the poetry and short stories covered in the course.
- Final Paper (40%): This paper will be based on either the novel, the play, or a combination of both. The instructor will provide a list of topics/questions for you to choose from.
- Oral Assessment (20%): This will be based on class participation and an individual presentation.

Exact dates for all evaluation activities will be confirmed at the start of the course through a course calendar published on the class Moodle.

PLEASE, NOTE:

- All the exercises are COMPULSORY
- The submission of any of the exercises invalidates the student to get a "Not assessed/Not submitted" course grade.
- On carrying out each assessment 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. In the event that tests or exams cannot be taken onsite, they will be adapted to an online format made available through the UAB's virtual tools (original weighting will be maintained). Homework, activities and class participation will be carried out through forums, wikis and/or discussion on Teams, etc. Lecturers will ensure that students are able to access these virtual tools, or will offer them feasible alternatives.

2) SINGLE ASSESSMENT

THE PROCEDURE FOR SINGLE ASSESSMENT IS BASED ON:

4 Evaluated items to be done in a single in-class exam:

- Item 1 and 2: 2 short essays on one of the short stories/poems (20% each)
- Item 3: A critical essay on the novel/play/both (40%).
- Item 4: Oral Presentation (20%)

REASSESSMENT: Re-assessment for this subject requires a content-synthesis test for each module component. The oral presentation is not eligible for re-assessment. The definitive grade awarded for a re-assessed item will be 5.

VERY IMPORTANT:

- Students must learn to respect the intellectual property of others, identifying any source they may use, and take responsibility for the originality and authenticity of the texts they produce.
- 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.
- Irregularities refer, for instance, to copying in an exam, copying from sources without indicating authorship, or a misuse of AI such as presenting work as original that has been generated by an AI tool or programme. These evaluation activities will not be re-assessed

Use of AI

- This subject allows the use of AI technologies exclusively for support tasks such as bibliographic, text correction or content-based searches.
- Other specific situations may be contemplated, as deemed appropriate by the teacher.
- The student must clearly (i) identify which parts have been generated using AI technology; (ii) specify the tools used; and (iii) include a critical reflection on how these have influenced the process and final outcome of the activity.
- Lack of transparency regarding the use of AI in the assessed activity will be considered academic dishonesty; the corresponding grade may be lowered, or the work may even be awarded a zero.
- In cases of greater infringement, more serious action may be taken.

Bibliography

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Software

Moodle

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	English	first semester	morning-mixed