



Universitat de Lleida

DEGREE CURRICULUM  
**SPECIAL TOPICS IN ENGLISH  
LITERATURE AND CULTURE**

Coordination: PUJOLRAS NOGUER, ESTHER

Academic year 2023-24

## Subject's general information

<b>Subject name</b>	SPECIAL TOPICS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE AND CULTURE			
<b>Code</b>	101295			
<b>Semester</b>	2nd Q(SEMESTER) CONTINUED EVALUATION			
<b>Typology</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Modality</b>
	Bachelor's Degree in English Studies	4	OPTIONAL	Attendance-based
	Double degree: Bachelor's degree in English Studies and Bachelor's degree in Applied Languages and Translation	4	OPTIONAL	Attendance-based
<b>Course number of credits (ECTS)</b>	6			
<b>Type of activity, credits, and groups</b>	<b>Activity type</b>	PRAULA		TEORIA
	<b>Number of credits</b>	3		3
	<b>Number of groups</b>	1		1
<b>Coordination</b>	PUJOLRAS NOGUER, ESTHER			
<b>Department</b>	FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES			
<b>Teaching load distribution between lectures and independent student work</b>	60 hours in-class teaching 90 hours autonomous work			
<b>Important information on data processing</b>	Consult <a href="#">this link</a> for more information.			
<b>Language</b>	English			
<b>Distribution of credits</b>	Theoretical credits: 2 Practical credits: 4			

Teaching staff	E-mail addresses	Credits taught by teacher	Office and hour of attention
PUJOLRAS NOGUER, ESTHER	esther.pujolras@udl.cat	6	

## Learning objectives

### General Objectives

To apply literary theory to the critical analysis of texts in English.

To understand literature as art and cultural product and, therefore, to be able to decipher the interaction of literature with specific socio-historical contexts.

To identify and assess the contributions of women to artistic creations throughout history.

### Specific Objectives

To understand and analyse the concepts of gender violence, symbolic violence and domestic violence through literature.

To use critical concepts and vocabulary from feminist and gender studies, so as to be able to carry out well-documented and well-founded analyses of literary works that explore issues of history and trauma, and of the construction of identity and symbolic violence.

To re-assess the position of women in society and the relevance of the feminist movement within the cultural and literary history of the English-speaking countries.

To explore the relationship between "race" and gender.

To identify the patriarchal essence of colonialism and thereby situate feminism within the postcolonial condition.

To disentangle male authorship from patriarchy and identify male authors that are feminist.

### Competences

General competences:

- CG3: To show creativity and initiative
- CG9: To show motivation for quality and rigour
- CG13: To apply theoretical knowledge on practical cases

Specific competences:

- CE10: To analyse the main genres, movements and literary texts in English
- CE14: To analyse the interaction between history and society and cultural products in English

Cross-disciplinary Competences:

- CT6: To apply a gender perspective to tasks related to specific professional settings

## Competences

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- CG3 To show creativity and initiative.
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- CG13 To apply theoretical knowledge on practical cases.

#### Specific competences:

- CE10 To analyze the main genres, movements and literary texts in English.
- CE14 To analyse the interaction between history and society and cultural products in English.

#### Transversal competences:

CT6 Apply a gender perspective to tasks related to specific professional settings

## Subject contents

This subject examines the articulations of gender violence encountered in the literatures in English. The course traces the development of the feminist sensibilities that started with the movement of the “New Woman” in the nineteenth-century to the recent consolidation of the academic field “Gender Studies”. This genealogical approach allows us to unmask the racist streak of patriarchy and, for this reason, postcolonial studies theory stands as one of the key theoretical guidelines utilized to analyse the selected literary texts.

WARNING! Due to the characteristics of the subject matter, some texts describe and analyse, in a more or less explicit manner, cases of violence.

## Methodology

**Lectures** in combination with **practical sessions**. Each week students will be asked to read several texts according to the theme of each unit and they will be required to participate actively in the discussion of the texts and to be able to engage with them critically employing the critical theories presented in class.

**Power point presentations** will be used in order to present the various theories that form the critical backbone of the subject.

**Short presentations and assignments developed and presented in class.** Since one of the principal aims of this subject is to provide students with a diachronic approach towards the evolution of feminist literary studies focusing on how “race” and gender are intertwined, they will be required to do a presentation (format recorded video) on two distinguished nineteenth-century female figures related to the New Woman movement. Students will be asked to choose from a list of three African-American activists and three white American activists: Ida B. Wells, Frances E. W. Harper, Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Margaret Fuller. Students will be asked to work in pairs and will be given time in class to work on the presentation. Similar presentations aimed at identifying how structural gender violence is exposed and challenged in short stories will likewise be included in class dynamics.

**It is paramount that students have read the corresponding texts before the class sessions to ensure a solid and conscientious debate.**

## Development plan

**WARNING!** Due to the characteristics of the subject matter, some texts describe and analyse, in a more or less explicit manner, cases of violence.

Unit 0. Preliminaries. Key Names and Works in the History of Feminism.

Unit 1. The Indissoluble Binary: "Race" and Gender. The African-American Case.

- Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*
- Sojourner Truth, "And Ain't I a Woman?"
- bell hooks, *Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*
- Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Unit 2. The Indissoluble Binary: "Race" and Gender. The African Case.

- Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Unit 3. Identifying Structural Violence

- Kate Chopin, "Désirée's Baby"
- Maxine Hong-Kingston, "No Name Woman"
- Jackie Kay, "Black Bottom"

Unit 4. (Un)allegorical Violences: Widowhood, Rape, Genital Cutting, hijras

- The Case of / for "Sati"
  - Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (excerpt)
  - Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (excerpt)
- Towards a Feminist Articulation of Rape
  - Warsan Shire "Mermaids"
  - Moniza Alvi's "Mermaid"
  - Lindsey Collen, *The Rape of Sita*
- Female Genital Cutting
  - Violet Barungi & Hilda Twongyeirwe, eds. *Beyond the Dance. Voices of Women on Female Genital Mutilation*
- Hijras, the Third Gender
  - Revathi, *Our Lives, Our Worlds*

Unit 5. Beyond the Veil Debate?: Muslim Women and/in Literature

- Mohja Khaf, *E-mails from Scheherazade*
- Fatima Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes to the West*
- Leila Aboulela, *Minaret*

Unit 6. Feminist Male Authorship

- Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Gravel Heart*

## Evaluation

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Students who want to ask for **alternative assessment** must submit an employment contract or justify, in a letter addressed to the dean, the reasons that make it impossible for him/her to carry out the continuous assessment within five (5) days after the beginning of the semester. For information, please send an e-mail to lletres.secretariacentre@udl.cat or ask for information at the Faculty's academic office (Secretaria Acadèmica de la Facultat de Lletres).

- All activities must be completed in order to qualify for continuous assessment.
- Class attendance is compulsory.
- Language will be taken into account in all assessment activities.
- Students are expected to read the texts before the corresponding in-class sessions.
- The course tutor reserves the right to introduce additional or alternative material for study at her discretion and to modify the programme if needs be. All changes will be notified at the beginning of the subject. In any case, these changes will not affect the selection of novels.
- **ACADEMIC FRAUD** consists of copying text from unacknowledged sources -whether this is part of a sentence or a whole text- with the intention of passing it off as the student's own production. It includes cutting and pasting from internet sources, presented unmodified in the student's own text. Plagiarising is a **SERIOUS OFFENCE**. Students must respect authors' intellectual property, always identifying the sources they may use; they must also be responsible for the originality and authenticity of their own texts. **If academic fraud or spontaneous copying is detected, we will apply what is established in the Regulations for the Assessment and Grading of Student Learning in UdL Bachelor's and Master's Degrees.**

**SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:**

<b>BLOCK 1 – 20%</b>	Exam	Units 1- 4 Content: ALL texts from Units 1-4 except the two novels ( <i>Beloved</i> and <i>Nervous Conditions</i> )
<b>BLOCK 2 – 20%</b>	In-class Essay	Comparative analysis of two novels: <i>Beloved</i> (Toni Morrison) and <i>Nervous Conditions</i> (Tsitsi Dangarembga)
<b>BLOCK 3 – 20%</b>	VIDEO PROJECT	“New Woman” movement Selection of two prominent American activists from the New Woman movement provided by the teacher  Format of the presentation: recorded video
<b>BLOCK 4 – 25%</b>	Classroom Assessment Exercise > Exact instructions will be given in due course	Units 5 - 6
<b>BLOCK 5 – 15%</b>	Assignment related to “Jornada d’orientació professional” > Exact instructions will be given in due course Class Participation: class discussions and any kind of activity carried out in the classroom.	17 April 2024 Attendance to the “Jornada d’orientació professional” is compulsory

**ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT:**

Students who opt for Alternative Assessment are required to sit two exams (50% each) on the date established by the teacher.

## Bibliography

- Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. Yale University Press, 1992.
- Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press, 2017.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (ed). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1995.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Masculine Domination*. Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Chambers, Claire. *Making Sense of Contemporary British Muslim Novels*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. 1952. Trans. Constance Farrington. Grove Press, 1998.
- Gates, Henry Louis Jr., (ed). *'Race', Writing and Difference*. University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- hooks, bell. *Talking Back. Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, South End Press, 1989.
- Nnaemeka, Obioma (ed). *The Politics of (M)othering: Womanhood, Identity and Resistance in African Literature*. Routledge, 1997.
- Nnemeke, Obioma (ed). *Female Circumcision and the Politics of Knowledge: African Women in Imperialist Discourses*. Praeger, 2005.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient*. 1978. Penguin, 1991.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern 'Speak'?". *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, MacMillan, 1988.
- Rothberg, Michael. *The Implicated Subject. Beyond Victims and Perpetrators*. Stanford University Press, 2019.
- Talpade Mohanty, Chandra, Lourdes M. Torres and Ann Russo (eds). *Third World Women and the Politics of Gender*. Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Young, Robert J.C. *Colonial Desire. Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. Routledge, 1990.
- Ware, Wron. *Beyond the Pale. White Women, Racism and History*. 1992. Verso, 2015.