



Universitat de Lleida

DEGREE CURRICULUM
**POPULAR CULTURE IN
ENGLISH AND THE
CONTEMPORARY WORLD**

Coordination: SANTAULARIA CAPDEVILA, MARIA
ISABEL

Academic year 2018-19

Subject's general information

Subject name	POPULAR CULTURE IN ENGLISH AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD			
Code	101296			
Semester	2nd Q(SEMESTER) CONTINUED EVALUATION			
Typology	Degree	Course	Character	Modality
	Bachelor's Degree in English Studies	3	OPTIONAL	Attendance-based
Course number of credits (ECTS)	6			
Type of activity, credits, and groups	Activity type	PRAULA		TEORIA
	Number of credits	2.5		3.5
	Number of groups	1		1
Coordination	SANTAULARIA CAPDEVILA, MARIA ISABEL			
Department	ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS			
Important information on data processing	Consult this link for more information.			

Teaching staff	E-mail addresses	Credits taught by teacher	Office and hour of attention
GUARDIOLA PASTOR, MARÍA INÉS	aguardiola@dal.udl.cat	3	
SANTAUULARIA CAPDEVILA, MARIA ISABEL	isantaularia@dal.udl.cat	3	

Learning objectives

After introducing the concept 'popular narratives' and the characteristics and potential of this type of fiction, the course will be devoted to introducing some popular visual and literary genres as well as their validity as tools to understand the world we live in through the prism of cultural studies. The course is, therefore, not only intended to establish the limits of popular narratives and the genres they comprise, but also to study their worth as texts through which we can make sense of our contemporary world.

Competences

Competencias generales /General competences:

- CG15 Buscar y gestionar información y utilizar fuentes y documentación diversas.
- CG15 Look for and handle information and use different resources and documents.
- CG16 Utilizar la metodología y las técnicas propias del ámbito disciplinar o profesional.
- CG16 Use techniques and methodology related to the professional world and the field of study of the degree.

Competencias específicas / Specific competences:

- CE11 Analizar la proyección y popularización de la literatura inglesa a través del cine y los medios de comunicación de masas.
- CE11 Analyse the projection and popularization of English literature through film and the mass media.
- CE14 Analizar la interacción entre historia y sociedad y la producción cultural en lengua inglesa.
- CE14 Analyse the interaction between history and society and cultural products in English.

Subject contents

UNIT 1: Media, popular narratives and society: The case of 9/11 and the War on Terror. Discussion of **Worksheet**

1. Compulsory texts for worksheet:

- *Battlestar Galactica* (NBC 2004-2009): "33" (1.1) and "Flesh and Bones" (1.8). (TV episodes)
- *Jericho* (CBS 2006-2009): "VoxPopuli" (1.11). (TV episode)
- *Boston Legal* (ABC 2004-2008): "Guantanamo by the Bay" (3.22). (TV episode)

UNIT 2: State of the crime: Detective fiction as chronicler of history and society. Discussion of **Worksheet 2**.

Compulsory texts for worksheet:

- Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur. "A Scandal in Bohemia". (Short story)
- *Seven* (David Fincher, 1995). (Film)
- *Cracker* (ITV, 1993-1996): "To Be a Somebody" Parts I, II and III (season 2). (TV episodes)

UNIT 3: YA (Young Adult Fiction), fantasy, science fiction and dystopia: Femininity in a post-feminist world. Discussion of **Worksheet 3**. Compulsory texts for worksheet:

- *The Hunger Games* (Gary Ross, 2012). (Film) **Notice that only this film is compulsory but ideally you should consider the film adaptations of the trilogy as a whole and if you have read Suzanne Collins' novels it will add more depth to the analysis.**

UNIT 4: The gothic and horror: Race and Class. Discussion of **Worksheet 4**. Compulsory texts for worksheet:

- *Underworld* (Wiseman, 2003). (Film)
- *Underworld Evolution* (Wiseman, 2006) (Film)
- *Rise of the Lycans* (Tatopoulos, 2009) (Film)

UNIT 5: Tele-visual genres: Reality TV and the Representation of Love. Discussion of **Worksheet 5**. Compulsory texts for worksheet:

- *The Undateables* (Channel 4, 2012-): "James, Tammy & Tom" (5.1) (TV episode)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhX-_A_KUmQ

- *First Dates* (NBC, 2017): "Never Been Kissed" (1.8) (TV episode)

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6rekot>

- *Finding Prince Charming* (Logo, 2016-) "The Canary" (1.2) (TV episode)

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6vurib>

- *Seeking Sister Wife* (TLC, 2018 -) "Three's Company or Three's Wise?" (1.3) (TV episode)

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6dvk1n>

- *The Bachelor* (ABC, 2002-) "Week 1 Limo Arrivals" (20.1) (TV episode)

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6s5be2>

- *I Wanna Marry Harry* (FOX, 2014) (1.1) (TV Episode)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gY2IR9I0jIk>

- *The Bachelorette* (ABC, 2003-) (2.1) (TV Episode)

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4xmkqh>

Methodology

In order to reach the subject's objectives, the course is divided into:

LECTURES: In which we will introduce popular narratives and some of the most relevant genres, their characteristics and relation with society.

SEMINAL SESSIONS: In which we will discuss worksheets related to the compulsory texts established in the syllabus and how they reflect on the world we inhabit.

Texts will be considered through textual analysis and the study and analysis of the narratives will be conducted through the prism of cultural studies. Worksheets will be used for class discussion and debate and will be devised to develop the formational professional objectives of the degree, particularly: interpersonal communication and research in English Studies. Also, we will make sure to highlight the importance of popular narratives in creative environments that require a profound knowledge of how genres operate and how they can be used to support or challenge dominant discourses.

Development plan

	MONDAY	TUESDAY
UNIT 1 (popular narratives and the contemporary world)	11 February	12 February
	18 February	19 February
	25 February	26 February
UNIT 2 (detective)	4 March	5 March
	11 March	12 March
	18 March	19 March
UNIT 3 (fantasy, sci-fi, YA dystopia)	25 March	26 March
	1 April	2 April
	8 April	9 April
AP1 (written assignment – draft) + PE1 (exam)		
UNIT 4 (gothic and horror)	22 April	23 April
	29 April	30 April
	6 May	7 May
	13 May	14 May
UNIT 5 (reality TV)	20 May	21 May
	27 May	28 May
	3 June	4 June
AP2 (written assignment – complete essay) + PE2 (exam)		

Evaluation

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Assessment will be continuous. Students who combine their degree with a full time job have the right to ask for alternative assessment within 5 days after the beginning of the semester. For information, please send an e-mail to academic@lletres.udl.cat or ask for information at the Faculty's secretary (Secretaria de la Facultat de Lletres).
- All activities must be completed in order to qualify for continuous assessment. If you fail to hand in a compulsory assessment activity or to attend an exam/quiz, you will not qualify for continuous assessment and final mark will be NP.
- Attendance to classes is compulsory.
- Date for first written exam will be negotiated with students and will take place on a Wednesday. The final exam will take place on the day established in the 'guia acadèmica'.
- Dates for written activities will be established at the beginning of the semester. No written activities will be accepted after the deadline. If handed in after the deadline, the mark for this specific assessment activity will be 0.
- Language will be taken into account in all assessment activities. Exams can be failed if language is poor. Assignments, on the other hand, will be penalised up to 2 points for language mistakes.
- Students should read/watch compulsory texts before the corresponding sessions.
- All worksheets will be provided by instructors before the corresponding sessions and should be prepared by students before discussion.
- 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.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

AP1: Written assignment	10%	Draft	Date to be determined.
AP2: Written assignment	24%	Complete essay	Date to be determined.
PE1: Exam	28%	Date, time and room to be determined.	
PE2: Exam	28%	Date, time and room to be determined.	
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION	10 %		

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (ESSAY):

	COMPULSORY TEXT	TOPIC
AP1 + AP2: Choose one of the following topics.	<i>A Touch of Frost</i> (ITV, 1992-2010): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Widows and Orphans' (2.2) <i>Vera</i> (ITV, 2011-): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Hidden Depths' (1.1) • 'Telling Tales' (1.2) • 'The Crow Trap' (1.3) • 'Little Lazarus' (1.4) 	Analyse the presentation of aging and elderly women in the episodes. Focus on how the victims are presented in the episode from <i>A Touch of Frost</i> as opposed to the presentation of the protagonist in <i>Vera</i> .
	Pratchett, Terry (2001). <i>The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents</i> . London: Corgi, 2011.	Analyse how Terry Pratchett disrupts the presentation of young girls in fairy tales in the novel.
	Harris, Charlene. <i>Living Dead in Dallas</i> . London: Gollancz, 2009.	Analyse the different examples of laws and legal structures that appear in the novel. Compare Human law vs. Vampire law. Which connections can you establish with the legal system and society in the United States of America?
	You can base your discussion on some of the following realities: Bridezillas (WEtv, 2004-) Flavour of Love Girls: Charm School (VH1 Television, 2007) Extreme Cougar Wives (TLC, 2012-2013) Wife Swap (ABC, 2003-2017) The Hills (MTV, 2006-2010) The Real Housewives of Orange County (Bravo Cable, 2006-2017) Toddlers and Tiaras (TLC, 2008-2013) Little Miss Perfect (WEtv, 2009-2010) The Bachelor (ABC, 2002-) The Bachelorette (ABC, 2003-)	Reality shows are the latest example of the 21st century antifeminist backlash. Women are portrayed as ruthless competitors of other women, stupid, incompetent at work, failures at home or even as gold diggers. Discuss how Reality TV promotes antifeminism throughout some shows and provide, if possible, some examples of feminist reality shows.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENT:

DRAFT:

You cannot write an academic essay without doing some research on the topic and preparing a draft of the aspects you will develop in your essays. To this purpose, we are going to start by assessing your preliminary work before writing your assignment. For this you should do the following:

- Read/watch the text(s) you have chosen taking into account the topic you have to develop. Underline relevant aspects that you will then use as examples when you write your essay.
- Do some research on the topic/text you have chosen. Select those references that you find the most useful and select some quotes that you can use to illustrate and support your points.
- Prepare an abstract that very succinctly summarises your main objectives and the conclusions you want to reach.
- Give a title to your essay.
- Prepare a draft clearly outlining the development of your essay. This should contain:
 - Introduction stating your main objectives.
 - Body of ideas with different points you will develop in your assignment with a brief explanation of what you'll consider in each of the points. These points should make your argument flow and, therefore, should be cohesively linked so that no abrupt changes of topic occur (make sure you do not digress! Stick to your argument!).
 - Conclusions you have reached.

What you have to submit for the first part of your assessment is a document that contains the following:

- Title of your essay.
- Brief abstract (250 words) of your essay.
- Draft that clearly shows the structure and main arguments of your essay.
- Annotated bibliography list.

(A TEMPLATE FOR YOUR DRAFT WILL BE PROVIDED TO HELP YOU)

FINAL ESSAY:

Remember to stick to the following instructions:

- Length 1500/2000 words.
- Font: Times New Roman 12 / Arial 11 / Calibri 11
- Assignments should be given an original title.
- Assignments should be clearly organised with an introduction, development and conclusion. The introduction should already clarify your major points. Basically, it should very briefly reflect your approach to the topic, which you will then develop in subsequent paragraphs. If you have written a good draft and follow instructions after our revision of the draft, this should be the easiest part.
- All assignments should have quotes from primary sources (a minimum of two and they should not exceed 100 words). Absence of quotes from primary sources and wrongful format of reference will be penalized.
- Students should read at least two secondary sources and include a minimum of one quote from each of the sources you have used. Wikipedia, fan reviews and dictionaries are not accepted as external references. Absence of quotes from secondary sources and wrongful format of reference will be penalized.
- At the end of the assignment, there should be a bibliography with primary and secondary sources. Absence of reference list and wrong format of bibliography / filmography will be penalized.
- Plagiarism is not allowed. Assignments containing plagiarised material (even if only partial) will automatically be failed (0).
- A rubric (scoring guide) will be provided.

- Berberich, Christine, ed. *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Popular Fiction*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.
- Berger, Arthur Asa. *Popular Culture Genres: Theories and Texts*. Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1992.
- Bloom, Clive. *Bestsellers: Popular Fiction Since 1900*. Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2008. (second edition)
- Browne, Ray B. "Popular Culture – New Notes Towards a Definition." (inHoppenstand)
- Cawelti, John. *The Six-Gun Mystique Sequel*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1999.
- Cawelti, John. "The Concept of Formula in the Study of Popular Literature." (inHoppenstand)
- Cranny-Francis, Anne. *Feminist Fiction: Feminist Uses of Generic Fiction*. Cambridge: Polity, 1990.
- Creeber, Glen. *Serial Television: Big Drama on the Small Screen*. London: BFI Publishing, 2004.
- Douglas, Susan J. *The Rise of Enlightened Sexism: How Pop Culture Took Us from Girl Power to Girls Gone Wild*. New York: St Martin's Griffin, 2010.
- Gelder, Ken. *Popular Fiction: The Logics and Practices of a Literary Field*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Glover, David and Scott McCracken, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Popular Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Gubern, Roman. *Espejo de fantasmas: de John Travolta a Indiana Jones*. Madrid: Espasa Calpé, 1993.
- Gwenllian-Jones, Sara and Roberta E. Pearson, eds. *Cult Television*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Hammond, Michael and Lucy Mazdon, eds. *The Contemporary Television Series*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.
- Holgate, Andrew and Honor Wilson-Fletcher, eds. *The Test of Time: What Makes a Classic a Classic?* Brentford: A Waterstone's Magazine Publication in Association with the Arts Council of England, 1999.
- Jancovich, Mark and James Lyons, eds. *Quality Popular Television*. London: BFI Publishing, 2003.
- Johnson, Steven. *Everything Bad Is Good for You: How Popular Culture Is Making Us Smarter*. London: Penguin, 2006.
- McCracken, Scott. *Pulp: Reading Popular Fiction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.
- Munford, Rebecca and Melanie Waters. *Feminism and Popular Culture: Investigating the Postfeminist Mystique*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014.
- Nelson, Robin. *State of Play: Contemporary 'High-End' TV Drama*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007.
- Palmer, Jerry. *Potboilers: Methods, Concepts and Case Studies in Popular Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Pawling, Christopher, ed. *Popular Fiction and Social Change*. London: Macmillan, 1984. (Editor's Introduction: 1-19)
- Radford, Jane, ed. *The Progress of Romance: The Politics of Popular Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986. (Editor's Introduction: 1-21)
- Rockland, Michael A. *La cultura popular o ¿Por qué estudiar basura?* Texto bilingüe. Traducción de Fidel

del Olmo González e Isabel Martín de Miguel. Introducción de Manuel González de la Aleja. León: Universidad de León, Taller de Estudios Norteamericanos, 1999.

Storey, John. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2015. (seventh edition)

Strinati, Dominic. *An Introduction to the Theories of Popular Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

Todd, Richard. *Consuming Fictions: The Booker Prize and Fiction in Britain Today*. London: Bloomsbury, 1995.

Viñas Piquer, David. *El enigma best-seller: Fenómenos extraños en el campo literario*. Barcelona: Ariel, 2009.

Worpole, Ken. *Reading by Numbers: Contemporary Publishing and Popular Fiction*. London: Comedia Publishing Group, 1984.