



Universitat de Lleida

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

Coordination: SANTAULARIA CAPDEVILA, MARIA
ISABEL

Academic year 2021-22

Subject's general information

Subject name	POPULAR CULTURE IN ENGLISH AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD			
Code	101296			
Semester	1st Q(SEMESTER) CONTINUED EVALUATION			
Typology	Degree	Course	Character	Modality
	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
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.			
Language	English			

Teaching staff	E-mail addresses	Credits taught by teacher	Office and hour of attention
GUARDIOLA PASTOR, MARÍA INÉS	agnes.guardiola@udl.cat	3	
SANTAULARIA CAPDEVILA, MARIA ISABEL	isabel.santaularia@udl.cat	3	

Subject's extra information

After introducing the concept 'popular narratives' and the characteristics and potential of this type of fiction, the course will be devoted to analysing some popular genres as well as their use 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.

Learning objectives

- Understand the objectives and dynamics of cultural studies.
- Understand what popular narratives are and their characteristics.
- Identify the major genres of popular narratives.
- Know the origins, evolution and major representatives of a selection of popular genres.
- Understand the interaction between history, society and popular narratives.
- Analyse what different examples of popular narratives reveal about the contemporary world.
- Understand how popular narratives condition our understanding of the world we live in.
- Be able to explain aspects of the contents of the subject clearly and analytically and to express these contents in a grammatically correct way.
- Recognize the contributions to the contestation of power relations and gender norms in feminist, LGBTI and queer art and artistic practices.
- Develop critical thinking about the forms of sexual representation in contemporary visual culture, with special attention to television and cinema.

Competences

General Competences

- CG15 Look for and handle information and use different resources and documents.
- CG16 Use techniques and methodology related to the professional world and the field of study of the degree.

Specific competences:

- CE11 Analyse the projection and popularization of English literature through film and the mass media.
- CE14 Analyse the interaction between history and society and cultural products in English.

Cross-curricular competence:

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

Subject contents

UNIT 1: Media, popular narratives and society: Sample topics and texts. Compulsory texts:

- Old age and ageism: “Granny O’Grimm’s Sleeping Beauty” (Nicky Phelan, 2008; short) and a selection of additional clips, excerpts and/or images.
- Coming to terms with 9/11: “Guantanamo by the Bay” (3.22) from *Boston Legal* (ABC, 2004-2008). (TV episode)
- Donald Trump, leader of the free world: the case of *The Good Fight* (CBS, 2017-). (TV series; excerpts and clips)
- Entertainment, pandemics and the limits of dystopia: the case of Peter May’s *Lockdown*. (novel; excerpts)

UNIT 2: State of the crime: Detective fiction as chronicler of history and society. Discussion of **Worksheet 1**. 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)
- *Joker* (Todd Phillips, 2019). (Film)

UNIT 3: (YA, Young Adult Fiction), fantasy, science fiction and dystopia: Femininity in a post-feminist world. Discussion of **Worksheet 2**. Compulsory texts for worksheet:

- *The Hunger Games* (Gary Ross, 2012). (Film)
- *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (Francis Lawrence, 2013). (Film)
- *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1* (Francis Lawrence, 2014). (Film)
- *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2* (Francis Lawrence, 2015). (Film)
- *Game of Thrones* (HBO, 2011-2019): “The Long Night” (8.3), “The Bells” (8.5) and “The Iron Throne” (8.6). (TV episodes)
- References may also be made (if there is enough time) to the television series *Carnival Row* (Amazon, 2019-) and *Shadow and Bone* (Netflix, 2021-) and to Suzanne Collins’ prequel to her *Hunger Games* trilogy, *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* (Scholastic, 2020). (**Pray, notice, these three texts are optional**)

UNIT 4: From the Gothic to the Pandemic Horror. Discussion of **Worksheet 3**. Compulsory texts for worksheet:

- Selected excerpts and chapters from:
 - King, Stephen. *The Stand*. London: Hodder, 2011. (Novel)
 - Koontz, Dean. *The Eyes of Darkness*. London: HeadlinePublishing Group, 2016. (Novel)
 - Chrichton, Michael. *The Andromeda Strain*. Llandudno: Arrow, 1995. (Novel)
- *The Stand* (Laurel Entertainment Inc, 1994): “The Plague” (TV Mini-series)
- *The Stand* (CBS Television Studios, 2021) (TV Series; selected clips)

UNIT 5: Tele-visual genres: Reality TV and Ethics. Discussion of **Worksheet 4**. Compulsory texts for worksheet:

- Selected clips and episodes from different Reality shows.
- A collection of articles and excerpts from different publications that will be provided to students.

Methodology

CLASS ORGANISATION:

Classes will take place face-to-face at the time and in the classroom established in the schedule.

If, due to space restrictions, we cannot accommodate the whole group in the classroom, we will establish rotations. If this is the case, the face-to-face class will take place using the videoconference tool in the virtual campus (VC) so that the students who stay at home can follow the class on-line synchronically. Face-to-face classes will also be made available on-line synchronically for those students that have to stay at home due to causes related to the pandemic.

LOCKDOWN ALTERNATIVE: In the event of a new lockdown, all classes will be on-line and delivered synchronically using the videoconference tool in the virtual campus (VC) on the days and at the times established

in the calendar.

HYBRID ALTERNATIVE: If, due to the present start of emergency, there is limited/partial access to the classroom, we will alternate face-to-face with on-line classes on the days and at the times established in the calendar. The on-line classes will be delivered using the videoconference tool in the virtual campus (VC).

On-line classes will not necessarily be recorded.

TEACHING 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, as well as examples to illustrate how popular narratives engage with contemporary debates.

SEMINAR SESSIONS: Will focus on the analysis of texts students will have read/watched beforehand. Worksheets will be provided to focus the discussion.

Development plan

	WEDNESDAY (2 hrs)	THURSDAY (1 hr)	FRIDAY (1 hr)
UNIT 1 (lectures and discussion of examples)	15 September	16 September	17 September
	22 September	23 September	24 September
	29 September	30 September	1 October
PE1 (written exam)			
UNIT 2 (lectures and discussion of Worksheet 1)	6 October	7 October	8 October
	13 October	14 October	15 October
	20 October	21 October	22 October
UNIT 3 (lectures and discussion of Worksheet 2)	27 October	28 October	29 October
	3 November	4 November	5 November
	10 November		
PE2 (written exam) + AP1 (written assignment – draft)			
UNIT 4 (lectures and discussion of Worksheet 3)		11 November	12 November
	17 November	18 November	19 November
	24 November	25 November	26 November
	1 December	2 December	
UNIT 5 (lectures and discussion of Worksheet 4)			3 December
	8 December	9 December	10 December
	15 December	16 December	17 December
	22 December		
PE3 (written exam) + AP2 (written assignment – complete essay)			

Evaluation

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Students who combine their degree with a full time job or a part-time job with schedules coinciding with classes 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 lletres.secretariacentre@udl.cat or ask for information at the Faculty's office (Secretaria de la Facultat de Lletres).
- Attendance to classes is compulsory.
- NP will be given when a student's assessment activities weigh less than 50% of the overall grade for the subject.
- Dates for assessment activities will be provided at the beginning of the semester. Date for PE3 (written exam 2) will be the one established in the Faculty's exam calendar.
- Activities handed in after the deadline will not be accepted.
- Language will be taken into account in all of the assessment activities. In exams, there will be a penalty of - 0.15 points per serious mistake. Assignments will be penalised up to 2 points for language mistakes. However, there will be a reduction by 50% of the grade of assignments that do not reach the level of language required for fourth-year students of the degree. In this case, content will be graded separately and the reduction applied to the grade for the content.
- Students should read/watch compulsory texts before the corresponding sessions.
- All discussion worksheets will be provided by instructor before the corresponding sessions and should be prepared by students before discussion.
- Plagiarism is not allowed. Assessment activities containing plagiarised material (even if only partial) will automatically be failed (0).
- 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	20%	Complete essay	Date to be determined. After Christmas.
PE1 Exam	14%	Date, time and room to be determined. Date does not necessarily have to coincide with class schedules.	
PE2: Exam	28%	Date, time and room to be determined. Date does not necessarily have to coincide with class schedules.	
PE3: Exam	28%	Date, time and room established in the Faculty's exam calendar.	

ALTERNATIVES TO FACE-TO-FACE EXAMS: In case face-to-face exams had to be cancelled due to the present state of emergency, we would replace the exams (or exam, in case it is just one) by assessment worksheets. The assessment worksheets would be given the same percentage as the exam they replace. These assessment worksheets would contain questions and activities designed to make students think critically, develop in-depth analysis, address texts and issues discussed in class from different perspectives and/or make connections between texts discussed in class and new (short) texts.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (ESSAY):

	COMPULSORY TEXT	TOPIC
AP1 + AP2: Choose one of the following topics.	May, Peter. <i>Lockdown</i> . London: Riverrun, 2020.	Analyse the text as postmodern detective fiction paying special attention to the bleak pandemic world in which the criminal investigation is set.
	Townsend, Jessica. <i>Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow</i> . Boston and New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2018.	Analyse the character of the girl protagonist, Morrigan Crow, and how her presentation aligns with our postfeminist world.
	<i>Carriers</i> (David and Àlex Pastor,2009) (Film)	Analyse the text as pandemic horror fiction paying special attention to the features that turn it into such a realistic horror text.
	Texts to be chosen by the student and approved by the teacher	Analyse at least three different reality shows and discuss the moral responsibility of both, producers and audience.

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

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.

Bibliography

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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.

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