



Universitat de Lleida

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

Coordination: SANTAULARIA CAPDEVILA, MARIA  
ISABEL

Academic year 2022-23

## Subject's general information

<b>Subject name</b>	POPULAR CULTURE IN ENGLISH AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD			
<b>Code</b>	101296			
<b>Semester</b>	1st 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>	2.5		3.5
	<b>Number of groups</b>	1		1
<b>Coordination</b>	SANTAULARIA CAPDEVILA, MARIA ISABEL			
<b>Department</b>	ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS			
<b>Important information on data processing</b>	Consult <a href="#">this link</a> for more information.			
<b>Language</b>	English			

Teaching staff	E-mail addresses	Credits taught by teacher	Office and hour of attention
GUARDIOLA PASTOR, MARIA INES	agnes.guardiola@udl.cat	3	
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## 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

- Identify the objectives and dynamics of cultural studies.
- Identify popular narratives and describe their characteristics.
- Identify the major genres of popular narratives.
- Know the origins, evolution and major representatives of a selection of popular genres.
- Develop critical thinking about popular narratives.
- Make connections between history & society and popular narratives.
- Recognise what different examples of popular narratives reveal about the contemporary world.
- Recognise 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 Horror to Metahorror: A necessary reflection upon violence in the contemporary world. Discussion of **Worksheet 3**. Compulsory texts for worksheet:

- *Scream* (Wes Craven, 1996) (Film)
- *Scream 2* (Wes Craven, 1997) (Film)
- *Scream 3* (Wes Craven, 2000) (Film)
- *Scream 4* (Wes Craven, 2011) (Film)
- References may also be made (if there is enough time) to other metanarrative texts

**UNIT 5:** The feminist western. Discussion of **Worksheet 4**. Compulsory texts for worksheet:

- *Godless* (Netflix, 2017) (Mini series)

## 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

	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>UNIT 1 (lectures and discussion of examples)</b>	15 September	16 September
	22 September	23 September
	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
	6 October	7 October
<b>PE1 (written exam)</b>		
<b>UNIT 2 (lectures and discussion of Worksheet 1)</b>	13 October	14 October
	20 October	21 October
	27 October	
<b>UNIT 3 (lectures and discussion of worksheet 2)</b>		28 October
	3 November	4 November
	10 November	11 November
<b>PE2 (written exam) + AP1 (written assignment – draft)</b>		
<b>UNIT 4 (lectures and discussion of Worksheet 3)</b>	17 November	18 November
	24 November	25 November
	1 December	
<b>UNIT 5 (lectures and discussion of Worksheet 4)</b>		2 December
	NO CLASS	9 December
	15 December	16 December
	22 December	NO CLASS
<b>PE3 (written exam) + AP2 (written assignment – complete essay)</b>		

## 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](mailto: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 3) is 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. In case of plagiarism, 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'..

- In case the authorship of a work is doubtful, the instructor can establish a mechanism to certify this authorship. In case the student cannot argue or justify the contents, the work will 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%	18 January at 18.30, ROOM 0.10B	

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (ESSAY):**

	COMPULSORY TEXT	TOPIC
<p><b>AP1 + AP2:</b> Choose one of the following topics.</p>	<p><i>Sherlock</i> (BBC, 2010-2017): Season 1 (or the season of your choice; or a selection of a minimum of 4 episodes from different seasons)</p>	<p>Postmodern detective fiction delves into the underbelly of society, but not <i>Sherlock</i>. Analyse the (social/historical) reasons that, in your view, explain the conservative message sponsored by the series.</p>
	<p>Terry Pratchett's <i>Wyrd Sisters</i> (1988)</p>	<p>In this novel, Pratchett chooses three witches (two elderly, one young) as protagonists to weave a tale with a strong feminist and anti-ageist message. Discuss how this text prefigures, and in many ways surpasses, what some critics define as our postfeminist ethos.</p>
	<p><i>Behind the Mask: The Rise of Leslie Vernon</i> (Scott Glosserman, 2006)</p>	<p>In this mockumentary we are invited to understand the mind and motivation of a killer, one who kills teenagers. Taking into account the increase in school shootings and other examples of teenage violence, discuss how the film reflects on the making of the killer, the role and ethics of media and the presence/absence of adults and institutions to prevent violence among teenagers.</p>

	Melissa Lenhardt's <i>Heresy</i> (2018)	Law and justice are very different things, especially when you are an outcast being abused by white men. Discuss how this narrative accommodates a claim for social justice for a multicultural society with great diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity and expression in a traditionally conservative and masculine genre, the Western.
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**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.
- In case of plagiarism, 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'.
- In case the authorship of a work is doubtful, the instructor can establish a mechanism to certify this authorship. In case the student cannot argue or justify the contents, the work will be failed (0).
- A rubric (scoring guide) will be provided.

## Bibliography

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.

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