COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
The Odyssey: The Wandering of a Text and its Reception Odisėja: teksto klajonės ir recepcija	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
Coordinating: prof. dr. Fatima Eloeva **Other:**	Faculty of Philology, Institute of English, Romance, and Classical Studies, Department of Classical Philology

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
Second	Optional

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Face-to-face	Spring semester	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites: English B2 level (CEFR)	**Co-requisites (if relevant):**

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	132	32	100

Purpose of the course unit		
The course aims to investigate the *Odyssey* as a text in perpetual movement through time, tracing its transformations in relation to literary and cultural history from antiquity to the present day.		
Learning outcomes of the course unit	**Teaching and learning methods**	**Assessment methods**
Generic competencies Students will develop the ability to work both independently and collaboratively. Additionally, students will develop the skills to discuss complex ideas in group settings, effectively integrating philosophical, literary, and cultural perspectives. They will be able to find, analyse, synthesise, and critically evaluate information from literary texts and scholarly sources. They will be able to formulate independent interpretations, develop	The course combines hermeneutic interpretation, close reading (slow reading), and comparative analysis, encouraging students to engage deeply with literary texts, interpret their meanings, and explore how the epic journey has been reinterpreted and transformed over time.	**Continuous assessment:** evaluation of independent work and in-class activities throughout the semester, including participation in discussions, thought-mapping activities, writing tasks, and peer evaluation. **Text analysis:** assessment of students' ability to identify main ideas, analyze arguments and supporting evidence, and critically interpret selected texts. **Final essay:** assessment of students' ability to formulate a

arguments, and apply knowledge to new literary and cultural contexts.		clear argument, support it with relevant evidence, organize ideas coherently, and use appropriate academic language.
Subject-specific competences Analytical and critical thinking: Students will develop their capacity to analyse and interpret key themes and motifs in the narrative of *The Odyssey*, identifying underlying structural patterns, poetic techniques, and their evolution across time. They will also cultivate the ability to critically evaluate diverse literary arguments and compare different historical, cultural, and artistic adaptations of the epic. Furthermore, students will develop the specific skills of close and slow reading necessary to trace how the text wanders across centuries, transforming in meaning through its various waves of reception.	Problem-focused and interactive lectures, group discussions, collaborative seminars, close reading workshops.	

Content	**Contact hours**							**Individual work: time and assignments**	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	**Contact hours, total**	**Individual work**	**Tasks for individual work**
1. **Introduction: What Does the "Wandering" of a Text Mean**? Concepts of reception, intertextuality, and the cultural migration of narratives. Jorge Luis Borges's reflections on the four fundamental plots—the story of a besieged city, the return, the search, and the sacrifice of a god—and their endless permutations across literary history. Anne Carson's experimental reworkings of classical texts as examples of translation, fragmentation, and creative transformation. The *Odyssey* as an exemplary narrative of wandering, homecoming, and transformation. Overview of the epic's structure. The Homeric question and oral theory.	4		2				6	10	***The Odyssey*, Books 1–2** (selected excerpts); Albert Lord, **"The Singer of a Tale"** (selected excerpts); Osip Mandelstam, **"I Haven't Read the Songs of Ossian"**; Jorge Luis Borges, **"The Four Cycles"**; Anne Carson, ***Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse*** (selected excerpts).
2. **The Motif of Journey (*Nostos*) and Odysseus' Identity** This section explores *nostos* (the journey home) as a central theme in Homer's *Odyssey* and examines its relationship to	2		2				4	10	**Book 9 of *The Odyssey*** (selected excerpts); Joyce, ***Ulysses***: **Episodes 4, 6, 14, 15** (selected excerpts).

Odysseus' identity, memory, and personal transformation. Particular attention is given to the ways in which the journey home involves not only physical return but also the restoration and redefinition of social relationships and personal identity.									
3. **The Underworld Reimagined: *The Odyssey*, Dante, and Joyce's "Hades"** This section explores the motif of the underworld in Homer's *Odyssey* and its reinterpretation in Dante's *Divine Comedy* and James Joyce's *Ulysses* ("Hades" episode). Focusing on Dante's *Inferno*, Canto XXVI, and its account of Ulysses, this topic explores the paradox of Homeric afterlives: Dante, who presumably did not read Homer directly, reimagines the Greek hero through the mediation of Latin literature.	2		2				4	16	Dante, **Canto XXVI**, ***Divina Commedia***; ***The Odyssey***, **Book 11**; James Joyce, ***Ulysses***: **Episode 6 ("Hades").**
4. **Sophocles (Pragmatism) vs. Bloom's Empathy (Joyce's *Ulysses*)** The epic cunning (*Metis*) of Homer's Odysseus degrades into political manipulation in Sophocles. The narration shifts from tragedy (Sophocles) to a profound statement on modern humanism (Joyce).	2		2				4	14	Sophocles: ***Ajax*** or ***Philoctetes*** (focusing on Odysseus's character); James Joyce, ***Ulysses***: **Episode 12 ("Cyclops")** and **Episode 4 ("Calypso")**.
5. **Yeats, Antiquity, and the Reconstruction of Myth** This section examines how W. B. Yeats reinterprets classical mythology and ancient literary traditions in his poetry, exploring the relationship between myth, history, identity, and cultural memory.	2		2				4	12	W.B. Yeats: **"Leda and the Swan"**, **"Sailing to Byzantium"**, **"No Second Troy"**.
6. **Ezra Pound, Ossip Mandelstam** The section examines modern poetic engagements with classical antiquity through the works of Ezra Pound and Osip Mandelstam. It explores how ancient literary and cultural traditions are reinterpreted in modern poetry, with particular attention to Mandelstam's concept of Hellenism as a living dialogue with antiquity rather than an imitation of classical forms.	2		2				4	18	Ezra Pound: **"Canto I"**; O. Mandelstam: ***"A stream of golden honey poured from the bottle..."***; Homer: ***The Odyssey*, Book 11 (*Nekyia*)**.
7. **C. P. Cavafy** C. P. Cavafy's vibrant engagement with the classical past as a celebration of human agency, intellectual discovery, and sensory experience.	2		2				4	10	**Άλογα του Αχιλλέως** (*The Horses of Achilles*), **Η Ιθάκη** (*Ithaca*), **Η Απιστία** (*Perfidy / Faithlessness*), **Απολείπειν ο Θεός Αντώνιον** (*The God Abandons Antony*).

8. **Final Roundtable** The course concludes with a roundtable discussion of a recent cultural artefact that reinterprets, adapts, or engages with Homeric epic. Students may choose an example from film, television, literature, visual art, digital media, or other forms of contemporary culture, such as Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* (2026). The discussion examines how key epic structures and themes, including *nostos* (the journey home), *nekyia* (the descent into the underworld), and familial separation, are transformed in contemporary contexts. It considers the *Odyssey* as an open text whose meanings continue to evolve through cultural reinterpretation.			2				2	10	Preparation for the roundtable discussion.
Total	**16**		**16**				**32**	**100**	

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Cumulative grade:			The final cumulative grade is calculated as the weighted average of the final essay (50%) and participation in seminars (50%).
Final essay	50%	Examination session	The final essay is assessed according to five criteria, each worth up to 2 points, for a maximum of 10 points. 1. **Knowledge and understanding (0–2 points):** The student demonstrates understanding of the literary texts, relevant course concepts, and approaches to the reception of the epic tradition. 2. **Textual analysis (0–2 points):** The student conducts close reading and supports interpretations with relevant textual evidence. 3. **Comparative and critical analysis (0–2 points):** The student identifies and critically examines parallels, transformations, and differences between texts and their cultural contexts. 4. **Argumentation and use of sources (0–2 points):** The student develops a clear, coherent, and well-supported argument, engaging appropriately with primary texts and relevant scholarly literature. 5. **Structure and academic writing (0–2 points):** The student presents ideas in a logical structure, uses appropriate academic language, and follows academic referencing conventions.
Seminar work	50%	During the semester	Seminar work consists of two complementary components: **A. Active participation in seminar discussions (30%)** Participation is assessed on a 10-point scale according to the following criteria: • **Preparation (0–3 points):** Familiarity with assigned literary texts and relevant scholarly readings. • **Quality of contribution (0–3 points):** Clarity, relevance, and coherence of contributions to seminar discussions. • **Critical engagement (0–4 points):** Ability to interpret literary texts, formulate questions, develop independent

			arguments, and engage constructively with alternative interpretations. **B. Two short analytical essays (20%)** During the semester, students submit two short essays (approximately 2 pages each), devoted to two poems discussed in the seminars. Students select the poems that they consider particularly significant or intellectually stimulating. The assignments are intended to encourage independent interpretation, close reading, and critical reflection on the relationship between the selected poems and the broader themes of the course. Each essay is assessed on a 10-point scale according to the following criteria: • **Understanding of the text (0–3 points):** Accurate comprehension of the poem and its relevant literary context. • **Interpretation and textual evidence (0–4 points):** Ability to develop an independent interpretation supported by close analysis of the text. • **Coherence and clarity (0–3 points):** Logical organization, clarity of argument, and appropriate academic expression. Each short essay contributes 10% to the final cumulative grade. Attendance is expected at all seminars. Students may miss up to 30% of seminars without penalty. Students with more than 30% of unexcused absences receive 0 points for this assessment component.

Guidelines for Generative AI Use

Permitted uses of GenAI
Students may use generative AI tools to assist with preliminary research planning, develop search terms for literature searches, improve language and academic style, organise bibliographic references, and enhance the technical presentation of analytical visualisations.

Student responsibility and independent work
The formulation of the research question, selection of the dataset, development of the conceptual framework, definition of analytical categories and criteria, coding, selection of evidence, analysis, interpretation, critical reflection, and formulation of conclusions must remain the student's own intellectual work.

Verification and academic integrity
AI-generated data, quotations, references, coding outcomes, interpretations, and conclusions must not be presented as the student's original work. Students are responsible for checking all AI-generated information and references against original materials and reliable sources. Any substantial use of generative AI must be acknowledged in accordance with Faculty guidelines.

Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Required reading				
Homer	2006	*The Odyssey*	Translated by Robert Fagles	Penguin Classics
Homer	2011	*The Iliad*	Translated by Richmond Lattimore	University of Chicago Press
Sophocles	2009	*Antigone, Oedipus the King, Electra*	Translated by H.D.F. Kitto (Context for *Ajax* / *Philoctetes*)	Oxford World's Classics
Dante Alighieri	2003	*The Divine Comedy: Inferno*	Canto XXVI (Ulysses' Voyage)	Bantam Classics

J. Joyce	2022	*Ulysses*	European Edition (Episodes 2, 4, 6, 12, 14, 16)	Penguin Modern Classics
W. B. Yeats	1996	*The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*	"The Wanderings of Oisin", "Leda and the Swan", "Sailing to Byzantium", "No Second Troy"	Scribner
Ezra Pound	1998	*The Cantos of Ezra Pound*	*Canto I*	New Directions
T.S. Eliot	2001	*The Waste Land*	Part II: "A Game of Chess"	Faber & Faber
O. Mandelstam	1993	*Stone / Tristia*	"A stream of golden honey...", "Psyché"	Princeton University Press
C. P. Cavafy	2009	*The Collected Poems*	«Ιθάκη», «Τα άλογα του Αχιλλέα», «Απολείπειν ο Θεός», «Απιστία»	Oxford World's Classics
Anne Carson	1999	*Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse*		Vintage Books
Recommended reading				
Albert B. Lord	1960	*The Singer of the Tale*		Harvard University Press
Milman Parry	1971	*The Making of Homeric Verse*	The collected Papers of Milman Parry	Oxford University Press
Jorge Luis Borges	1999	*The Four Cycles*	Collected Fictions. Translated by A. Hurley	Penguin Books
Gregory Nagy	1979	*The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*		Johns Hopkins University Press
Irina Melnikova	2012	*Intertekstualumas: teorija ir praktika*		Vilniaus universiteto leidykla
Jacqueline Furby and Stuart Joy	2015	*The Cinema of Christopher Nolan: Imagining the Impossible*		Wallflower Press

Course description updated 2026-10-28.