COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Literature, Culture, Theory/Literatūra, kultūra, teorija	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered
Coordinator: Dr. R. Šlapkauskaitė **Other(s):**	English Philology Faculty of Philology

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)
BA	Compulsory

Mode of delivery	Period when the course unit (module) is delivered	Language(s) of instruction
Lectures and seminars	Autumn (5)	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: A very good command of English (B2/C1)	**Additional requirements (if any):** Introduction to Literary Theory

Course (module) volume in credits	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	150	32+16+2 (exam)	100

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competences to be developed		
Rather than follow a historiographic thread, this reading-intensive course is organized around concepts, issues, and terms of art that open the study of cultural production to the creative flow of interdisciplinary dialogue. The range of conceptual approaches to the study of poetic texts and larger cultural formations discussed in the course invites the students to reconsider and discuss their own perspectives on the value of cultural phenomena and intellectual labour in the age of permacrisis.		
Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	**Teaching and learning methods**	**Assessment methods**
Generic competences: 1. ability to set goals, choose and use resources necessary for the completion of a task, plan their time and follow deadlines; 2. ability to take responsibility for their work / study results and learn from mistakes. 3. ability to work in a team by setting common goals, sharing information, and looking for solutions together; 4. ability to motivate other team members to achieve common goals. 5. ability to understand the specifics of different cultures and to analyse and assess cultural contexts; 6. ability to study, work, and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds and develop awareness, respect, and openness to cultural diversity;	Problem-oriented; historical-cultural; comparative analysis; engaging lecture; seminar.	Written **midterm** (40%) and written **exam**. (60%) Possible points for seminar work (at the instructor's discretion and only if the student has attended all the lectures and seminars)

7. ability to identify problems by finding, analysing, and critically assessing relevant information, generate new ideas, choose the most optimal solutions. 8. familiarity not only with the changes taking place in their field of interest, but also their causes, challenges, opportunities; 9. openness to new ideas, strive to change, and be creative and innovative; 10. ability to evaluate the quality of their actions and achievements and will strive to acquire the competencies necessary for future change.		
<u>Subject-specific competences</u> Students 1. should know, understand and be able to describe literature as a phenomenon and properly use and interpret the basic concepts and terms of literary studies; 2. should acquire knowledge of the main branches and methods of literary studies. 3. should be able to analyse, interpret and evaluate the phenomena of English literature in the wider context of world literature, using appropriate terminology and methods. 4. should be able to use modern information technologies, data resources and research resources to conduct linguistic and literary analysis of English texts and present the results of analysis and/or interpretation to the public in order to contribute to the practical applicability of English philology studies (corpora, dictionaries, term banks and glossaries, thematic websites, literature maps, etc.).	Individual work: • Reading of research articles • Reading of primary texts • Written assignments Work in class: • Thought mapping • In-class discussion • Tasks on writing (e.g. building an argument) • Peer-evaluation tasks	

Content: breakdown of the topics	**Contact hours**							**Self-study work: time and assignments**	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Internship/work placement	**Contact hours**	**Self-study hours**	**Assignments**
1. Introductory remarks. The aims and scope of the course. The role of critical thinking in the age of AI.	2								
2. **Literature and the aesthetic imperative.** Literature as a "disinterested endeavour" and *purposeless purpose*. The *beautiful* and the *sublime*: Longinus, Burke, Kant. Death and art: Federico Garcia Lorca's notion of *duende.* Sianne Ngai and contemporary aesthetics: the *cute*, the *interesting*, the *zany*.	3		2						**Lecture references**: Longinus, "On the Sublime" (pp. 1- 32) Federico Garcia Lorca, "Theory and Play of the Duende" (pp. 3-24)

									"Our Aesthetic Categories: An Interview with Sianne Ngai" (pp. 45-51) **Seminar texts**: **I.** Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" (pp. 17-23) Cleanth Brooks, "The Language of Paradox" (pp. 28-39) Poetic samples.
3. **Form, structure, image.** Russian Formalism and the linguistic turn. Literariness, parody, deviation. Roman Jacobson's functions of language. The poetic function. Paranomasia. Tropes. New Criticism and close reading. Poetry as the language of paradox. Caroline Levine's "new formalism": the affordances of form. Structuralism and the study of narrative. Plot vs. story. Vladimir Propp's narrative functions. Jonathan Culler and the notion of *literary competence*. Parody, pastiche, and the dialogic imagination. Between word and image: the pictorial turn. Ekphrasis, pictorialism, iconicity, poetics of image-text.	6		2						**Lecture references**: Caroline Levine, *Forms* (pp. 1-23) Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren "Poetry as a Way of Saying", (pp. 1-16) Vladimir Propp, "Morphology of the Folktale" (pp. 1-45) Jonathan Culler, "Literary Competence" (pp. 113-130) Yuri Lotman, from *Universe of Mind* (pp. 20-35; 123-130; 131-142) W.J.T. Mitchell, "Beyond Comparison: Picture, Text, and Method" (pp. 83-107) **Seminar texts:** **II**. James Heffernan, from *Museum of Words* (pp. 1-8)

									Poetic sample(s).
4. **Genre.** Conceptualizing genre: formal features, thematic structure, situation of address, structure of implication, rhetorical function, regulative frame. Problematizing generic distinctions: comedy, tragedy, romance, poetry (sonnet, villanelle, limerick), detective fiction. Genre bending.	5		2						**Lecture references:** John Frow, *Genre* (pp. 6-28) John Drakakis, *Tragedy* (pp. 20-37) Andrew Stott, *Comedy* (pp. 1-16; 32-39) Barbara Fuchs, *Romance* (pp. 1-11) **Seminar texts:** **III**. Tzvetan Todorov, "The Typology of Detective Fiction" (pp. 42-52) Jorge Luis Borges, "Death and the Compass" (pp. 251-263)
5. **Textuality, experience, memory.** Art and/as experience. A phenomenology of reading: experience, imagination, ethics. Hermeneutics and the significance of the written tradition. Art and understanding. Interpretation and the structures of pre-understanding. Meaning as dialogue. Tradition and historical distancing. The concepts of *play* and *horizon*. Hermeneutical circle. René Girard's theory of mimetic desire. Mimesis, violence, ethics.	4		2						**Lecture references**: Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics* (pp. 33-45; 66-71; 194-217) **Seminar texts:** **IV**. René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (pp. 1-18) Poetic samples.
6. **Identity and (narrative) representation.** Post-structuralism and the critique of binary logic. Logocentrism and Western metaphysics. Art and ideology. Cultural Studies: feminist, postcolonial, queer perspectives.	5		2						**Lecture references**: Peter Barry, "Feminist Criticism" (pp. 116-130)

									Anne McClintock "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the term 'Post-Colonialism'" (pp. 84-98) **Seminar texts:** **V**. Will Stockton, "A Brief History of Queer Theory" (pp. 1-30) Octavia Butler, "Bloodchild" (pp. 1-32)
7. **Reception and Affect.** The Constance school and the reader response theory. Aesthetics of reception. Reading as a build-up of meaning. The notion of competence and indeterminacy. Horizon of expectations. Wolfgang Iser's notion of *gaps* and the *implied reader.* Stanley Fish and the *interpretive community*. Aristotle's notion of *catharsis* and its implications for critical reception. Affective fallacy and the role of (literary) emotions.	4		2						**Lecture references:** Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process" (pp. 279-299) Stanley Fish, "What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?" (pp. 338-355) Stephen Ahern, "Affect Theory and Literary Criticism" (pp. 96-106)
9. **Literature and the Environment.** Ecocriticism and ecopoetics. Ecocentric environmental ethics. The (eco-)logic of relationality. Critique of dichotomous ontology, anthropocentrism, and speciesism. Poetry as a form of dwelling. Matter *as* text and matter *in* text. Zoopoetics. Body-discourse enmeshments, human-nonhuman interlockings.	3		2						**Lecture references:** Lawrence Buell, Ursula K. Heise, and Karen Thornber, "Literature and Environment" (pp. 417-435) Jonathan Bates, "What are Poets For?" (pp. 243-283) **Seminar texts:** **VI.** Matthew Calarco, "Genealogies" (pp. 277-291)

									J.M. Coetzee, "The Poets and the Animals" (pp. 47-69)
10. Midterm			2						**On the designated day**
11. **Exam**		2							
Total	**32**		**16**					**100**	

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
The seminar texts will be uploaded onto the VU Moodle system: www.emokymai.vu.lt **Attendance of lectures and seminars is compulsory. Students who miss more than 30% of the classes may not be admitted to the exam.** No individual consultations will be provided. Should there be questions related to the material or the final exam, the students have to tackle these issues before the exam date. The instructor reserves the right to not answer research-related questions – those sent by email included – once the course has been completed and the exam period has begun. **N.B.** The course instructor reserves the right to turn class assignments into home assignments in case of a conference, lecture, library visit, or any other unforeseen circumstances, such as *force majeure*, pandemic, quarantine, etc. The contents of the course will not be measured only by the contents of the lectures. It is the responsibility of the students to "fill in the gaps" by studying the theoretical material provided in the reading lists. Needless to say, any reputable source of literary theory not mentioned in the course description may be useful as well. The students should be well advised to NOT use Internet sources (e.g. Shmoop, Wikipedia, Cliff Notes, etc.) or AI tools as intellectually reliable sources.			Consistent participation in seminars, good use of metalanguage, ethical critical thinking, error-free language. The students may be given an opportunity to volunteer to read a lecture or moderate a seminar on a given subject matter – this offer is given at the course instructor's discretion. Provided the students attend to this task responsibly, they may be given an additional point as part of their final grade.
Cumulative grade	40+60		The final course assessment consists of the grade for the written midterm (40%) and the final written exam (60%). Both assignments will include closed and open-ended tasks based on the material covered during the lectures and the seminars. ***10- Excellent****. All the tasks have been carried out in such a way that the answers show the student's academic excellence and an astute understanding of the main issues under discussion. Apt use of the necessary critical and theoretical terms. Full understanding of the*

			relation between form and content. Solid grasp of the discursive contingencies and their contradictions. Excellent, almost effortless, ability to conceptualise and substantiate one's reasoning. Independent and creative thinking. Fluent and error-free academic English. ***9- Very good**. The tasks have been very well carried out but lack the edge of excellence. Mostly apt use of the necessary critical and theoretical terms. A very good understanding of the relation between form and content. A reliable grasp of the discursive contingencies and most of their contradictions. A consistent, though not excellent, ability to conceptualise and substantiate one's reasoning. Independent, though not always creative, thinking. Fluent and error-free academic English.* ***8 – Good**. The tasks have been well carried out, but without razor-sharp intelligence or creativity. Mostly apt use of the necessary critical and theoretical terms. A good, though predictable, understanding of the relation between form and content. A limited grasp of the discursive contingencies and their contradictions. An inconsistent, and varying in degree of success, ability to conceptualise and substantiate one's reasoning. Coherent and logical thinking derived from learned sources. Mostly fluent and error-free academic English.* ***7 – Average**. The tasks have been carried out selectively and without much cognitive labour. A tendency towards inept use of critical and theoretical terms. A predictable and limited understanding of the relation between form and content. An amateurish grasp of the discursive contingencies and their contradictions. An inconsistent, mostly inadequate, ability to conceptualise and substantiate one's reasoning. Struggle with logic and coherence of thought, as made manifest in reproduction of the ideas of others. Some instances of relying on Internet sources may be detected. Lack of fluency and correct grammar in the use of academic English.* ***6 – Satisfactory**. The tasks have been carried out selectively and with little cognitive labour. Inept use of critical and theoretical terms. An inconsistent, and largely inadequate, understanding of the relation between form and content. A weak and amateurish grasp of the discursive contingencies and their contradictions. Lack of ability to conceptualise and substantiate one's reasoning. Struggle with logic and coherence of thought, as made manifest in reproduction (not always successful) of the ideas of others. Multiple instances of relying on Internet sources may be detected. Lack of fluency and correct grammar in the use of academic English.* ***5 – Poor**. The tasks have been carried out selectively and poorly. Irresponsible and/or incompetent use of critical and theoretical terms. Lack of understanding of the relation between form and content. A poor grasp of the discursive contingencies and their contradictions. Lack of ability to conceptualise and substantiate one's reasoning. Struggle with logic and coherence of thought, as made manifest in poor reproduction of the ideas of others. Prevalent instances of relying on Internet sources. Poor use of academic English.* ***4-0 – Fail**. None of the tasks has been adequately carried out to show the student's intellectual competences developed in the course.* ***N.B. In case of suspicion regarding academic integrity, the student will be asked to account for his or her work in a form of viva voce defense in the Department of English Philology.***
The use of AI			The course is based on the human-oriented approach and does not aim to generate conditions for human-machine collaboration, especially given how destructive the use of AI is on both cognitive and ecological processes. The students are expected to read full original texts, not their summaries generated by either Google or AI. All the seminar and exam tasks are expected to be carried out without the use of AI. The students' use of AI in developing their cognitive skills in this course will be considered a breach of the university's ethical standards.

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Compulsory reading				
Ahern, Stephen.	2024	"Affect Theory and Literary Criticism".	*Emotion Review*, Vol. 16, Iss. 2.	
Aristotle. Horace. Longinus.	1965	*Classical Literary Criticism.*		London: Penguin Books.
Barry, Peter.	1995	*Beginning Theory.*		Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
Bate, Jonathan.	2000	*The Song of the Earth.*		London:Picador.
Borges, Jorge Luis.	1954	"Death and the Compass"	New Mexico Quarterly, Vol. 24, Iss. 3	https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3433&context=nmq
Brooks, Cleanth and Robert Penn Warren.	1960	"Poetry as a Way of Saying" from *Understanding Poetry.*		New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston
Brooks, Cleanth.	1947	"The Language of Paradox" in *The Well Wrought Urn.*		New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
Lawrence Buell, Ursula K. Heise, and Karen Thornber.	2011	"Literature and Environment".		www.annualreviews.org
Butler, Octavia.	2005	*Bloodchild and Other Stories*		New York: Seven Stories Press.
Calarco, Matthew.	2019	"Genealogies" in *The Edinburgh Companion to Animal Studies.*		Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Coetzee, J.M.	2004	"The Poets and the Animals" from *Elizabeth Costello*.		London: Vintage.
Culler, Jonathan.	2002	"Literary Competence" from *Structuralist Poetics*.		London and New York: Routledge.
Drakakis, John.	2024	*Tragedy.*		Routledge: London and New York.
Fish, Stanley.	1980	"What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?" from *Is There a Text in this Class?*		Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Fuchs, Barbara.	2004	*Romance.*		London and New York: Routledge.
Girard, René.	1989	*Violence and the Sacred.*		Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
Heffernan, James.	1993	*Museum of Words.*		Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
Hirsch, Edward.	2014	*A Poet's Glossary.*		Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Iser, Wolfgang	1972	"The Reading Process" from *New Literary History.*	Vol. 3, No. 2	
Jasper, Adam.	2011	"Our Aesthetic Categories: An Interview with Sianne Ngai".	*A Quarterly of Art and Culture*, Issue 43.	
Levine, Caroline.	2015	*Forms. Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network.*		Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Lorca, Federico Garcia.		"Theory and Play of the Duende".		https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Spanish/LorcaDuende.php
Lotman, Yuri.	2001	*Universe of the Mind*.		Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Anne McClintock	1992	"The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the term 'Post-Colonialism'"	*Social Text*, No. 31-32.	
Mitchell, W.J.T.	1994	*Picture Theory.*		Chicago; The University of Chicago Press.
Palmer, Richard E.	1969	*Hermeneutics*.		Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
Shklovsky, Victor.		"Art as Technique" in *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*, edited by Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh.		London and NY: OUP.
Stockton, Will.	2023	"A Brief History of Queer Theory" from *An Introduction to Queer Literary Studies*.		New York: Routledge.
Stott, Andrew.	2014	*Comedy.*		Routledge: London and New York.
Todorov, Tzvetan.	1977	"The Typology of Detective Fiction" from *The Poetics of Prose.*		Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Optional reading				
Eagleton, Terry.	2005	*Literary Theory. An Introduction*.		Oxford: Blackwell.
Heidegger, Martin.	2001	"The Origin of the Work of Art" from *Poetry, Language, Thought*.		New York: Harper Perennial.
Jacobson, Roman.		"Linguistics and Poetics".		http://pubman.mpdl.mpg.de/pubman/item/escidoc:2350615/component/escidoc:2350614/Jakobson_1960_Linguistics_poetics.pdf
Truron, Wendy.	2022	"Affect Theory" in *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Emotion,* edited by Patrick Hogan, Colm Bradley J. Irish and Lalita Pandit Hogan.		London and New York: Routledge.
Wimsatt, W.K. and M.C. Beardsley.	1949	"The Affective Fallacy" in *The Sewanee Review.*	Vol. 57, No. 1	

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