



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Ukraine in Images and Symbols: From Origins to the Present /Ukraina vaizduose ir simboliuose: nuo ištakų iki dabarties	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered
Coordinator: Dr. Olena Chepurna	Department of Slavic Studies, VU Faculty of Philology

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)
first	Optional

Mode of delivery	Period when the course unit (module) is delivered	Language(s) of instruction
Lectures and seminars	Autumn or spring term, according to the possibilities of the department	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: B2 level of English according to CEFRL	Additional requirements (if any):

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	150	32	118

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competences to be developed		
<p>The course aims to introduce students to Ukraine's cultural identity through the study of key images and symbols in literature, visual art, and cinema. It explores how cultural symbols contribute to the formation of national identity and how they reflect historical experience and cultural memory.</p> <p>The module develops students' ability to analyse and interpret cultural images and symbols within their historical and cultural contexts. It encourages critical reflection on Ukraine's cultural development, including its postcolonial experience and its dialogue with global cultural processes.</p> <p>Through an interdisciplinary approach combining literature, art, and film studies, the course provides students with a broader understanding of Ukraine's cultural heritage and its place within European and global cultural contexts.</p>		
Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods

<p>Students will acquire the ability to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify key cultural images and symbols that shape Ukrainian cultural identity; - explain the role of cultural traditions and historical experience in the formation of national symbols; - analyse and interpret Ukrainian images and symbols in literature, visual art, and cinema; <p>[- understand how cultural symbols transform across different historical and cultural contexts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analyse literary texts, artworks, and films in order to interpret their cultural and symbolic meanings; - discuss how Ukrainian creators represent national identity, historical memory, and cultural experience. 	<p>Interactive lectures and seminar discussions; analysis of literary texts, visual artworks, and films; student presentations; guided discussions; practical analytical exercises.</p>	<p>Continuous assessment based on: participation in seminar discussions; individual analytical presentation; final integrative seminar discussion.</p> <p>Students who obtain at least 60% of the total score through continuous assessment are exempt from the final examination.</p> <p>Students who receive less than 60% may take the final examination during the examination session.</p>
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Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	lectures	tutorias	Seminars	Workshop	Laboratory work	Internship	Contact hours,total	Individual work	Tasks for individual work
<p>1. Imagining Ukraine: Landscape, Geography and Cultural Identity.</p> <p>Ukraine as a cultural crossroads of Europe. Images of the steppe, the Dnipro River and the Ukrainian landscape. Ukraine in historical maps and European imagination. The image of the Cossack and the frontier.</p>	2		6				8	16	<p>Reading and analysing texts related to the topic.</p> <p>Preparation of a presentation on a chosen topic.</p>
<p>2. Folk Symbols and National Archetypes in Ukrainian Culture.</p> <p>Traditional symbols in Ukrainian folklore. Archetypal images: the Cossack, the Mother, the Warrior. Symbolism of plants and colours in Ukrainian culture. Folk traditions in literature and art.</p>	2		6				8	16	<p>Visual or film analysis assignment.</p>
<p>3. Ukrainian Art and Literature in the Cultural Context.</p>	2		6				8	16	

Traditional folk art and decorative symbolism. Sacred art and Ukrainian icon painting. Classical and contemporary Ukrainian art. Literature and art as forms of cultural resistance.								
4. Contemporary Ukrainian Culture: Literature and Cinema. Revival of Ukrainian culture after independence. Contemporary Ukrainian literature and cinema. Cultural memory, war and national identity.	2		4				8	16
5. Individual analytical presentation Preparation of an individual analytical presentation on a selected cultural image or symbol of Ukraine, including examples from literature, visual art or cinema.			2					54
Total	8		24				32	130

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Cumulative evaluation:			
Participation in seminars and discussions	30 %	during the semester	Active and informed participation in seminar discussions. Ability to analyse cultural images and symbols, ask analytical questions, and engage in meaningful discussion. Students must attend at least 65% of seminars.
Individual presentation	40 %	during the semester (according to the seminar topic)	Ability to analyse a selected cultural image or symbol of Ukraine using examples from literature, visual art, or cinema. Clarity of argument, logical structure of the presentation, use of relevant sources, and ability to respond to questions.
Final integrative seminar discussion	30%	end of the semester	Ability to synthesise the main themes of the course, interpret cultural images and symbols, and participate in a reflective discussion summarising the course topics.
<p>Continuous assessment</p> <p>Students are evaluated through continuous assessment based on seminar participation, an analytical presentation, and a final integrative seminar discussion. Students who obtain at least 60% of the total score through continuous assessment are considered to have successfully completed the course and are exempt from the final examination.</p>			

Examination			<p>Students who receive less than 60% in continuous assessment may take the final examination during the examination session, provided that they have attended at least 65% of seminars. The examination evaluates the student's knowledge of the course themes and the ability to analyse cultural images and symbols of Ukraine in literature, visual art, and cinema. Assessment is based on a 10-point grading scale.</p> <p>10 (excellent). Excellent, exceptional knowledge and abilities. Demonstrates outstanding knowledge of the course topics. Provides a clear, well-structured and original analysis of cultural images and symbols of Ukraine. Uses relevant examples from literature, visual art and cinema and engages critically with the material.</p> <p>9 (very good). Very good knowledge and abilities. Demonstrates very good knowledge of the course topics. Provides a well-structured analysis with relevant examples. Shows good understanding of cultural images and symbols, with minor inaccuracies.</p> <p>8 (good). Knowledge and abilities are above average. Demonstrates good understanding of the course themes. Provides relevant examples and explanations but the analysis may lack depth or detail.</p> <p>7 (average). Average knowledge and abilities; there are a few not essential mistakes. Demonstrates satisfactory knowledge of the course topics. Identifies key cultural images and symbols but the analysis remains descriptive rather than analytical.</p> <p>6 (satisfactory). Knowledge and abilities are below average. Demonstrates basic knowledge of the course material. Able to identify some cultural symbols and themes but with limited explanation or analysis.</p> <p>5 (weak). Knowledge and abilities meet the minimum requirements. Demonstrates insufficient knowledge of the course topics. Analysis is incomplete or unclear and examples are poorly explained.</p> <p>4, 3, 2, 1. Minimum requirements are not met.</p>
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Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Compulsory reading				
Ivshyna L.	2014	Ukraine incognita Top 25		Private JSC Ukrainian Press Group, Kyiv
Shevchenko T.	2014	Кобзар. The Essential Poetry of Taras Shevchenko		Piramida Publishing, Lviv
Kazimirova K.	2022	Voices of Freedom. Contemporary Writing From Ukraine		8 th and Atlas Publishing, Winston-Salem
Lozhkina A.	2024	The Art of Ukraine (World of Art)		Thames & Hudson, Australia
Joshua First	2015	Ukrainian Cinema: Belonging and Identity during the Soviet Thaw (KINO - The Russian and Soviet Cinema)		Bloomsbury Publishing, London
Recommended reading				
Івшина Л.	2017	Корона або Спадщина Королівства Руського		ТОВ “Українська прес-група”, Київ
Мусієнко О.	2009	Українське кіно: тести і контекст		Глобус-Прес, Вінниця
Самусенко Ю.	2025	Як це дивитися: українське кіно незалежності		Видавництво Stetovych, Київ

