

27838 - American Literature IV

Syllabus Information

Academic Year: 2020/21

Subject: 27838 - American Literature IV

Faculty / School: 103 - Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Degree: 416 - Degree in English

ECTS: 6.0

Year: 4

Semester: First semester

Subject Type: Compulsory

Module: ---

1.General information

1.1.Aims of the course

1.2.Context and importance of this course in the degree

1.3.Recommendations to take this course

2.Learning goals

2.1.Competences

2.2.Learning goals

2.3.Importance of learning goals

3.Assessment (1st and 2nd call)

3.1.Assessment tasks (description of tasks, marking system and assessment criteria)

4.Methodology, learning tasks, syllabus and resources

4.1.Methodological overview

The methodology followed in this course is oriented towards the achievement of the learning objectives. All class activities will be complemented by group or individual tutorials that form part of the face-to-face teaching and which can also be carried out by e-mail or via Moodle. The learning process is based on the student's active participation and encourages the accurate planning of their autonomous work, which includes the writing of an optional individual essay. The learning process fosters the development of the student's analytical skills and critical thinking, reasoning and argumentation, and involves the reading of the compulsory texts in the light of the recommended bibliography and the in-class teaching. English will be the language used in all class activities, tutorials, essays, and exams, and the literary texts shall be read in their original version.

4.2.Learning tasks

This is a 6 ECTS course organized as follows:

- **Theory sessions** (1.2 ECTS: 30 hours). They include the study of the historical and cultural context (naturalism, psychological realism, modernism and postmodernism), the main features of the literary production of the second half of the 20th century, the introduction to authors and texts, and the explanation of relevant critical and methodological approaches. The teacher will introduce these concepts with PowerPoint presentations and other materials available in Moodle. Student participation will be encouraged in these sessions by means of relevant questioning and prior knowledge-activating strategies.
- **Practice sessions and group seminars** (1.2 ECTS: 30 hours). These sessions consist on the critical analysis of the compulsory literary texts: a series of poems, short stories and fragments of longer works which constitute a

representative selection of key texts of the American literature of the second half of the 20th century. Previous reading on the part of students is essential for the development of these sessions, which will include guided commentaries with the whole class, small group discussion, or the writing of brief individual or group analyses to be presented orally. Debates, questions, brainstorming or role play for character analysis will also be used in order to activate theoretical and practical knowledge, reinforce basic concepts and develop synthesizing, analyzing, interpreting, relating, and expressing skills as well as attitudes such as cooperation and valuation of the work of others.

- **Individual and group tutorials** (0.1 ECTS: 2.5 hours). Tutorial attendance (alternatively, e-mail consultations or participation on the Moodle platform) is compulsory for the guided writing of essays, and optional for the rest of issues concerning the course.
- **Autonomous work and study.**
 - Compulsory readings, use of secondary sources and Moodle materials (2.9 ECTS: 72.5 hours; or 3.5 ECTS: 87.5 hours for the students who do not write up the optional essay). The students' independent activities include revising the concepts studied in class, as well as reading and analyzing the compulsory texts, reading secondary sources, and visiting the Moodle page.
 - Optional essay (0.6 ECTS: 15 hours). It consists on the elaboration of an optional essay. By the 8th week of the semester, students will decide on a topic that will be agreed upon with the teacher. They will work on the development of a working hypothesis that will be presented to the teacher by the 13th week, together with the essay outline and the selected bibliography. The completed essay will be handed in by the day of the exam.
- **Assessment taks** (0.1 ECTS: 2.5 hours) A global exam will take place on the day assigned by the Faculty. Students will have 2.5 hours at the most. The type of exam is described in the Assessment section of this guide.

4.3.Syllabus

This course will address the following topics:

- Topic 1. The 1940s: Modernist narrative or the triumph of History? Literature, society and the echoes of modernism. The effects of the Great Depression: social commitment and experimentation in Steinbeck's fiction.
- Topic 2. US drama in the post-war period. Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams: on cultural politics and Freudian psychoanalysis. Red or patriot? Official ideology, sexual options and the beginning of the Cold War.
- Topic 3. Neorealism in the war and post-war period. Negotiating identity and the color black: Ralph Ellison. From tradition and the Torah into existentialism and parody: Saul Bellow.
- Topic 4. Poetry of dissent: Adrienne Rich and the vindication of the rights of women; Allen Ginsberg, poetry against the status quo; Amiri Baraka and his radical political art.
- Topic 5. Postmodern fiction in the USA. The struggle against hegemonic narratives: Tim O'Brien and the Vietnam War. Gender, race, and trauma in contemporary fiction: Bharati Mukherjee.

COMPULSORY FILMS AND READINGS

Novels, plays and film adaptations:

- John Steinbeck: "The Pearl" (1947)
- Arthur Miller: *The Crucible* (1953) (script and film adaptation)
- Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) (script and film adaptation)
- Saul Bellow: *Henderson the Rain King* (1959)

Shorter texts (poems, short stories):

- A selection of shorter compulsory texts by Ralph Ellison, Adrienne Rich, Allen Ginsberg, Amiri Baraka, Tim O'Brien, and Bharati Mukherjee are available at Reprografia.

Films (Film copies are available at SEMETA, Biblioteca María Moliner):

- John Ford, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940)
- Stanley Kubrick, *Dr. Strangelove* (1963)
- Milos Forman, *Hair* (1983)

4.4.Course planning and calendar

Theory and practice sessions (critical analysis of the compulsory literary texts) will take place in two weekly sessions, following the official schedule. Three to four weeks will be necessary for the presentation and discussion of each topic.

Group and individual tutorials will follow the schedule provided by the teacher, taking into account the students' class hours.

Students can write up an optional individual essay guided by the teacher taking into account the following key dates:

- Deadline for notifying the choice of subject: week 8.
- Deadline for submitting the detailed draft and the bibliography: week 13.
- Deadline for submitting the essays: during the first final exam.

The first final exam includes the submission of the optional essay and will take place on the official date assigned by the University.

4.5. Bibliography and recommended resources