

**Universidad de Costa Rica**  
**Sistema de Estudios de Posgrado**  
**Facultad de Letras**

Maestría en Literatura Inglesa

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| Course:<br>SP-7156: Amor y muerte en la narrativa        | Type: optional  |
| Cycle:   | Modality: Theoretical   |
| Instruction modality: virtual (synchronic, asynchronous) | Credits:  |
| Requisites:  | Distribution: Theory: 3 hours<br>Independent work:  |
| Co-requisites:   | Attention to students (by appointment): L: 2-4pm (online)   |
| Instructor: M.L. Susana Monge Alvarado                   | Contact: <a href="mailto:susana.monge_a@ucr.ac.cr">susana.monge_a@ucr.ac.cr</a> ,<br><a href="mailto:monge.alsu@gmail.com">monge.alsu@gmail.com</a> |

**Course Description:**

Love and Death in Narrative is an elective for students of the Master's Program in English Literature. We will study novels and short prose within the thematic frame of love and death, primarily circumscribed within a dialectical focus based on literary hermeneutics.

We will approach this dichotomy (love-death) with the intent of better understanding the social, political and economic contexts that produced these texts and their echoes afterwards. We will attempt to establish how love and death are jointly productive in the texts to communicate discourses of marginality, race, class, gender, and sexuality. This course allows students to put into practice their expertise and look at literature through different critical lenses such as Feminism, Marxism, New Historicism, Deconstruction, and PostColonialism.

This course is 100% virtual. UCR's *Mediación Virtual* will be the course virtual classroom where all the content and extra material will be posted, sent, and collected.

**General Objectives:**

1. Study representative works of certain major authors, evaluating their presence and importance within their social and literary contexts.
2. Further the students' knowledge of English language literary works and of the varied literary techniques used during the past century.

3. Examine the different ways in which the thematic pair of love and death can be portrayed, perceived and developed in literature.

### **Specific Objectives:**

1. Carefully examine the theoretical concepts the authors use, modify, reference or reject.
2. Focus on different narrative, stylistic and structural techniques, such as single or multiple points of view, stream of consciousness, psychological time and digression.
3. Study social, political and economic aspects such as ideology, power and oppression, and their manifestation in social constructs such as gender, race, class and sexuality.
4. Evaluate ethical notions such as good and evil, morality, justice and redemption.

### **Methodology:**

This course will be virtual. Synchronic sessions (Zoom sessions) will cover about 60% of the course calendar (10 sessions). Students will work with a theoretical and literary content compendium. Since this course is 100% online, multimedia complementary materials and important information will be uploaded for each class. UCR's *Mediación Virtual* will be the course virtual classroom where all the content and extra material will be posted, sent, and collected. This platform will also be used to upload evaluation instructions and feedback, as well as graded class activities. Therefore, enrolling and participating in *Mediación Virtual* is mandatory for all students.

Because of the nature of the subject matter and course modality, students have to cover the extensive reading assignments of theory and literary texts and complete any homework or assignment on their own. Synchronic -time will be used to generate discussion and to analyse the readings. The professor will review and supplement with introductory material using different media (movies, power point presentations, among others) and guide the students in the discussion and analysis of the text indicated in the syllabus. Student preparation for and participation in discussion is fundamental since the free exchange of ideas and opinions facilitates and enhances assimilation of the course content. Students will share their ideas individually and in groups, in both oral and written form, applying theory into practice. Activities will include traditional lectures, brief group work, open discussions, forums and oral presentations. Students are accountable for making a conscientious use of all learning opportunities that are offered.

Consequently, punctuality in task completion, commitment and honesty in the teaching-learning process are essential.

**Contents:**

- Theoretical concepts and other considerations about love and death. Philosophical and historical reflections.
- Love and Death in relation to the following aspects in literary analysis:
- Social, political, and economic aspects: ideology, power and oppression.
- Social constructs: gender, race, class, and sexuality.
- Ethical considerations: good and evil, morality, justice, redemption.
- Hermeneutics of love and Death in the following works:

Euripides, *Medea*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

James Joyce, “The Dead”

William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*

Other texts: “Porphyria’s Lover” (Browning), “Thanatopsis” (Cullen Bryant).  
Other examples in music.

**Evaluation:**

Students are responsible for all the material discussed in class or assigned. The final grade will be determined on the following basis:

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| Critical Reaction: Forums (4) ..... | 40 % |
| Research Project .....              | 30 % |
| Presentation Research project ..... | 10 % |
| Creative Writing .....              | 20%  |

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| Critical Reaction: Forums | Asynchronous activity. Students will be provided with questions or prompts that must be answered according to a list of requirements.<br>(these short writings will serve to discover, question, complicate and clarify our thoughts. These exploratory writings will be written and turned in according to the syllabus. You should try to show in your reactions not only that you did the reading, but that you |
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|                               | <p>have thought about it and can formulate a response to its premises. These short compositions will contribute to guide our discussions during class).</p>  |
| Research Project              | <p>The research project will be a written literary analysis of potential publication. The text will be about 12 to 15 pages, and it will include 10 sources. You are encouraged to use the theoretical and literary sources studied throughout the semester; however, students have to reference their essay with at least three additional critical articles / book chapters. These sources must be published in English, from a distinguished academic journal or a critical book. Students are required to submit an electronic version of their research paper before 5 p.m. on the due date. This version does not replace the printed copy of your essay, nor does it compensate for late submission. No late work will be accepted.</p> |
| Presentation Research project | <p>Presentation Research project: Each student is required to present their research findings. The day of your presentation, you also have to submit a handout to your professor and your classmates, concisely outlining/summarizing your report. Presentations are not to be read, although you may refer to notes on flashcards. The presentations should be practiced and prepared, but not memorized or scripted. You may be interrupted during your presentation with questions.</p>   |
| Creative Writing              | <p>2 options:<br/>Students create a narrative piece using any type of visual tool or technology (comics, animation, mini-movie)<br/>Prompts and/or topics will be provided</p>   |

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|  | <p>only for suggestion. Grade based on participation. 5min approx. video-visual content. Calculate a similar time period for the reader to revise the text. Mixed evaluation.</p> <p>Standard written text:<br/>Students are provided with prompts and/or topics for writing an original narration. Suggested length: 3-4 pp. micro-narrations are also possible. Grade based on participation. Mixed evaluation</p> |
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**Notes:**

- **Formal Writing:** All written assignments, including homework, papers, reports and creative writing, must follow the established MLA (8th edition) format standards; they won't be accepted otherwise. All submissions should be double-spaced, with one inch margins all around, 12-point font, and page numbers at the top of the page (except the first page). There is no need to have a separate title page, but provide the first page with an appropriate heading. Consistently document all sources.
- The pace of the "Tentative Timetable" will depend on student's progress and performance as well as on the development of the class.
- It is expected and required that all students study the material assigned for each class as it appears on the course Tentative timetable.
- No writing generated in whole by A.I. technologies (for example, ChatGPT) can be submitted for evaluation purposes.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated as this constitutes a serious academic offense. Plagiarized work will be given a zero; an account of the student's fault will be kept in his/her records.

*Todo estudiante en todo curso queda sujeto a los reglamentos de evaluación de la Universidad de Costa Rica.*

**ARTÍCULO 4. Son faltas muy graves:**

- g) Utilizar, con conocimiento de causa, documentos falsificados, para cualquier gestión universitaria administrativa, académica o de cualquier otra índole.

## **ARTÍCULO 5. Son faltas graves:**

•c) Copiar de otro estudiante tareas, informes de laboratorio, trabajos de investigación o de cualquier otro tipo de actividad académica.

**ARTÍCULO 9.** Las faltas serán sancionadas según la magnitud del hecho con las siguientes medidas:

a) Las faltas muy graves, con suspensión de su condición de estudiante regular no menor de seis meses calendario, hasta por seis años calendario.

b) Las graves con suspensión de quince días lectivos a seis meses calendario.

## **Main Bibliography**

Ariés, Philippe. *Western Attitudes toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*. London: Marion Boyars, 1976.

Binion, Rudolph. *Love Beyond Death: The Anatomy of a Myth in the Arts*. New York University Press, 1993.

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory, a very short introduction*. Great Britain: OUP, 2011.

Fiedler, Leslie. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. Dalkey Archive Press, 1998.

Güven, Ferit. *Madness and Death in Philosophy*. State of University of New York Press, 2005.

Kusch, Celena. *Literary Analysis*. London: Routledge, 2016.

Luper, Steven. Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Life and Death*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Malpas, J.E & Robert C. Solomon. *Death and Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1978.

Wood, Claire. *Dickens and the Business of Death*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

## Tentative Timetable

**\*\*\*Students will be provided with specific readings for analysis besides the literary texts.** The readings must be completed before the sessions according to the dates presented.

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| 1  | <b>Synchronous</b><br>Introduction: Theoretical concepts and other considerations about love and death. Philosophical and historical reflections. |
| 2  | Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>   |
| 3  | <b>Synchronous</b><br>Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>   |
| 4  | <b>Forum 1</b>  |
| 5  | Euripides, <i>Medea</i>   |
| 6  | <b>Synchronous</b><br>Euripides, <i>Medea</i>   |
| 7  | <b>Forum 2</b>  |
| 8  | <b>Synchronous</b><br>William Faulkner, <i>As I Lay Dying</i>   |
| 9  | <b>Synchronous</b><br>William Faulkner, <i>As I Lay Dying</i>   |
| 10 | <b>Forum 3</b>  |
| 11 | <b>Synchronous</b><br>James Joyce, "The Dead"   |

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| 12 | <b>Forum 4</b>  |
| 13 | <b>Synchronous</b><br>Research Project Due date Presentation Research project   |
| 14 | <b>Synchronous</b><br>Other texts: "Porphyria's Lover" (Browning), "Thanatopsis" (Cullen Bryant).<br>Other examples in music. |
| 15 | <b>Synchronous</b><br><b>Creative Writing Discussions</b>   |
| 16 | <b>Synchronous</b><br>Final Feedback  |

**\*This a tentative timetable; thus, it may change during the development of the content of the subject matter along the semester. Changes may occur if the instructor deems it necessary.**

***Ampliación:***

**\*Ampliación dates may be subject to change if 10 business days are necessary to compute final results (see Article 22 of the Reglamento de Régimen Académico Estudiantil).**