

### COURSE OUTLINE I-2025

<b>Name:</b> Literary Aesthetics and Theory I	<b>Requisites:</b> NA
<b>Course Code:</b> SP-0260	<b>Co-requisites:</b> NA
<b>Credits:</b> 3	<b>Type:</b> Plan de Estudios MA in English Literature
<b>Schedule:</b> 3 hours / weekly synchronous or asynchronous work 6 hours / week out-of-class work	16 weeks
<b>Level:</b> Graduate	<b>Cycle:</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> cycle
<b>Course Delivery Modality:</b>	Virtual (through Mediación Virtual/ Zoom sessions)

#### I. Course Description:

Literary Aesthetics and Theory I is a required introductory course for students of the Master in English Literature Program. The course is held in weekly three-hour sessions for one semester for three theory credits. This course is designed to introduce students to basic issues, approaches, and concepts of the twentieth and twenty-first century literary theory and to serve as a transition from undergraduate to graduate literary studies. It also provides a foundation for further investigation and application in other courses of the program.

The course will use online sessions to comply with the fully online delivery modality (100% of virtualization, with 60% synchronous and 40% asynchronous sessions) required by University of Costa Rica. This methodology requires students to develop autonomy as learners and writers and to make frequent use of technologies to complete the coursework.

The institutional platform Mediación Virtual will be used as the official platform for online classes. Thus, students are required to possess a UCR account and to participate in all the online activities of the course. A videoconferencing service will be used to establish synchronic communication during class time, and the UCR's institutional email accounts will be the official channel of communication between instructor and students.

#### II. General Objective:

By the end of the semester students will have a basic understanding of key issues, trends, and concepts in contemporary literary theory which will allow them to actively engage in contemporary literary studies and further pursue theoretical inquiry on their own.

**Specific Objectives:**

By the end of the semester students will:

- A. Be familiar with the vocabulary and concepts related to fundamental issues of contemporary literary studies.
- B. Be able to productively formulate and creatively respond to basic questions in literary studies today.
- C. Recognize the significance of the historicity of those issues and elements and contextualize them accordingly.
- D. Understand basic perspectives in the aesthetics of literature while formulating personal criteria of the same.
- E. Expand critical skills and theoretical frameworks for literary analysis and research.

**III. Contents:**

- A. Historiography and literary studies (5 weeks)
  - 1. Introduction
  - 2. Literature as a subject/object of study
  - 3. Literary theory
  - 4. Literature and history
- B. Meaning and interpretation (4 weeks)
  - 1. The origins and locations of meaning
  - 2. The politics of interpretation
  - 3. Reading/writing
- C. Literature, Culture, and Subject Formation (6 weeks)
  - 1. Literature in/and/as cultural context
  - 2. Identity and subjectivity
  - 3. Speaking the subject
- D. Basic aspects of literary research (continuous)
  - 1. Literary documentation
  - 2. Establishing a theoretical framework
  - 3. Argumentation and critical analysis.

#### **IV. Methodology:**

Readings will be assigned weekly for individual study before class and will serve as points of departure for class discussion and activities. Active student preparation and participation are not only desirable but essential (late arrivals and absences will not be welcome.) Students are expected to contribute both formally (papers and presentations) and informally (class discussion, group work, and other activities) to the analysis, comparison/contrast, synthesis, and application of assigned material, while the professor serves as the mediator.

#### **V. Evaluation:**

Evaluation is continuous in the sense that weekly performance will be monitored, so attendance is fundamental and individual participation is crucial. Students must make up responsibly for late arrivals or absences. The final course grade will be determined on the following basis:

- 15% (1 oral presentation in pairs)
- 30% (2 graded group discussions, in class)
- 15% (1 response paper)
- 15% (1 individual Literary Project in Milanote)
- 25% (1 final essay)

#### **Description of evaluations**

##### **Response paper**

For your response paper, you will apply the theory studied in class (choose a minimum of 2 articles) to the novel studied in the course (*Poor Things*). You will submit your ideas about these texts in a 4- 5-page response paper. Your paper must have quotes from the texts to support your analysis and opinion and be well-organized with a clear thesis statement. You will use theory to discuss how the text relates to the concepts studied in class as well as your substantiated response/opinion to the texts.

##### **Student presentation**

During these presentations, you will be the “experts” on the theoretical texts or authors you choose according to the rifle of topics. You will share your expertise with the class, leading the class in motivating and provocative discussions and applying critical analysis to the texts. The presentation may have but is not limited to providing a summary with the main points, explaining difficult, specific, or interesting parts in the text; the author’s work/life, contextualizing the text/author from a historical-biographical approach or a similar one depending on the assignment, offering critical reviews and criticism as well

as your own opinions on the authors' ideas and the theory you have chosen. The presentation should be organized, have clear objectives, have strong analysis and be well-researched.

The presentation should:

- Be between 45 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes long (including the master class, discussion, Videos or similar visual aids, and a pop-time activity where you manage to engage your audience in the information you have provided).
- Promote analysis
- Link the theory readings studied in class with the topics given in the presentation.

***Student presentation: Topics to be selected.***

*Presentation 1*

The whole novel + readings up to week 4 (select 1 of your choice)

Topic 1: Historical- Biographical approach. Author's life and frequent themes in his/her work.

Topic 2: Deconstruction: Ways to read *Poor Things*, the novel.

*Presentation 2*

The novel, the movie, and readings from 4 to 6

Topic 3:

- Author's Cinema: The Cinema of Yorgos Lanthimos
- Comparison and contrast between the movie and the novel

*Presentation 3*

The poems by e. e. cummings

Topic 4: Historical- Biographical approach. Author's life and frequent themes/styles in his/her work.

Topic 5: Concrete poetry: Shape vs meaning.

*Presentation 4*

The work of David Catá

Topic 6: Historical- Biographical approach. Author's life and frequent themes/styles in his/her work.

Topic 7: The trace in literary studies vs its use in the visual arts (mainly the interpretation of images)

## Research paper

For your final paper, you will choose an artistic text studied in class and write a 12-15 page essay. You should think of the essay as the draft of a publishable article, a conference presentation and/or a starting point for your thesis. You will need to research your text extensively, contextualize it historically, and apply the theories discussed in class to the analysis of your text. You must use at least 2 theoretical works from the class in addition to other academic texts from your own research. You will be required to turn in a project proposal by week 12 as well as a brief informal presentation of your work.

## Group discussions:

The day of the class/group discussion you will receive a question that you must answer spontaneously and that will open and guide the discussion on such a topic for the rest of the group to participate. This is an oral production activity, and the idea is that you will be the student in charge of guiding the discussion that day for that topic. Therefore, you must use sound arguments from the theoretical texts studied in class applied to literary works.

## Literary Project in Milanote

For this assignment, you will create a Literary Project using the app Milanote with at least 10 written entries paragraph like, and 15-20 images, icons, comments, or similar tools the app offers you for free. You must complete a total of 25-30. The app allows you to have a project with 100 entries free of charge and it is quite useful for creative analysis and teaching. It is also used in arts research for the framework of thesis projects. All materials must be related to the material covered in the course, your opinions and associations as well as their connections to the world around us. These are meant to be creative expressions of the material discussed in class and the literary/artistic works analyzed in class with a critical and analytical focus but also a place for exploration and risk-taking. You can combine texts or focus only on one artistic text and/or one theoretical text. You must show your project to the class briefly in an informal but colloquial presentation.

## VI. Proposed Course Schedule of Readings (Theoretical and Literary), Evaluation, and \*Assignments:

	Modality	Contents	Assignment
<b>Week 1</b> March 11	Synchronous	<b>Introduction</b> Course syllabus Dobie – “The Relationship of Reading and Writing”	<b>Readings</b>
<b>Week 2</b> March 18	Synchronous	<b>Section 1</b> Eagleton (Ch 1): “What is Literature?” Culler (Ch 1): “What is Theory?”	<i>Start reading: Poor Things – Alistair Gray</i>

<b>Week 3</b> March 25	Asynchronous	Culler (Ch 2): "What is Literature and does It Matter?" Belsey (Ch 1 excerpt): "Criticism and Common Sense"	
<b>Week 4</b> April 1	Synchronous	Patterson (in Lentricchia): "Literary History"	<b>Presentation 1</b>
<b>Week 5</b> April 8	Synchronous	Chatman (in Rivkin): "The Structure of Narrative Transmission" Culler (Ch 4): "Language, meaning, and Interpretation"	<b>First group discussion</b> – based on the novel only
<b>April 15</b>	No class	<b>Easter Break</b>	
<b>Week 6</b> April 22	Asynchronous	<b>Section 2</b> Watch <i>Poor Things</i> – by <i>Yorgos Lanthimos</i>	
<b>Week 7</b> April 29	Synchronous	Culler (Ch 6): "Narrative"	<b>Presentation 2</b> <b>Second group discussion</b> – Cine Comparative literature – discussion/film forum: theory, novel, and movie
<b>Week 8</b> May 6	Asynchronous	Graff (in Lentricchia): "Determinacy/Indeterminacy"	<b>Response paper</b>
<b>Week 9</b> May 13	Asynchronous	Culler (Ch 5): "Rhetoric, Poetics, and Poetry" Belsey (Ch 3): "Criticism and Meaning"	<i>Start reading: Poems by e.e. cummings</i>
<b>Week 10</b> May 20	Synchronous	Barthes: "The Death of the Author" Barthes: "From Work to Text"	<b>Presentation 3</b> (Poems by e.e. cummings)
<b>Week 11</b> May 27	Synchronous class	<b>Section 3</b> Culler (Ch. 3): "Literature and Cultural Studies" Culler (Ch. 8): "Identity, Identification, and the Subject"	<b>Start watching the work of David Catá.</b> <b>Presentation 4</b>
<b>Week 12</b> June 3	Synchronous	Belsey (Ch. 4): "Addressing the Subject" Coppa, Francesca. "Introduction: Five Things FanFiction is, One Thing It Isn't" Serrano and Jannes "Conceptual Challenges on the Road to the Multiverse"	Start reading. Chapter of Webnovel. <i>The Job of Deadpool</i> <a href="https://www.webnovel.com/book/the-new-job-of-deadpool_17763632806905405/orientation.47684080724143577">https://www.webnovel.com/book/the-new-job-of-deadpool_17763632806905405/orientation.47684080724143577</a>
<b>Week 13</b> June 10	Asynchronous	Storey, "What is Popular Culture?" Heller, "Too Much or Not Enough"	Start Reading. Chapter of Webnovel. Spintners by Choice: A Bridgerton FanFic. <a href="https://www.webnovel.com/book/spintners-by-choice-a-bridgerton-fanfic!29746427800494005">https://www.webnovel.com/book/spintners-by-choice-a-bridgerton-fanfic!29746427800494005</a>
<b>Week 14</b> June 17	Synchronous	No reading – Discussion -Presentation	<b>Literary Project</b>

<b>Week 15</b> June 24	Asynchronous		Final paper
<b>Week 16</b> July 1		Results	

**\*Extra materials used in class (short readings for analysis) may be included.**

## **VII. Selected bibliography (Theory and Literature) \*:**

Barthes, Roland. *Image-Music-Text*. 1977. Trans. Stephen Heath. Noonday, 1988.

Belsey, Catherine. *Critical Practice*. Routledge, 1980.

Bressler, Charles. *Literary Criticism*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Prentice-Hall, 2011.

Catá, David. *David Catá's*. <http://davidcata.com/>

Childs P., & Fowler R.,. *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Routledge, 2006.

Coppa, Francesca. *The Fanfiction Reader. Folktales for the Digital Age. University of Michigan, 2017.*

<https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9479376>

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 1997.

Cummings, e. e. *The Complete Poems: 1904-1962*. George J. Firmage (ed.) Liveright, 1991.

Dabrowski, et all. *The Multiverse*. NDPI, Switzerland, 2020.

Dobie, A. *Theory into Practice. An Introduction to Literary Criticism*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Wadsworth, 2012.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. University of Minnesota Press, 2018.

Gray, Alisdair. *Poor Things. Episodes from the Early Life of Archibald McCandless M.D. Scottish Public Health Officer*. Mariner Books, 2023.

Lanthimos, Yorgos. *Poor Things*. Search Light Pictures, 2023.

Lentriccia, Frank and Thomas McLaughlin, eds. *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago UP, 1995.

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. The Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

QW\_JiHi. "Spinsters By Choice. A Bridgerton Fanfic!" N.D. [https://www.webnovel.com/book/spinsters-by-choice-a-bridgerton-fanfic!\\_29746427800494005](https://www.webnovel.com/book/spinsters-by-choice-a-bridgerton-fanfic!_29746427800494005)

Rivkin, Julie. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Blackwell, 2004.

Storey, John. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Pearson, N.D.

ShKshoto. "The New Job of Deadpool" N.D. [https://www.webnovel.com/book/the-new-job-of-deadpool\\_17763632806905405/deadpool-new-job\\_47683907600051405](https://www.webnovel.com/book/the-new-job-of-deadpool_17763632806905405/deadpool-new-job_47683907600051405)

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

All essays must follow MLA format thoroughly. Essays failing to do so will not be accepted.