Department of English

Stockholm University

Literary Cultures 1832-the Present
(7.5 credits)
Autumn 2025
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Note: This is an abridged version of the module description. The complete version, which also includes the module grading criteria, can be found on Athena.

Module Description

This module focuses on literature in English from different genres and different parts of the world from the period 1832 to the present. Terms and analytical concepts that the students acquired in English I and in Literary Cultures 1340-1832 are used and expanded upon. In addition, students gain historical and critical perspectives on literary texts. Special emphasis is placed on the students' own ability to use English in speech and in writing to critically analyse the texts in question.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the module, students are expected to be able to:

- Critically analyze different types of literary texts from different time periods and different parts of the English-speaking world;
- Demonstrate the ability to place these texts in their historical context and relate the texts' aesthetic expressions to the context in which they were produced;
- Demonstrate a good ability to understand texts written in English;
- In writing, express themselves appropriately in good academic English.

Grading

The module adopts the 7-grade SU scale.
To receive a final grade, students must have completed all the examination assignments and the exam [not done all examination assignments=no mark].
To receive a passing grade (A to E), students must receive a Pass on the written assignment and pass the exam with the minimum of the grade E.

Examination

Students are required to complete the following:

1. Written assignment: Pass/Fail (To receive a Pass, the assignment needs to meet the grading criteria for at least an E)
2. Exam: 100% of the module grade (A to E)

Module activities

The module consists of the following activities:

- Five seminars (pre-seminar instructions for each seminar will be posted on Athena);
- Five lectures (lecture notes/readings/ppts will be posted on Athena);
- Five workshops (pre-workshop instructions will be posted on Athena);
- Before each lecture, seminar or workshop, students are expected to finish the assigned reading, do any accompanying tasks, and discuss the texts and tasks in groups. Students should be prepared to discuss the reading and tasks at the seminar;
- Students are expected to complete all the tasks assigned by the teacher.

Module format

The module will take place in the form of lectures, workshops, and seminars. In the lectures, students will be given broad theoretical tools and contexts through which to approach different genres of English language literature. In the workshops, students will develop and practice their skills in close textual analysis. In the seminars, students will practice analyzing literary texts in relation to their historical context, as well as in terms of their generic features and broader thematic concerns and learn how to provide textual support for their reading.

Both the seminars and workshops are intended to be active, hands-on opportunities for students to practice the skills they will learn throughout the module; for this reason, the students should bring the assigned text(s) with them to every seminar.

Required reading

Please buy the following books in the following editions.

- Either *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, 11th edn. (New York: Norton, 2024): volumes E-F.
- Or *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, 10th edn. (New York: Norton, 2018): volumes E-F.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. *Mary Barton*, Norton or any other edition.

Schedule

Please also read the biographies of the authors you read in *Norton*.

Unit	Set Texts
1 Victorian Literature	Introduction to The Victorian Age (*Norton* E/F); Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott' (*Norton* E/F), 'The Lotos-Eaters' (*Norton* E/F); Arnold, 'Dover Beach' (*Norton* E/F); Rossetti, 'In an Artist's Studio' (*Norton* E/F); Dickens, from *Hard Times* (pdf); Darwin, from *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man* (*Norton* E/pdf); Engels, from *The Great Towns* (*Norton* E/F)
2 The Realist Novel	Gaskell, *Mary Barton*
3 Modernism	Introduction to The Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries (*Norton* E/F); Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (*Norton* E/F), 'Modern Fiction' (*Norton* E/F); Eliot, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' (*Norton* E/F)
Written assignment	Argument essay of 1500 words, answering one of a set number of questions; referring to primary texts, historical context and at least two scholarly, peer-reviewed sources
4 Contemporary Modern Literature	Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (*Norton* E/F); Orwell, 'Shooting an Elephant' (*Norton* E/F), 'Politics and the English Language' (*Norton* E/F); Duffy, 'Warming Her Pearls', 'Valentine', 'Medusa' (*Norton* E/F)
5 Contemporary World Literatures	Rhys, 'The Day They Burned the Books' (*Norton* E/F); Johnson, 'Inglan is a Bitch' (*Norton* E/F); Kureishi, 'You will always be a Paki' (*Norton* E/pdf); Heaney, 'Digging' (*Norton* E/F); Ishiguro, 'A Village after Dark' (*Norton* E/F); Desai, 'The Sermon in the Guava Tree' (*Norton* E/F); Smith, 'The Waiter's Wife' (*Norton* E/pdf)
Exam	2-hour sit-down closed-book exam; students choose to write on one out of two different tasks; in each task students write a practical criticism of a set passage, situating the text in its historical context

Assignment dates

Written assignment released: September 22, 12:00
Written assignment deadline: September 29, 23.59
Retake written assignment released: October 15, 13:00
Retake written assignment deadline: October 22, 23.59
Exam: (Check TimeEdit)
Re-take exam: (Check TimeEdit)