Stockholm University

Optional Literature Module: Education in Literature
(7.5 credits)
Spring 2025
Teacher: Joakim Wrethed
Email: joakim.wrethed@english.su.se

Module description

"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery." — Mark Van Doren.

In this module, we will focus on the important figure of the teacher as presented in and through the literary form. We will also explore how education in general—and the teaching of literature more specifically—have been dealt with within different literary/fictional worlds. We will consider how teachers, teaching, and learning are thematised in sometimes similar but more often very different ways. This involves looking more closely at aspects of education regarded as potentially harbouring liberating forces, but also, in contrast, at dimensions forwarding education as mechanical production leading to conformity and spiritual decline. The overarching questions we address to ourselves, each other and the works are: What is a teacher? What is teaching? What is learning? What is education in literature? What is literature in education?

The module comprises eight two-hour seminars, all of which involve active participation from the students. The students will read primary texts and secondary material before each seminar. They will discuss the material in groups, in and outside of class, using these meetings as occasions to reflect upon and voice their ideas about their reading of primary texts and understanding of the secondary material. The final examination will be comprised of one written and one oral assignment.

Intended learning outcomes

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

- Account for the contents of the course literature;
- Display the ability to use basic theoretical concepts, analytical models and methods in the field;
- Apply these concepts to literary texts;
- Analyse literary texts from a relevant theoretical perspective;
- Motivate their own analyses in writing in a manner relevant to the field;
- Display a good understanding of written English;
- Express themselves in academic English.

Grading

The module adopts the 7-grade SU scale (A–F).
To receive a final grade, students must have completed all the examination assignments [not done all examination assignments=no grade].
To receive a passing grade (A to E), students must complete and pass all the examination assignments, and thus demonstrate that they achieved all the learning outcomes at least at the minimum level (see "Module grading" below).

Module activities

The module consists of the following activities:

- Seminars (pre-seminar instructions for each seminar will be posted on Athena);

- Before each seminar, 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.

Examination

Students are required to complete the following:

- Oral presentation: a structured presentation defining and applying central concepts to the course readings in a selection of works from the reading list: pass/fail grading. These presentations will be given by students in the seminars. The order will be decided at the start of the module.
- Analytical essay (100% of the module grade): a research-led argument essay of 2000-2500 words, which must make reference both to primary sources and to at least two secondary peer reviewed sources: A-F grading scale.
- The final grade will be the essay grade (A–F), but the student must also have a passing grade (P) for the oral presentation.

Module format

The module will take place in the form of seminars, where students will practise analysing literary texts in terms of the specific historical, generic and critical perspectives dealt with in the course, as well as develop their skills in providing textual support for their reading.

Seminars 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 try to get the editions listed below)

Literary Texts:

Coetzee, J. M. *The Schooldays of Jesus*. London: Harvill Secker, 2016.

Fitzgerald, Penelope. *The Gate of Angels. London: HarperCollins, 2004.* ISBN-13: 9780006543602.

Plato. *Meno*. Available at: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1643/1643-h/1643-h.htm

Spark, Muriel. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. London: Penguin, 2000.

Williams, John. *Stoner*. London: Vintage, 2003.

Wolff, Tobias. *Old School*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2005.

Films:

Dead Poets Society. 1989. Dir. Peter Weir.

Whiplash. 2014. Dir. Damien Chazelle.

Articles (full PDFs will also be available on Athena):

Brown, Peter Robert. 2006. "'There's Something about Mary:' Narrative and Ethics in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*." *Journal of Narrative Theory*, no. 2: 228. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsglr&AN=edsgcl.159507867&site=eds-live&scope=site.

Dunne, É., 2016. “Event, Weak Pedagogy, and Shattered Love in John Williams’ *Stoner*.” *JOMEC Journal*, (10), pp.75–83. DOI: http://doi.org/10.18573/j.2016.10088

Dunne, Éamonn. 2013. “Love Foolosophy: Pedagogy, Parable, Perversion.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, no. 6: 625. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsbl&AN=vdc.100081597786.0x000001&site=eds-live&scope=site.

Glendening, John. 2019. “Science, Secularism, and Chance in Penelope Fitzgerald’s *The Gate of Angels*.” *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*, 63 (1): 61–76. Accessed December 2. doi:10.1080/20512856.2016.1152079.

Gooblar, D. 2019. “Tobias Wolff’s *Old School*: Truth, Lies, Fiction, and the American Boarding School.” *Critique - Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 55 (4): 358–72. Accessed December 2. doi:10.1080/00111619.2013.783545.

Lewis, Tyson E. 2011. “Rethinking the Learning Society: Giorgio Agamben on Studying, Stupidity, and Impotence.” *Studies in Philosophy and Education: An International Journal* 30 (6): 585. doi:10.1007/s11217-011-9255-6.

Magrini, James Michael. 2014. “Dialectic and Dialogue in Plato: Refuting the Model of Socrates-as-Teacher in the Pursuit of Authentic Paideia.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, no. 12: 1320. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsbl&AN=vdc.100067639080.0x000001&site=eds-live&scope=site.

Schedule

Please see Time Edit for seminar dates/times and rooms. Check regularly for updates.

SEMINAR	Reading
1	Introduction; Practical information.
2	*The Schooldays of Jesus*; Lewis (Athena)
3	*Stoner*; Dunne “Event, Weak Pedagogy” (Athena)
4	*Dead Poets Society*, *Whiplash*; Dunne “Love Foolosophy” (Athena)
5	*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*; Brown (Athena)
6	*The Gate of Angels*; Glendening (Athena)
7	*Old School*; Gooblar (Athena)
8	*Meno*; Magrini (Athena)

Deadlines: The analytical essay deadline Mar 23, re-take hand-in April 27.

Module grading criteria

	A	B	C	D	E	Fx	F
	excellent skills in	**very good skills in**	**good skills in**	**adequate skills in**	**satisfactory skills in**		
Overview of material	accounting for the contents of the course literature	accounting for the contents of the course literature	accounting for the contents of the course literature	accounting for the contents of the course literature	accounting for the contents of the course literature	The student has displayed some, but not all, of the skills of the level of the criteria for E.	The student's work does not demonstrate the achievement of the course outcomes at a minimally adequate level.
Discussion	displaying the ability to use basic theoretical concepts, analytical models and methods in the field, and applying these concepts to literary texts	displaying the ability to use basic theoretical concepts, analytical models and methods in the field, and applying these concepts to literary texts	displaying the ability to use basic theoretical concepts, analytical models and methods in the field, and applying these concepts to literary texts	displaying the ability to use basic theoretical concepts, analytical models and methods in the field, and applying these concepts to literary texts	displaying the ability to use basic theoretical concepts, analytical models and methods in the field, and applying these concepts to literary texts		
Analysis	analysing literary texts from a relevant theoretical perspective critically, and motivating their own analyses in writing in a manner relevant to the field	analysing literary texts from a relevant theoretical perspective critically, and motivating their own analyses in writing in a manner relevant to the field	analysing literary texts from a relevant theoretical perspective critically, and motivating their own analyses in writing in a manner relevant to the field	analysing literary texts from a relevant theoretical perspective critically, and motivating their own analyses in writing in a manner relevant to the field	analysing literary texts from a relevant theoretical perspective critically, and motivating their own analyses in writing in a manner relevant to the field		
Comprehension	displaying a good understanding of written English	displaying a good understanding of written English	displaying a good understanding of written English	displaying a good understanding of written English	displaying a good understanding of written English		
Expression	expressing themselves in academic English	expressing themselves in academic English	expressing themselves in academic English	expressing themselves in academic English	expressing themselves in academic English		

Grading criteria: Oral presentation

Criteria	Pass	Fail
Content	The presentation introduces the topic of the presentation in a clear and concise manner demonstrating the student's understanding of the literary, historical and theoretical issues discussed. These issues are presented and discussed in a lucid manner.	In the presentation the student does not demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the literary, historical, and theoretical issues discussed. These issues are not presented and discussed in an adequate manner.
Organisation and language	The presentation is well structured and easy to follow. The language used is academic and does not contain any severe mistakes.	The organisation of the presentation is poor, and the language used contains several mistakes.