

EN3581: LITERATURE AND THE CITY

Effective Term

Semester A 2026/27

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Literature and the City

Subject Code

EN - English

Course Number

3581

Academic Unit

English (EN)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to introduce students to a diverse range of city literature, creative nonfiction and literary journalism situated in different socio-cultural contexts from the nineteenth century to the present day. Students will explore how

selected writers represent, narrate and (re) imagine the city and the urban experience. Drawing upon theories and practices in literary studies, cultural geography, sociology and spatiality, students will be introduced to key concepts and critical perspectives in the study of space, place and the city. Topics to be discussed include: city and modernity, gender and space, flâneur and the metropolis, memory and place, and cosmopolitanism. Students will generate reading and creative responses to selected texts throughout the course, as well as develop critical skills in analysing literary and cultural texts.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify key aspects of city writing from the nineteenth century to the present day		x	x	
2	Explicate the characteristics of literary and cultural texts and understand their interdisciplinary character		x	x	x
3	Analyse the aesthetic and creative aspects of literary and nonfictional works		x	x	
4	Apply critical reading, thinking, and writing skills in interpreting literary and cultural texts		x	x	x
5	Generate creative and critical responses to various texts		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Interactive lecturing and discussion	Students will acquire knowledge of key concepts and major ideas through lectures and discuss and exchange ideas with their peers in small groups and in response to questions raised by the instructor.	1, 2, 3, 4	
2	Composition and critical analysis of key concepts and ideas	Students will apply their knowledge and literary interpretative skills to compose a critical essay on a topic germane to city and literature.	1, 2, 3, 4	

3	Creative and critical responses to literary texts	Students will generate creative and critical responses to selected texts throughout the course.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Individual Analysis Paper Students will write an individual analysis paper in response to selected topics/ literary texts covered in this course.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	Individual Work	No
2	Group Creative Project Students form small groups to give a creative response to a set text of the course. The project will be curated on a course-dedicated website. Students will give a presentation on their project in class.	2, 3, 4, 5	30	Group Work	No
3	Final Test Students will sit a final test that will evaluate their knowledge and understanding of course materials.	1, 2, 3, 4	35	Individual Work	No

4	Participation: Discussion and Reading Responses Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and activities and prepare the set texts before each class. They will also write short reading responses throughout the course.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	15	Individual Work (AI tools can be used for guided in-class discussions, but AI tools cannot be used for in-class written reading responses)	Yes
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Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Analysis Paper

Criterion

Argumentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Thesis is clear and appropriate for the writing task. There is a sense of originality in the way the writer has answered the question. Ideas are well supported and conclusions reveal a progression of ideas

Good (B+, B, B-)

The responses contain sharp ideas that are clearly expressed, original, and thoughtfully supported.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Elements of B and D

Marginal (D)

The topic is clear but there is little originality in the way that the writer has answered the question. Ideas are not always supported. There is little sense of progression as the paper develops.

Failure (F)

The essay appears to be off topic or only loosely related to the task. The writer may have misunderstood the question.

Assessment Task

Analysis Paper

Criterion

Language

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Exceptionally well composed. Words are used with precision and accuracy. A wide variety of sentence structures are used.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Strong control of language and a wide lexical range. Grammatical structures are varied and well constructed. Small errors may persist but the meaning is sharp and clear.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Effective and functional control. Basic ideas are communicated effectively. Errors cause minimal distraction.

Marginal (D)

There is a high density of errors, causing strain for the reader. The meaning is sometimes lost or unclear

Failure (F)

Almost every sentence has some kind of error, which causes serious problems for the reader. The meaning is often lost or distorted.

Assessment Task

Analysis Paper

Criterion

Engagement

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Sophisticated critical reading and interpretative skills apparent.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The discussion of the primary texts is appropriate and sufficiently detailed. There is a sense of the writer critically engaging with the texts.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Elements of B and D

Marginal (D)

Some discussion of the primary texts, but mostly in general and broad terms. The selection of primary texts may not be appropriate for the task. Citation methods are not clear or inconsistently applied.

Failure (F)

Very little if any engagement with the primary texts

Assessment Task

Analysis Paper

Criterion

Presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The written assignments are extremely well presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Good (B+, B, B-)

The written assignments are well presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The written assignments are adequately presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Marginal (D)

The written assignments are poorly presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Failure (F)

The written assignments are very poorly presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Assessment Task

Group Creative Project

Criterion

Ideas

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The main ideas are creative, original and compelling

Good (B+, B, B-)

The main ideas are thoughtful and contains elements of originality

Fair (C+, C, C-)

There are some interesting ideas, though the project appears to be lacking in terms of original or creative ideas.

Marginal (D)

The project appears to be lacking in terms of originality or relevance.

Failure (F)

The project ideas are generally incoherent, or irrelevant to the chosen topic

Assessment Task

Group Creative Project

Criterion

Content

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The key ideas of the creative project are very well expressed. Demonstrates an excellent understanding of the literary text. Establishes an intertextual relationship with the source text while demonstrating a strong sense of originality

Good (B+, B, B-)

The key ideas of the creative project are well-articulated. Demonstrates a very good understanding of the literary text. Establishes an intertextual relationship with the source text while demonstrating some elements of originality

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The key ideas of the creative project are to a large extent conveyed. Demonstrates a fair understanding of the literary text. The intertextual relationship with the source text can be strengthened. The project may be lacking in terms of original or creative ideas.

Marginal (D)

The main ideas are unclear. Demonstrates limited understanding of the literary text. The intertextual relationship between the source and the creative response needs to be strengthened. The project is lacking in terms of originality or relevance.

Failure (F)

Failed to demonstrate an understanding of the literary text. There is no attempt to establish an intertextual relationship with the original text. The project is lacking in terms of relevance.

Assessment Task

Group Creative Project

Criterion

Presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The creative project is extremely well-presented. The chosen approach succeeds in bringing out the major features and ideas of the project.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The creative project is well-presented. The chosen approach to a large extent brings out the major features and ideas of the project.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The creative project is to a large extent clearly presented. The chosen approach may not bring out all the key features and ideas of the project.

Marginal (D)

The creative project is not effectively presented. The chosen approach is not effective in bringing out the key ideas of the project.

Failure (F)

The presentation appears to be incoherent and is in lack of consideration.

Assessment Task

Participation: Discussion and Reading Responses

Criterion

Participation in in-class activities

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Makes significant contribution to in-class discussion and completes reading response tasks satisfactorily.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Makes occasional contribution to in-class discussion and completes the reading response tasks satisfactorily.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Seldom makes contribution to in-class group discussion; only completes few in-class reading response tasks.

Marginal (D)

Little evidence of participation in class; completes very few in-class reading response tasks.

Failure (F)

Fails to complete in-class reading response tasks or participate in class discussions.

Assessment Task

Test

Criterion

Engagement and Support

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates an excellent understanding of the course materials with specific and accurate support.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrates a good understanding of course materials with some specific support.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstrates fairly good understanding of course materials, but lacking in detail. There may be some inaccuracies.

Marginal (D)

Demonstrates a superficial understanding of course materials. Support is often insufficient and/or inaccurate.

Failure (F)

Demonstrates little (if any) understanding of course materials.

Assessment Task

Test

Criterion

Ideas

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The main ideas demonstrate originality and critical thinking. They demonstrate students' excellent analytical and interpretative skills.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The main ideas demonstrate some elements of originality and critical thinking. They show that students attain a good level of analytical and interpretative skills.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The main ideas are mostly clear but lacking in terms of specific or original ideas. They show that students' analytical and interpretative skills are average or below average.

Marginal (D)

The main ideas are not always clear and they lack originality or relevance.

Failure (F)

The writing appears to be off topic or ideas are generally incoherent.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

City, narratives, literature, society, modernity, metropolis, space, place

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Baudelaire, Charles. “The Painter of Modern Life” .
2	Berman, Marshall. All That is Solid Melts Into Air (selections)
3	Dickens, Charles. Sketches by Boz: Illustrative of Everyday Life and Everyday People (Selections)
4	Leung, Ping-kwan. City at the End of Time (selections)
5	Pamuk, Orhan. Istanbul: Memories of a City (Selections)
6	Poe, Allan Edgar. “The Man of the Crowd Rhys, Jean. “Let Them Call It Jazz” ”
7	Italo Calvino. Invisible Cities
8	Other materials, such as criticisms and poems, will be distributed by the instructor

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Alter, Robert. Imagined Cities: Urban Experience and the Language of the Novel. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
2	Bachelard, Gaston. The Poetics of Space. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.
3	Benjamin, Walter. The Arcades Project. Tran. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge, Mass., and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999.
4	De Certeai, Michel. The Practice of Everyday Life. Tran. Steven Rendall. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988.
5	Dennis, Richard. Cities in Modernity: Representation and Production of Metropolitan Space 1840-1930. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
6	Lehan, Richard Daniel. The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998.
7	Nord, Deborah. Walking in the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995.
8	Parsons, Deborah. Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity. Oxford, New York: OUP, 2000.
9	Solnit, Rebecca. Wanderlust: A History of Walking. London and New York: Verso, 2002.
10	Tuan, Yi-Fu. Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience. London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
11	Williams, Raymond. The Country and the City. Hogarth Press, 1985.