**Course Descriptions**

***The descriptions below provide general guidelines: courses offered and course content vary from year to year depending on faculty research interests and student needs.***

**ELL 641 Special Topics in Literature** **(3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course provides an opportunity for a specific focus on aspects of a period, movement or genre, such as transnational literary influences, marginal genres, scientific, artistic or political texts and movements, etc. Apart from historical context, theoretical and critical reponses to visual and literary material will be taken into consideration.

**ELL 642 Literatures in English (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course may engage with texts in two overlapping areas: literature by writers outside Britain and the United States or by émigrés, produced or widely circulated in English; or literature in English produced in former British colonies (excluding the United States).

The first area includes works from former French, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese and other colonies, and may include such writers as the Djebar, Khadra and Jelloun in North Africa; or Borges, Neruda, Paz, Márquez, Fuentes, Llosa, Amado and Lispector in South America. The course may also choose to consider texts from other countries which have been written in English or acquired global mainstream circulation in English translation, such as the works of Japanese writers like Mishima, Ōe, Murakami and Ishiguro; or of the Chinese authors Gao Xingjian, Mo Yan, Ha Jin, and Amy Tan.

The second area covers a wide range of literature affiliated with postcolonial studies and the study of Commonwealth literature, which may provide other perspectives. Texts to be discussed may include works by such writers as Naipaul and Hodge (Trinidad); Kincaid (Antigua), Rhys (Dominica), Seth, Rushdie and Mukherjee (India), Kureishi (Pakistan), Ondaatje (Sri Lanka), Thiong’O (Kenya), Tutuola, Achebe, Soyinka and Okri (Nigeria), Coetzee, Fugard and Gordimer (South Africa); or Mahfouz and Saadawi (Egypt).

The course may choose to look at common motifs and historical experience in the selected texts, or study differences in the geopolitical and cultural contexts of writing and circulation; or in language, and literary style; or explore various theoretical perspectives across national traditions.

**ELL 643 Single Author Study** **(3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course concentrates on the works of a single author. The historical period and the author’s contemporaries as well as critical responses to the texts will be taken into consideration.

**ELL 650 Text and Image (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

Designed to discuss *paragones* or encounters between the so-called sister arts, literature and visual arts, this course will survey relevant critical writings of Plato, Horace, da Vinci, Sidney, G. E. Lessing and the Romantics, and then move on to a discussion on definitions of the concept of ekphrasis in the 20th century, with reference to the work of Mitchell, Krieger, Heffernan, and others. In particular, the discussion of critical texts on ekphrasis will provide a foundation for students to analyze poetic and fictional works by major English and American poets (Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, the Pre-Raphaelites, Ashbery, Auden, Larkin, O’Hara, Duffy, Nichols), and fiction writers (Wilde, Ackroyd, Chevalier).

Apart from ekphrastic texts, another focus of the course may be on the ways in which visuality is incorporated in literature, through the analysis of visual poetry by poets such as Herbert, e. e. cummings, Thomas and Ferlinghetti, and graphic fiction; or the reverse, where the visual arts make use of words, as in Cubist and Dada collages, the paintings of Magritte, postmodern word art, and contemporary graffiti art.

**ELL 651 Text and Performance (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

The course may focus on the analysis of a specific literary text and its evaluation within a performance; a cinematic version or an acting performance or a ballet or an opera. Within this focus patterns in the pure text and its performance within its rich texture of sound, light and setting may be analyzed to see how the meaning is gained or lost in ambiguity to the extent that a new text is created.

**ELL 652 Literature, Science and Technology (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

Literary works in every historical period refer to contemporaneous developments in science and technology, developments which are central to genres such as science fiction and cyberpunk; in addition, with the current rapid pace of scientific and technological developments, there is an increasing need for students in the humanities to acquire general literacy, some depth of knowledge, and terminological precision in these areas.

This course explores some key developments in the history of science and technology, both in the contexts of their own systemic terms, and as they are reflected in written, visual, cinematic, and other texts. The focus may be on ideas in diverse fields, such as the evolution of disease and treatment (e.g. from Hippocrates to modern medicine and gene therapies, to the placebo effect and the quackery of “alternative medicine”); or developments in mathematics (e.g. from the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and Chinese through the Arab world and the European Renaissance to cryptography, systems theory and artificial intelligence); or models of the universe (e.g. from Democritus to Gödel, Einstein, Feynman and Hawking); or concepts of the human being in relation to the animal or machine (e.g. from Descartes and LaMettrie to Darwin, Lakoff, Pinker, Minsky, Tipler, Kurzweil, and developments in cognitive science and transhumanist thought); or the relations between science, skepticism and humanism (e.g. Dawkins, Harris, Dennett, Hitchens, Shermer).

**ELL 653 Environmental Issues in Literature (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

The course may cover a wide range of environmental issues, including the place of the human within nature, ecofeminism and gender, engagements with European philosophy and the biological sciences, critical animal studies, posthumanism and climate change. It will trace the development of ecocriticism from its origins in studies of European pastoral literature up to the contemporary literary academic approaches. It may question environmental damage raised by pollution, wildlife extinction and urban development. It may include not only the analysis of European thinkers such as Novalis and Rousseau, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, Adorno, Deleuze and Westphal, Zapt and Böhme, Uexküll and Agamben but also the analysis of literary works reflecting environmental issues such as the works of Wordsworth, Dickens, Shelley, Carson, DeLillo, Ghosh, Atwood, Martel, Mootoo and also related films such as *Microcosmos* and Werner Herzog’s *Grizzly Man.*

**ELL 654 Borders and Displacements (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

The concept of borders is generally associated with geography, and in the context of world events, with concepts of national, ethnic, or community identity as well as displaced or migrant populations. This course focuses on broader philosophical underpinnings of borders, understood as frames for defining particular systems and ways of thinking, and through which ideological divisions and exclusions are maintained or engaged in complex ways. Such frames may demarcate not only geographical and economic or political divides, but also styles, genres and disciplines; concepts of class, race, gender, sexuality; definitions of the “human” in relation to other species and artifical intelligence; and ideologies and belief systems. The course therefore intersects with other courses focusing on these related fields, as well as with colonial, postcolonial, diaspora and travel writing, the works of émigrés and déracinés, science fiction and cyberpunk literature, and trans and queer studies. Texts may be selected from a variety of sources, including literature, film, and the visual and performing arts, historical archives, and media representations. Theoretical contexts will vary depending on the semester, and may be drawn from a wide variety of texts, such as Arendt’s *Origins of Totalitarianism,* Anderson’s *Imagined Communities,* Derrida’s *Politics of Friendship* and *Margins of Philosophy,* Althusser’s *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,* Butler’s *Gender Trouble,* Dennett’s *Breaking the Spell,* Haraway’s “Cyborg Manifesto” and Hansell and Grassie’s collection *H+/-: Transhumanism and its Critics.*

**ELL 655 Literature and Film (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

An examination of relations between literary texts and cinematic representations, focusing on concepts and theories that serve as frames of reference in both media, considered as distinct forms of representation, as well as in their intertextual relations. Thus on the one hand, this course could deal with a variety of literary genres and their adaptations, such as the epic, novel, play, or poem; or on the other hand, with the adaptation process of a single genre; or with a single author or text with numerous adaptations.

However, as the aim of the course is to move beyond traditional fidelity and adaptation studies, its broader focus will be on understanding the fluidity as well as distinctions in the relationship between the two media and between verbal and visual representation, by considering aesthetic and structural parallels, analogies, variations and contradictions; framing, editing, and fragmentation; style, genre and subject matter; narrative codes and techniques; temporality and spatial constructs; allusion, pastiche and appropriation; and contexts of circulation and reception varying from television to the cinema to digital media.

Course material may therefore include literary texts from classical drama to contemporary popular fiction; scripts and cinematic representations in various genres from experimental film to recent releases; and review articles as well as theoretical and critical essays, from statements by early directors, to the writings of auteur theorists, to contemporary discussions in media and cultural studies and social, political, scientific, and literary theory.

**ELL 661 Postcolonial Literature (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course will consider questions and problems central to postcolonial studies. Through literary and theoretical works, it will explore such issues as versions of history, forms of identity and attachment, nationhood, translation/translatability, vernaculars, rewriting, hybridity and mimicry, and geographic and cultural displacement.

Writers studied may include Conrad, Rhys, Fanon,Mukherjee, Ondaatje, Achebe, Emecheta, Rushdie, Coetzee, Mahfouz, Kureishi, Said, Spivak, Bhabha, among others.

**ELL 662 Travel Writing (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course offers an introduction to the different forms of travel writing, from historical examples of letters, treaties, and diaries from expeditions, pilgrimages, and business trips, to contemporary narrative nonfiction. Texts may include newspaper and magazine articles, nonfiction books, literary essays, correspondence, and travel blogs. Discussions may focus on the environment, health, culinary issues, gender, authenticity and credibility, Orientalism, cultural critique, the traveller’s gaze, and journeys of the imagination.

**ELL 663 History, Memory and Trauma** **(3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

Texts and acts of literature, film, photography, and the visual and performing arts may be read as ways of selectively mediating personal and collective memories. The broader contexts for these kinds of readings include clinical psychological studies of trauma; global issues such as demographic changes, wars, and the situations of migrants and refugees; and conceptualizations of ethnic and national identity, race, gender, sexuality, and cultural-geographical belonging. This course considers various examples of oral, written and visual representation as they relate to processes of remembering and forgetting, both in their production and in their processing by readers and audiences. The theoretical focus is in three areas: the relation between lived experiences of history and interpreting their narrative representation (as elaborated, for example, in the work of Dominick LaCapra, Cathy Caruth and Pierre Nora), concepts of memory (e.g. from Freud to current studies in neuroscience), and understandings of catastrophic events and historical ruptures (e.g. Maurice Blanchotand Jalal Toufic on the writing of disasters). Other frameworks may be selected from such collections as Budd’s *Modern Historiography Reader*; Revel and Hunt’s *Histories,* Radstone and Schwarz’s *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates,* Caruth’s *Trauma: Explorations in Memory,* Balaev’s *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory,* and Nadal and Calvo’s *Trauma in Contemporary Literature.*

**ELL 665 Science Fiction and Fantasy (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course examines works of speculative fiction and their allegorical relations with contemporary society. Elements of the fantastic in literature can be traced from ancient beliefs in magic, gods, monsters and other supernatural entities and spaces, mythological stories and sacred texts, through medieval and Renaissance romances, and seventeenth and eighteenth-century allegorical fables, fairy tales and children’s stories, to the long Romantic period, when fantasy literature became established as a broad genre of fiction. The overlapping genre of science fiction has a similar history, dating back to times when beliefs in fictions were more intertwined with empirical realities or historical facts than they are today, and evolving, along with the progress of science as a means of understanding the world, as a mode of speculation: early elements of the genre can be seen in such works as Lucian of Samosata’s *True History* fromsecond-century Syria, Ibn Tufail’s *Hayy ibn Yaqdhan* (twelfth-century Spain), Kepler’s *Somnium* (seventeenth-century Austria), and Godwin’s *The Man in the Moon* (seventeenth-century England).

The course considers the origins of the genre as well as its subsequent development, but with a particular focus on twentieth and twenty-first-century works, looking at a variety of texts from literary and artistic works to graphic novels, television programs, films, and electronic games. Texts, including film and other adaptations, will be selected from a range of authors of fantasy (e.g. Burroughs, Lewis, Lovecraft, Tolkien, LeGuin, Pratchett, Rowling, Martin) and science fiction, including cyberpunk and transhumanist fiction (e.g. Verne, Wells, Čapek, Heinlein, Bradbury, Herbert, Clarke, Asimov, Gibson, Octavia Butler, Ballard, Dick, McMaster, Asher, Nagata, and Banks).

Topics covered may range from AI, space and time travel, the end of the world, to feminist utopias, chaos theory, new worlds and species, ecological disaster and holocaust; critical perspectives on the genre and specific works will be provided by essays written or collected by such scholars as James Gunn, David Hartwell, Robert Scholes, Bruce Sterling, Ann and Jeff Vandermeer, Marvin Minsky, Donna Haraway, Max More, Ray Kurzweil, Rosi Braidotti, Cary Wolfe, Bruno Latour, and Katherine Hayles.

**ELL 666 The Gothic (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

The Gothic may be considered as a literary genre related to Romantic sensibilities and fantasy literature, or as a broader aesthetic form that can be traced stylistically or thematically from medieval architecture and art to opera, film, and contemporary fashion. This course may therefore focus on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British canonical works from Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) through Stoker, Lewis, Mary Shelley, Radcliffe, and Le Fanu, to Reeve and Gaskell; or on aspects of other Gothic traditions, such as the American (the tales or novels of Irving, Brockden Brown, Poe, Hawthorne and Melville), French (the works of Sade, Lautréamont, Nerval, Bataille; Diderot, Leroux, Gautier, Hugo, Maupassant, and the roman noir; the films of Méliès, Cocteau, Epstein and Vadim); German (the *Schauerroman* or “shudder novel”; plays by Schiller, stories by Hoffmann and Kleist, German expressionist film); or Russian (Tolstoy, Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Bulgakov). Alternatively, or as a counterpoint, the course could address twentieth and twenty-first century productions such as Lovecraft’s stories, gothic romance, American southern gothic, modern gothic (Daphne du Maurier, Shirley Jackson), 1970s comic books, Stephen King, film noir and Gothic horror films (Hammer Horror, Tim Burton, Guillermo Del Torro), and Gothic rock music, and fashion.

Critical perspectives on the Gothic may range from analyses of related concepts such as Burke’s definition of the sublime, Freud’s work on the uncanny, Kayser on the grotesque, Foucault on madness, Ariès on death, Kristeva on abjection, Praz on the erotic sensibility and Toufic on vampires; to studies by scholars on such topics as redefining the genre (Gilbert and Gubar, Punter, Sedgwick); gothic psychology (Todorov, Wood, Clover, Carroll), the aesthetics of horror (Freeland, Lowenstein); the Gothic carnivalesque and habitus (Jones); economic contexts (Clery); escapism and counternarratives (Byron, Punter); the American Gothic (Ringe, Goddu); issues of gender and sexuality (Moers, Anolik, Smith, Heiland, Becker, Haggerty); or ghost and crypt effects (Abraham and Török, Derrida, Berthin).

**ELL 667 Women and Writing (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course may explore either a history of women’s writing or investigate a specific period (such as the 20th century) of development. It could include authors from around the globe, both from the Eastern and Western traditions. The course seeks to establish an awareness of the ways in which women’s writing has been produced and consumed, in changing contexts and situations, and the contemporary critical responses. Students will explore a range of texts that define womanhood and the cultural construction of femininity through class, ethic, gendered and national perspectives.

**ELL 671 Cultural Studies (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course covers a range of contemporary concerns in the context of globalization and rapid developments in technology, as they are discussed in academic contexts as well as in local, regional, and international print, visual and digital media. The focus will be on analyzing the possibilities and limitations of institutional modes of belief and thought, and on developing informed rational perspectives on these concerns, in particular as they become frames of reference for interpreting literary, visual, and other kinds of texts.

Course material – critical essays, media reports including blogs and online texts, films, etc – will vary from semester to semester as new issues emerge and become points of focus; however, in general, readings and discussions will deal with a variety of critical current topics, such as climate change and environmental concerns; human rights and protest movements; war, borders and citizenship; displacement, migration, refugees and identities; international law, terrorism, and nationalism; governmentality and societal structures; the uses and effects of news and social media; ideologies, belief systems and censorship; science and pseudoscience; medicine and health; and developing technologies and ethical issues.

**ELL 673 Gender Studies (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This interdisciplinary course challenges students to engage with texts from the humanities and the social, natural, and physical sciences which question universalizing or stereotypical conceptions of gender and sexuality. It looks at how issues of gender, sexuality, race, class and ethnicity intersect; to what extent social or biological factors may inform “identities” based on these conceptions, and how gender roles serve to shape individual identities, agencies, and structures of power.

Selected literary, cinematic, media and other kinds of texts, both mainstream and fringe, will be analyzed as cultural artefacts which interpret and question how such identity-forming constructs are produced, shaped and controlled in different historical and cultural contexts.

As a corollary, the course will self-reflectively consider to what extent cultures, psychologies and ideologies of reception (i.e. conceptual moments in criticism and theory, readers’ frames of reference) affect the way these texts and contexts are read and presented. Course material will therefore also include a range of critical and theoretical perspectives in such areas as feminist, masculinity, queer, and transgender studies; postmodern, postcolonial, psychoanalytical, and cognitive theories; critical race and legal theory; gynocriticism, gendered writing and canon formation; and social and legal activism.

**ELL 680 Literary Theory I (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course surveys a range of trajectories in theory and criticism from the classical period to the contemporary, with a focus on late 20th-century and recent developments that are essential for understanding and engaging in contemporary interpretation and analysis of texts. Areas covered include classical, Enlightenment and romantic theories, Anglo-American and Russian formalism, structuralism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, historiography, marxisms, reader-response/reception theory, poststructuralism and deconstruction, postmodernisms, feminisms and gender theories, theories of race, ethnicity and nationalism, postcolonial theory, new historicisms, ecocriticism, cultural theory and ideological critique, transhumanism.

Readings include both theoretical texts and exemplary analyses; the focus is on understanding theories as modes of questioning how meanings are produced in the process of reading, and not as formulaic “approaches” to be “applied.” Course assessment is based primarily on examinations and critical analyses of texts.

**ELL 681 Literary Theory II (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course provides opportunities for students to study particular areas of theory and criticism in detail. They may focus on particular areas of theory (e.g. deconstruction, gender theory, postcolonial theory, critical legal studies, transhumanism); on the oeuvre of philosophers, theorists or critics whose works have broad literary and interdisciplinary implications (e.g. Arendt, Foucault, Derrida, Bourdieu, Habermas, Chomsky, Deleuze, Zizek, Berger, Butler, Latour, Luhmann, Sloterdijk, Giddens, Weber, Tajfel, Bandura, Lakoff); or on debates around selected critical ideas (e.g. theories of mimesis, of irony, of metaphor, of the sublime, of history; the concept of the subject; philosophies of language, theories of art, architecture or music).

**ELL 683 Special Topics in Theory (3 0 3) 7.5 ECTS**

This course concentrates on the works of a single critic or theorist. The theorist’s contemporaries as well as critical responses will be taken into consideration.

**ELL 690 Seminar (0 0 0) 7.5 ECTS**

This is the final coursework requirement prior to the qualifying exam. Each student is assigned a seminar advisor for the duration of the course, and is required: (1) to write a substantive 15-20 page critical essay analyzing a text or texts, with original arguments, showing clear understanding of the theoretical and critical issues involved in the analysis, carefully researched with all sources fully indicated, acknowledged and cited in-text and in notes and references, and in a standard professional format; (2) to meet regularly with the advisor during the semester and submit drafts of the essay for feedback; (3) towards the end of the semester, to submit the essay to all the department faculty two weeks before a scheduled presentation date; (4) to give a 15-20 minute oral presentation of the essay (if presentation software is used, all source material including texts, paraphrases and images must be indicated and cited fully for each slide) to the department faculty and students, and respond to questions and criticisms, on the scheduled date. The essay and presentation are expected to reflect the knowledge, theoretical understanding, and critical skills and sophistication a student has acquired over the course of the program, and to be an indication of the quality of thesis work to be expected from the student; grading of the course will be determined by departmental consensus.

As the PhD program focuses on theoretical and analytical work (including critiquing and reframing concepts and ideologies of history, genre, authorship and intention, of reading strategies, of meaning, and of the concept of literature itself) it is expected that the essay and presentation will reflect this orientation and also question the assumptions and validity of their own methods and frames of reference. For this reason, essays and presentations based on general historical reviews, biographical summaries, simplistic overviews of plots, themes, characters or symbolism, and formulaic or uncritical “applications” of a theory, are excluded from consideration.

**ELL 696 Qualifying Exam (0 0 0) 30 ECTS**

Students who have successfully completed the courses and the seminar enter the qualifying exam in the following semester. The written and oral exams test the student’s knowledge in field and his/her ability to conduct research. A student can take the exam twice. The exams are done in May and November.

**ELL 699 Dissertation (0 0 0) 150 ECTS**

The dissertation is a substantive, 150-250-page critical, analytical study of a selected text or texts, based on directed, independent research; the topic is approved by the student’s supervisor and the chairperson of the department, and the student is expected to meet with the supervisor and submit drafts of the thesis for feedback at regular intervals during the course.

The dissertation is expected to demonstrate careful textual analysis, cogent argumentation, originality of thought, and engagement with relevant existing research and theoretical issues; all sources must be acknowledged in detail, and the dissertation is presented in the specified format.

As the PhD program focuses on theoretical and analytical work (including critiquing and reframing concepts and ideologies of history, genre, authorship and intention, of reading strategies, of meaning, and of the concept of literature itself) it is expected that the dissertation will reflect this orientation and also question the assumptions and validity of its own methods and frames of reference. For this reason, dissertation based on general historical reviews, biographical summaries, simplistic overviews of plots, themes, characters or symbolism, and formulaic or uncritical “applications” of a theory, are excluded from consideration.

On completion of the dissertation, the student is required to submit it to a jury comprising the supervisor and at least two internal and two external members, and defend it in an oral exam; the jury may accept, reject, or suggest revisions to the dissertation and extend time for the student to make changes accordingly, pending a subsequent decision.