UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA

ENGLISH LITERATURE D

LAURA GIOVANNELLI

Anno accademico	2020/21
CdS	EURO-AMERICAN LANGUAGES, LITERATURES AND PHILOLOGIES
Codice	1304L
CFU	9

Moduli	Settore/i	Tipo	Ore	Docente/i
LETTERATURA INGLESE D	L-LIN/10	LEZIONI	54	LAURA GIOVANNELLI

Learning outcomes

Knowledge

At the end of this course, students will be expected to achieve a high level of knowledge regarding

- the organization, communicative goals and discursive policies underlying utopian and dystopian literature
- the fruitful debates and stratified terminology associated with this literary production
- the main features, levels of meaning, stylistic and axiological codes of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English fiction dealing with utopian and dystopian themes
- updated critical tools and methodologies relating to this literary genre
- the historical and social contexts referred to or discussed by the authors analyzed.

Assessment criteria of knowledge

- During classes, students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process and engage with the course material through short discussions. They may also, on a voluntary basis, present oral reports and case-based research which will demonstrate their level of factual knowledge and comprehension. Such reports will concern the authors or the primary as well as secondary texts included in the syllabus
- This kind of participation will be taken into account in view of the **final oral exam, which will focus on both Module A and Module B**
- Foreign students may choose to take the exam in English or in Italian.

Skills

During the course activities, students will acquire skills allowing them to

- properly discuss and investigate in detail both the principles and dynamics of literary communication (symbols, archetypes, connotation, instances, channels, codes, the spheres of referentiality and intertextuality) and the specific phenomenology of utopian and dystopian fiction
- recognize crucial tenets and choose the appropriate critical tools and methodologies
- suitably contextualize a series of authors, works and topics
- draw on the pertinent register when analyzing works and contexts.

Assessment criteria of skills

- During classes, students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process and engage with the course material through short discussions. They may also, on a voluntary basis, present oral reports and case-based research, which will demonstrate both their level of factual knowledge and comprehension and their communication/argument/analytical skills. Such reports will concern the authors or the primary as well as secondary texts included in the syllabus
- This kind of participation will be taken into account in view of the **final oral exam, which will focus on both Module A and Module B**
- Foreign students may choose to take the exam in English or in Italian.

Behaviors

During the course activities, students are expected to

- develop a deep awareness of the semantic and symbolic relevance of the literary discourse and its communicative processes
- pay attention to questions and issues informing the discursive policies of utopian/dystopian writing and its connections with the extratextual sphere
- consciously deal with the different levels of the dialogue involving authors or literary works and the complexity of situational contexts
- respond to and provide a feedback on the relevance of critical studies concerning utopian/dystopian writing.

Assessment criteria of behaviors

- During classes, students will be able to show their involvement, growth in cognitive understanding and critical sensibility through active participation in discussions and/or the presentation of oral reports and case-based research on the authors and texts included in the syllabus
- The conclusive assessment will take place through a **final oral exam**
- Foreign students may choose to take this exam in English or in Italian.

Prerequisites

This course requires a good command of the English language. An adequate knowledge of the history of English literature and its contexts (at least from the nineteenth century to the contemporary age) is also recommended.

Co-requisites

As regards foreign students, there is no specific co-requisite for this course.

Prerequisites for further study

This course is not a mandatory prerequisite for gaining access to other courses.

Teaching methods

- Although this course is mainly structured on a taught-class basis, the students' active participation is warmly encouraged (e.g., through short discussions, oral reports, case-based research on relevant texts, authors and topics)
- The main language employed in lectures is Italian
- Course materials and information will be shared through the e-learning page of the course (see E-learning Website "Area Umanistica", https://elearning.humnet.unipi.it/)
- Students may contact me during office hours (Palazzo Scala, Via Santa Maria, 67, Pisa), or any time of the year at my email address: laura.giovannelli@unipi.it

Syllabus
Course structure:
This course of English Literature D (54 hours) is structured into two units, which are both mandatory:

1. Module A: **"Reality and Otherness**. **English Fiction and the Trajectories of the Utopian/Dystopian Imaginary**"
2. Module B: **Further reading material**

 MODULE A
"Reality and Otherness. English Fiction and the Trajectories of the Utopian/Dystopian Imaginary"
By looking at a small but significant selection of texts dating back to the nineteenth and twentieth century, this course aims at investigating the meanings, symbolic features, philosophical and prophetic connotations informing utopian and dystopian narratives. These narratives make up a fertile literary genre in which historically contextualized elements are often interfused with references to the present state of things. As suggested by its multiple definitions (e.g. "antiutopia", "critical dystopia", "speculative fiction", "social science fiction"), this macrogenre lends itself to interesting modulations within each different work. After dealing with the necessary theoretical and historical premises, light will thus be thrown on the specificity of such chronotopic dimensions. [For further details, see Section 1. in the Bibliography]
MODULE B
Further reading material
This second unit consists in an individual learning experience that students are required to tackle. The four works included in the reading list are to be approached as tools for a further investigation of the utopian/dystopian discourse, in connection with the power of its mythopoetic imaginary and its moral and social questioning**.** [For further details, see Section 2. in the Bibliography]

Bibliography

1. **MODULE A - BIBLIOGRAPHY**
Primary texts:

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- Samuel Butler, *Erewhon, or Over the Range* (1872)
- H.G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (1898)
- E.M. Forster, "The Machine Stops", "The Other Side of the Hedge", "The Celestial Omnibus", in *Collected Short Stories* (1947)
- George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)

The works listed above may be read in any edition in English, provided it is an unabridged one.
Required secondary sources:

- Sue Zemka, "*Erewhon* and the End of Utopian Humanism", *ELH*, 69 (2), 2002, pp. 439-472; the article can also be downloaded from https://www.jstor.org/stable/30032027?seq=1
- Denis Gailor, "Wells's *War of the Worlds*, the 'Invasion Story' and Victorian Moralism", *Critical Survey*, 8 (3), January 1996, pp. 270-276; the article can also be downloaded from https://www.jstor.org/stable/41556021?seq=1
- Ana Cristina Zimmermann and W. J. Morgan, "E.M. Forster's 'The Machine Stops': Humans, Technology and Dialogue", *AI & Society*, 34 (1), 2019, pp. 37-45; the article can also be downloaded from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00146-017-0698-3
- David Dwan, "Truth and Freedom in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*", *Philosophy and Literature*, 34 (2), October 2010, pp. 381-393; the article can also be downloaded from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/395666

2. **MODULE B - BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (1890)
- Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932)
- Trevor Lloyd, "How to Write a Utopia: William Morris's Medieval Interests and *News from Nowhere*", *Historical Reflections,* 2 (1), 1975, pp. 89-108; the article can also be downloaded from https://www.jstor.org/stable/41298661?seq=1
- Krishan Kumar, *Utopia e antiutopia: Wells, Huxley, Orwell,* Ravenna, Longo, 1995; or, alternatively, Bülent Diken, "Huxley's *Brave New World* – and Ours", *Journal for Cultural Research*, 15 (2), 2011, pp. 153-172; con le credenziali d'Ateneo, scaricabile anche all'indirizzo URL https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14797585.2011.574056

Non-attending students info

In addition to the bibliography relating to Module A and B, **non-attending students** are required to study the following works:

- Lyman Tower Sargent, *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford U.P., 2010, Introduction and Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-49); or, alternatively, Lyman Tower Sargent, "Ideology and Utopia: Karl Mannheim and Paul Ricoeur", *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 13 (3), 2008, pp. 263-273
- Gregory Claeys, "The Origins of Dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell", in G. Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 2010, pp. 107-132; or, alternatively, Richard A. Posner, "Orwell versus Huxley: Economics, Technology, Privacy, and Satire", *Philosophy and Literature,* 24, 2000, pp. 1-33
- Peter Fitting, "Utopia, Dystopia and Science Fiction", in G. Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 2010, pp. 135-153; or, alternatively, Gorman Beauchamp, "Technology in the Dystopian Novel", *Modern Fiction Studies*, 32 (1), Spring 1986, pp. 53-63.

Assessment methods

- Students will be assessed through a **final oral examination** during one of the scheduled sessions of the exam period. Questions in Italian will be followed by a few ones in English, although **foreign students may take the whole exam in English**
- Students may also, on a voluntary basis, take active part during lectures and present oral reports and case-based research, which will be positively taken into account in view of the final exam
- The final exam will cover both Module A and B material and will test the students' level of knowledge, acquired skills and behaviours as illustrated in the previous sections of the syllabus. It will be 30/45 minutes long.

Work placement

This course includes no specific training connected with work placement.

Notes

The time-schedule of this course is six hours (three lessons) per week:
MONDAYS   4 p.m.-5,30 p.m.
TUESDAYS 4 p.m.-5,30 p.m.
FRIDAYS   4 p.m.-5,30 p.m.
This course will be held online and will start on **Monday, 1 March 2021**

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