



Master Literary Studies, Specialization Literatures in English  
VU University Amsterdam - Faculteit der Letteren - M Literary Studies - 2013-2014

[Programme overview \(pdf\)](#)

## Index

<a href="#">Course: Fiction and Film (Period 1)</a>	1
<a href="#">Course: Literature and Society (Period 1)</a>	1
<a href="#">Course: Literature Visualized (Period 1)</a>	2
<a href="#">Course: MA-Thesis English Literature (Ac. Year (September))</a>	3
<a href="#">Course: Seminar Renaissance Literature and Visual Studies (Period 4)</a>	4
<a href="#">Course: The Gothic Gaze (Period 5)</a>	5
<a href="#">Course: The Holocaust in American Film and Literature (Period 2)</a>	6
<a href="#">Course: Visual Art and the American Poet (Period 2)</a>	6

## Fiction and Film

<b>Course code</b>	L_ELMAENG006 ()
<b>Period</b>	Period 1
<b>Credits</b>	6.0
<b>Language of tuition</b>	English
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculteit der Letteren
<b>Coordinator</b>	dr. R.V.J. van den Oever
<b>Teaching staff</b>	dr. R.V.J. van den Oever
<b>Teaching method(s)</b>	Seminar
<b>Level</b>	400

### Course objective

Students learn how to compare and contrast a novel and its film adaptation.

### Course content

Using (film) narratology as our theoretical starting point, we will compare and contrast three novels with their respective film adaptations. We focus on the question what different ideological meaning-effects arise when transporting a narrative from one medium to another.

### Form of tuition

Weekly seminars plus three film screenings.

### Type of assessment

Final essay.

### Course reading

To be announced.

### Entry requirements

None.

### Target group

MA students of English, VAMA students, Research Master students.

### Remarks

1) Students should be fluent in English. 2) Attendance is compulsory.

## Literature and Society

<b>Course code</b>	L_AAMALEC001 ()
<b>Period</b>	Period 1
<b>Credits</b>	6.0
<b>Language of tuition</b>	English
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculteit der Letteren
<b>Coordinator</b>	prof. dr. E. Jansen
<b>Teaching staff</b>	dr. M.J.E. van Tooren, prof. dr. E. Jansen, dr. A.S. Raghunath, prof. dr. B.J. Peperkamp, prof. dr. D.H. Schram, dr. B. Boter, dr. R.V.J. van den Oever

<b>Teaching method(s)</b>	Seminar
<b>Level</b>	400

### Course objective

We will examine the impact of selected anthropological, cultural, scientific, and political texts and study these alongside literary texts to assess how they have changed the societies in which they were produced.

### Course content

Each week we will be drawing on our department's experts to discuss a selected text in conjunction with a relevant cultural theory/theorist in order to explore the impact of that text on society. The course will be 'theory based.' The course will draw on Dutch, French (in the original language or in an English translation) and English literary texts and non-literary texts of a variety of other disciplines to gauge the surprising connections and well as differences between literature and other disciplines.

### Form of tuition

Lectures

### Type of assessment

Exam

### Course reading

To be announced

### Entry requirements

No prior knowledge required, although students who do not specialize in literature should be aware that this course is theory based. An interest in and knowledge of contemporary theories, such as Cultural Materialism, Marxism, and Postcolonialism is recommended.

### Target group

All MA students of Literature and Culture, including RMA students

## Literature Visualized

<b>Course code</b>	L_ELMAENG007 ()
<b>Period</b>	Period 1
<b>Credits</b>	6.0
<b>Language of tuition</b>	English
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculteit der Letteren
<b>Coordinator</b>	prof. dr. D.M. Oostdijk
<b>Teaching staff</b>	prof. dr. D.M. Oostdijk
<b>Teaching method(s)</b>	Seminar
<b>Level</b>	400

### Course objective

This is the core course of the programme and will give students a thorough theoretical background to the intricate relations between literature and visual media. Pictures are supposed to tell a thousand words, but where does this cliché come from and how truthful is it? How

has the visual turn impacted literature?

### **Course content**

Seminars

### **Form of tuition**

Presentation, essay

### **Type of assessment**

Using Gunther Kress' and Theo Van Leeuwen's Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design as our main text, we analyze how to read images and circumnavigate the intricate relationship between the visual and verbal, especially when they interact. Book illustration, movie adaptation, and ekphrastic poetry are some of the forms of literature visualized we will address, but we will also study the historical and theoretical implications of the intense relationship and rivalry between the written word and the visual image.

### **Course reading**

Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design. New York: Routledge, 2006

### **Entry requirements**

A solid oral and written command of the English language is necessary.

### **Target group**

MA-students of English, Literature and Culture students, VAMA-students, RMA-students

## **MA-Thesis English Literature**

<b>Course code</b>	L_ELMAENGSCR (510651)
<b>Period</b>	Ac. Year (September)
<b>Credits</b>	18.0
<b>Language of tuition</b>	English
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculteit der Letteren
<b>Coordinator</b>	A.J. Oostdijk
<b>Level</b>	400

### **Course objective**

Students will acquire theoretical, methodological, and practical knowledge about conducting research within the field of Literature Visualized. Together with your supervisor, you will set up your own research proposal. You will select both primary and secondary sources and learn how to use these to construct your own argument in your thesis.

### **Course content**

Students will write a thesis of roughly 25,000 to 30,000 words on a topic that is related to Literature Visualized. In December 2011 students will be asked to submit a rough plan for the final thesis. In January you will be assigned a supervisor and he or she will help streamline your plan and help you write the thesis in period 5 and 6.

### **Form of tuition**

Individual sessions with supervisor in period 5 and 6.

### **Type of assessment**

Students will be assessed on their writing style, cogency of their arguments, and ability to relate their findings to scholarship at large; on their finished project, but also on their independence in deciding on a suitable topic, on gathering information, and the writing process itself.

### **Course reading**

This will be decided on an individual basis.

### **Entry requirements**

You need to have thirty ECTS credits to start the thesis. Please consult the study advisor if you think you do not fulfill this requirement, but still want to start on your thesis.

### **Target group**

Students of the Literature Visualized Programme

## **Seminar Renaissance Literature and Visual Studies**

<b>Course code</b>	L_NOMANED008 ()
<b>Period</b>	Period 4
<b>Credits</b>	6.0
<b>Language of tuition</b>	English
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculteit der Letteren
<b>Coordinator</b>	dr. P.H. Moser
<b>Examinator</b>	dr. P.H. Moser
<b>Teaching staff</b>	dr. P.H. Moser
<b>Teaching method(s)</b>	Seminar
<b>Level</b>	400

### **Course objective**

This course looks at Renaissance literature from the perspective of visual studies and the history of the senses. Several developments in the period challenged ideas about the workings of sight and the effects of visual images, such as the Reformation and advances in science and philosophy, and the emergence of 'new media'. In this course, you will analyse Renaissance literature from the perspective of these changing ideas about images, vision, and sight, focusing on the relations and exchanges between literature and visual culture in genres such as poetry and drama, and the material culture of the printed book.

### **Course content**

We will study the visual aspects of one very influential religious text, *A Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan (1678), in various English and Dutch versions and editions. We will focus on 1) the allegorical and visionary nature of the text and the impact of 'the mind's eye' and imagination; 2) the word-image relation in the illustrated versions of the text, including concepts such as ekphrasis and performative reading; 3) the material representation of the text in manuscript, print and digital form (from a unique illustrated manuscript at the VU Library to the representation of the text on Early English Books Online). There will be background literature and theoretical literature on each of these

subjects. You will conduct your own research project, studying one visual aspect of the text in more depth.

**Form of tuition**

Seminar

**Type of assessment**

Paper

**Course reading**

Will be announced.

**Target group**

Students of the master in Dutch Literature; students of the master in English Language and Culture (Literatures in English); Research master students

**Remarks**

This course is also open to Master students ACW, History and Art History. All participants are expected to have read *A Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan prior to the first meeting.

## The Gothic Gaze

<b>Course code</b>	L_ELMAENG010 ()
<b>Period</b>	Period 5
<b>Credits</b>	6.0
<b>Language of tuition</b>	English
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculteit der Letteren
<b>Coordinator</b>	dr. A.S. Raghunath
<b>Teaching staff</b>	dr. A.S. Raghunath
<b>Teaching method(s)</b>	Seminar
<b>Level</b>	400

**Course objective**

The aim of this course is to offer an opportunity for students to develop their understanding of the social and historical context of Gothic literature from the nineteenth century to the present.

**Course content**

The material is wide- ranging: plays, film, poetry, music and novels and the course will encourage students to develop their own understanding of why Gothic remains a popular and meaningful cultural phenomenon.

**Form of tuition**

Seminar

**Type of assessment**

Essay of 4,000 words

**Course reading**

- \* Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*
- \* Anne Rice, *Queen of the Damned*
- \* Edgar Allen Poe, *Complete Short Stories*

- \* Angela Carter, The Bloody Chamber
- \* H.G. Wells, The Door in the Wall and Other Stories
- \* H.P. Lovecraft, Dreams of Terror and Death
- \* George A. Romero, Dawn of the Dead
- \* Matthew Lewis, The Monk
- \* Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto

**Entry requirements**

Bachelor degree

**Target group**

MA-students of English, Literature and Culture students, VAMA-students, RMA-students

**The Holocaust in American Film and Literature**

<b>Course code</b>	L_ELMAENG013 ()
<b>Period</b>	Period 2
<b>Credits</b>	6.0
<b>Language of tuition</b>	English
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculteit der Letteren
<b>Coordinator</b>	prof. dr. D.W. Skorczewski
<b>Teaching staff</b>	prof. dr. D.W. Skorczewski
<b>Teaching method(s)</b>	Seminar
<b>Level</b>	400

**Course objective**

This course introduces students to representations of Nazi Holocaust of European Jewry in American film and literature.

**Course content**

Students will analyze how American literature and film bear witness to the destruction of European Jewry and anti-Semitism and grapple with the complexity of representing such horrific events as they are translated into novels and films.

**Form of tuition**

Seminars

**Type of assessment**

Essay; presentations

**Course reading**

TBA

**Entry requirements**

A thorough command of the English language is required

**Target group**

MA students in Literature and Culture; VAMA-students; RMA-students

**Visual Art and the American Poet**

<b>Course code</b>	L_ELMAENG009 ()
--------------------	-----------------

<b>Period</b>	Period 2
<b>Credits</b>	6.0
<b>Language of tuition</b>	English
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculteit der Letteren
<b>Coordinator</b>	prof. dr. D.M. Oostdijk
<b>Teaching staff</b>	prof. dr. D.M. Oostdijk
<b>Teaching method(s)</b>	Seminar
<b>Level</b>	400

### **Course objective**

The student will gain both a theoretical and historical perspective on how and why nineteenth-century and twentieth-century American poets have written about visual art. Key to this understanding is the complex and changing concept of ekphrasis, the evolving dynamics between art and poetry, and the development of American poetry in the last two centuries. Students will also assess whether male poets and female poets address visual art differently in their poems.

### **Course content**

This course focuses on the fascination of the American poet since the nineteenth century for visual art works (paintings, sculptures, gardens, architecture, films, and television). Ekphrastic poetry - poems inspired by visual art - has been written since Greek antiquity, but for American poets it has grown into a significant subgenre in which poets may reveal the essence of their poetics as well as the limitations of their chosen art form. Starting with Herman Melville and Walt Whitman, the course traces the development of American poetry about visual art through Modernism (Marianne Moore and William Carlos Williams), the Middle Generation (Elizabeth Bishop, Randall Jarrell, and Robert Lowell) to Postmodernism (John Ashbery, James Merrill, Frank O'Hara). A central question in this development is whether female poets have developed a different kind of ekphrastic poetry from men. Other points of interest will be the American fascination for European art and ekphrastic war poetry.

### **Form of tuition**

The course is taught in fourteen seminars. Students are expected to have prepared the text(s) before class and should be ready to discuss them with their peers and instructor. Students will be asked to hold several presentations.

### **Type of assessment**

Presentations/Participation (20 percent), Short paper (30 percent), Final Essay (50 percent)

### **Course reading**

Selection from: Jane Hedley, Nick Halpern and Willard Spiegelman (eds), *In the Frame: Women's Ekphrastic Poetry from Marianne Moore to Susan Wheeler* (Newark: University of Delaware Press).  
 James A.W. Heffernan, *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (University of Chicago Press)  
 John Hollander, *The Gazer's Spirit: Poems Speaking to Silent Works of Art* (University of Chicago Press)

### **Entry requirements**

Students should have a good command of English and an interest in poetry and visual art.

**Target group**

MA-students of English, Literature and Culture students, VAMA-students, RMA-students