

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, UMCS

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS B.A. AND M.A. PROGRAMMES

B.A. PROGRAMME (3 YEARS)

Practical English

Practical English grammar (year II, ANG/AM)

The aim of the course is to help students become competent in their use of the English grammar at clause level, as well as to familiarize them with basic grammatical terminology at that level..

Reading comprehension (year III, ANG/AM)

The course uses a handbook written by the Department teachers, which combines reading comprehension (20 newspaper or magazine articles) with vocabulary/ idiom practice and use of English.

Presentations and discussion skills (year III, ANG/AM)

The class is meant to help develop and improve students' presentation and discussion skills as well as increase their confidence in speaking. Students are expected to prepare in groups of two or three short talks based on a variety of materials: magazine articles, books, internet sources, films etc. Each talk is followed by group discussion.

English literature

History of English literature (year I, AM)

A chronological survey course of history of English literature from its beginnings to contemporary times, realized in the form of conversation classes. This form of classes allows for a fairly detailed analysis of literary works most relevant for the evolution of English literature in particular periods and makes it possible to examine the historical processes determining the directions of this evolution.

Survey course in the history of English literature (year I; ANG)

The course provides an overview of English literature from the mid-seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century. It is offered in the form of class/seminar discussions. Its purpose is to elicit knowledge of English literary history from students of the first year and to practise analytical skills on specimens of poetry, drama and fiction.

History of English literature in the 19th-20th centuries (1) (year II, ANG)

The course constitutes a continuation of the general survey covering the whole history of English literature started in the first year. It concentrates on the Victorian Period and the 20th

century. It is realized partly in the form of traditional lecture (semester III) and conversation classes (semesters III and IV). Lectures provide a presentation of the overall historical-literary process and introduce a broader context for conversation classes devoted to detailed analyses of texts most important and typical of particular trends, currents and artistic movements.

History of English Literature in the 19th-20th centuries (2)

This course surveys the greatest achievements of the 19th and 20th c. English and Anglo-Irish literature, covering a diverse selection of writers and forms. The texts (among them works of such Nobel Prize Winners as T.S. Eliot, G.B. Shaw, W.B. Yeats, S. Beckett, S. Heaney, W. Golding) on the syllabus invite consideration of crucial intellectual, artistic, social, and spiritual trends of the period.

American literature

History of American literature (year II; ANG)

The course aims at discussing the texts of major American authors, starting from the Colonial period until the end of the twentieth century. The students also analyze the main literary trends and movements as well as their representative authors. The assigned reading list includes the works of R. W. Emerson, W. Whitman, H.D. Thoreau, H. Melville, E. Dickinson, E. Pound, E. Hemingway, T. Williams, A. Ginsberg, A. Walker, J. Barth, T. Pynchon.

American literature survey – lecture (year II; ANG)

This is an introductory lecture outlining the history of American literature from the colonial period until the end of the twentieth century. The lecture's objective is to give students a sense of how American literature evolved over the past four centuries – what were the forces and who were the people critical to that evolution, which novels and poems constitute American literary canon, which concerns make American letters distinctly American, and how reading American literature gives us insight into what America is today.

American Literature survey course – beginnings to 1945 (year II, AM)

In this course we read and discuss the most important literary works – both prose and poetry. While the 17th-century Puritan chronicles have fairly bad reputation (ok, it is rather bad), in fact they clarify a number of contemporary issues, for example the cult of work and success. And then, as we go into the 19th and 20th century, things only get better.

Culture

British culture (year II; ANG/AM)

The course aims at acquainting students with basic knowledge about British culture, UK's political system, social life and major institutions, from the point of view of cultural studies. The students are expected to acquire the ability to analyse source texts in English, to logically interpret cultural processes and to adopt a research perspective which will help them to objectively study a foreign culture and understand its different nature.

American culture (year II, ANG/AM)

The course offers an introduction to the study of the contemporary United States. It focuses on the geographical, social, political and economic development of the American society after

the Second World War. The course is intended to provide students with a firm background for further analysis of American history, literature and culture.

Music History/Popular Culture (year II, ANG/AM)

The course is designed to acquaint students with American music and its relationship to society. The lectures focus on intersections between American cultural and musical life, addressing such issues as race, politics, gender, and cultural identity. The main historical topics, styles and individual artists are explored in presentations combining lecture with listening to music and movie watching. Students will gain an understanding of the significance of music in the development of the United States and will be able to identify a number of specific pieces of American music and musical styles.

Semiotics of culture (year II, ANG)

The course is a cycle of lectures lasting one semester whose aim is the introduction of semiotics as one of several possible approaches to the examination of problems of a broadly understood concept of culture. Illustrative materials are provided by a selection of highly varied phenomena occurring in British culture, but the ordering principle results from particular issues of the theory of semiotics rather than chronology.

Cultural regions of the USA (year II, AM)

The aim of the course is to familiarize students with different cultural regions of the United States, their history, traditions and society. The course, based on video and reading materials, will include discussions of: New England, the Middle Atlantic States, the South, the Midwest, the West, the Southwest, and the Pacific Northwest.

Key concepts of American civilization (year I; AM)

The course familiarizes the students with the key concepts of American civilization (yes, despite what some say there is something like that!) such as the sense of newness, freedom, multiculturalism or the road. Apart from short historical synopses, students will be first and foremost expected to learn how to identify these seemingly abstract notions in a range of popular culture artifacts – Hollywood cinema, rock and pop songs, and music videos.

Film studies (year III, ANG/AM)

In this course film is examined both as a narrative art and as a form of entertainment. The course is divided into a 15 hour lecture for the entire semester and 15 hours of class work in groups. Students receive an introduction to cinema studies: problems such as the different film narrative strategies from classical and contemporary Hollywood style to art cinema, etc. will be examined.

American Popular Culture and Mass Media (year II, AM)

The course familiarizes students with the history and character of the major media outlets in the USA: the press, radio, television, movie industry, the Internet, music industry, videogame industry. It also focuses on issues such as media concentration, copyright, media bias and advertising. Simultaneously, it examines American popular culture and its broad appeal in the last 100 years. The course is augmented with visual materials.

American Art (year III, AM)

The course is designed to acquaint students with American art and its relationship to society. The lecture focuses on the main periods, movements, schools and individual artists and combines presentation of slides with discussion of biographies, histories and theories.

Students will gain an understanding of the significance of art in the development of the United States and will acquire skills to visually analyze and interpret painting, sculpture, and architecture.

Racial and ethnic minorities in the USA (year III, AM)

This course will examine America's racial and ethnic diversity, comparing the historical experiences of Native Americans, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and whites. We will concentrate on changes in "American" national identity from the late nineteenth century to the present. This course is based on literary sources (both fictional and documentary).

History

History of Britain: A survey (year I)

The course has been devised to bring Britain's past nearer to students of the English language, literature and culture. It introduces British history by concept and by approach rather than by traditional textbook chronology. Individual lectures constitute samples of different perspectives currently found in numerous areas of the historical discipline. Several broad themes are covered: the territorial changes and the growth of the state, religion, economic transformations, social configurations, and the global impact of British culture.

American History (year I, II; ANG/AM)

The course offers an introduction to the study of American society through its history. Combining "coverage" with in-depth analysis, it focuses on key topics to give students both an overview of all the significant historical developments that took place across four centuries and an understanding of how various kinds of evidence are used by historians to construct interpretations.

Linguistics

Introduction to linguistics (year I; AM/ANG)

The aim of the course Introduction to Linguistics is to familiarize the students with basic linguistic concepts pertaining to morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics and historical linguistics.

Descriptive grammar of English 1 (year I; ANG/AM)

The goal of the course is to introduce the basic information on the articulatory segmental phonetics of English. First the organs of speech and the mechanics of speech production are studied. Then the major phonetic properties of English consonants, vowels and diphthongs are discussed together with the issue of phonetic interference from Polish. Emphasis is placed on difficulties in learning English pronunciation by Poles and ways of overcoming these problems.

Descriptive grammar of English 1 (year I; ANG/AM) – lectures

The lectures deal with English suprasegmental phonetics. First the major processes which take place in English connected speech, such as assimilations, linking, elisions and insertions are

discussed. Then the focus is on the presentation of prosodic phenomena of word and sentence stress, rhythm and intonation.

Descriptive grammar 2 (year I and II) (ANG)

The course is meant to provide the students with the basics of cognitive grammar, to describe the linguistic context in which cognitive theory emerged and to offer selected cognitive analyses relating to the morphology, syntax and semantics of English and Polish. The second semester of the course (year II) extends cognitive analysis to include pragmatic considerations; it focuses on a number of theory specific solutions proposed in the cognitive literature.

History of English (year III; ANG)

Objectives: (i) to be familiar with a general conceptual apparatus and methodological procedures of historical linguistics (e.g., causes, types and examples of language change); (ii) to be able to present English as both an Indo-European and a Germanic language (i.e. by relating English forms and meanings to their corresponding historical antecedents and/or cognates); (iii) to be able trace selected Present-Day English grammatical phenomena back to their historical sources and origins.

American English (year I, AM)

Part I of the course offers a description of lexis, syntax and semantics from a cognitive perspective. Adopting the cognitive standpoint, Part II undertakes to characterize the American variety of English as contrasted with British English data.

Methodology of teaching English as a Foreign Language (year II, III)

2nd year course covers the following topics:

- Teaching the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing),
- Teaching the subsystems of language (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation),
- Lesson planning and classroom management,
- Language assessment and language testing,
- Teaching learners with special educational needs,
- New teaching trends and using technology in language education.

3rd year course covers the following topics:

- Teaching very young and young foreign language learners,
- Individual learner differences.

Specialized seminars (year III)

Conrad and film

1. "Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad and Apocalypse Now by F. F. Coppola.
2. Kapitan Conrad, part I (Polish biographical film) + another short Polish biographical film..
3. "Amy Foster" by Joseph Conrad and Swept from the Sea (its American film adaptation).
4. The Shadow-Line by Joseph Conrad and by Andrzej Wajda.
5. The Secret Agent by Joseph Conrad and its British/French TV adaptation.

6. *Under Western Eyes* by Joseph Conrad and *Spiskowcy* by Z. Huebner (its Polish TV theatre adaptation).
7. *Victory* by Joseph Conrad and its film adaptation (time permitting).
8. "To-morrow" by Joseph Conrad and *Jutro* by Tadeusz Baird.

Presentation of each film will be followed by students' comparative discussion/analysis of the relevant films and fiction, guided and augmented by the teacher.

The above program will be supplemented by 5-6 lectures concerning:

1. Conrad's biography. Conrad the man and writer.
2. Conrad and Poland. Conrad's reception in Poland.
3. General presentation of Joseph Conrad's literary output - of all his works and their main lines of meaning.
4. Principal trends in world research on Conrad.

The course mainly aims at

1. Introduction to Conrad's fiction: presentation of its main tendencies and various aspects.
2. Developing students' perception of structural-semantic organization of a work of fiction and film. Developing students' abilities of comparative analysis of film and fiction.

Students are evaluated on the basis of their performance in class. No seminar paper is required.

Semiotics of literature (ANG)

It is a yearly cycle of meetings, both traditional lectures and conversation classes, which introduce the terminology and basic assumptions of semiotics of literature. Each successive meeting is devoted to a detailed semiotic analysis of texts of increasing length and complexity, from a joke, through a fable, a short story, a cycle of tales, chapter of a novel, to whole novels.

Conceptual metaphor in theory and practice

The first semester is devoted to the theory of conceptual metaphor. In the second semester the participants make an oral presentation of an analysis carried out on selected linguistic material (+ handout) and consequently write a paper on the topic. Samples of topics selected by former participants: "Conceptual metaphors in economy", "Conceptual metaphors in recipes", "Metaphors of God in psalms".

American history of the 20th c.

The course is designed to give students the opportunity to learn about key issues in 20th century American socio-cultural history by studying and analyzing primary and secondary materials. Special emphasis is placed on the transformations of American society and culture after the World War II.

B.A. seminars (rok III)

Popular culture studies: Theory and practice. An introduction

The course is devised as an outline and critical assessment of the leading theories of popular culture. Students are introduced to the American and European schools of thought on society and culture most influential in the advancement of cultural studies (structuralism, semiotics, psychoanalysis, Marxism, feminism, postmodernism). Samples of cultural interpretations are discussed and imitated to acquaint the course participants with practical applications of theoretical concepts and models to various forms of British and American popular culture

(popular fiction, newspapers and periodicals, television entertainment genres, music, youth fashion, group behaviour etc.).

Cult writing

The term “cult” is very imprecise and basically implies intense devotion (often irrational) to an author or book. The aim of the course is to introduce students to authors who belong to this category. What makes them cult figures? Is their writing an artistic or merely sociological phenomenon? Who are their followers? These will be among the questions discussed during classes. The list of the writers discussed includes: Richard Brautigan, Charles Bukowski, Raymond Carver, Leonard Cohen, Bret Easton Ellis, Philip K. Dick, Chuck Palahniuk, Jack Kerouac, Ken Kesey, Hunter S. Thompson, Jerzy Kosinski, Stephen King, Kurt Vonnegut and others.

Canada: Culture and Literature

This is a course meant to sensitize students to the fact that „America” and the „USA” are not synonymous terms. Introductory 4 lectures focus on Canada’s geography and separate historical legacy: colonization patterns, the history of Quebec, the story of the Confederation, Canada’s economic growth in the twentieth century, the policy of multiculturalism, Quebec separatism and the situation of the First Nations. The following 11 classes are seminar-type, and are based on a selection of literary texts, documentaries and feature films, illustrating the major differences (and several similarities) between Canadian and American cultural traditions.

Contemporary American Literature

This course is an introduction to American literature after 1945. Based on lectures, discussions, and student presentations, the seminar focuses on the main developments in American poetry and prose in the last 60 years. Emphasis is put both on the innovative character of those developments and on their roots in American literary tradition. The literature of the period is viewed in the context of twentieth-century political, social, and cultural transformations in the USA.

M.A. PROGRAMME (2 YEARS; FULL-TIME)

Practical English

year I

The course focuses on the development of language skills on an advanced level. The course modules comprise writing (academic English), speaking (presentations and discussions) and translation.

Literature

Methodology of literary study

The course aims at familiarizing its participants with theories and methodologies in contemporary literary studies. Among the issues discussed in class are, for instance,

psychoanalysis, reader-response criticism, feminism and post-colonial studies. Another objective of the course is to expose students to various strategies that can be applied in the study of a literary text.

Culture

American film (year I)

The course surveys the American film history (early cinema, the silent era, the studio system, New Hollywood, indie film making, and the contemporary period) and concentrates on the major styles, genres, directors and stars. It introduces students to American movie classics such as *Citizen Kane*, *Out of the Past*, *The Searchers*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Last Picture Show* among others. Students examine these films through genre theory and historical contexts and analyze them as reflections of American culture.

New media and digital culture (Module: New Media)

As the first and the only English department in Poland we offer an M.A. emphasis in new media, which prepares students for jobs in professions at the intersection of humanities and digital technologies – this course is the cornerstone of this emphasis. In it, the students become familiar both with mechanisms of digital culture (History of the Internet, software industry, e-economy, copyright and copyleft) and with its products – electronic literature, videogames, social networking sites or alternate reality games.

Linguistics

Methodology of contemporary linguistics

The aim of the Philosophy of Linguistic Science class is to help critically evaluate major issues in linguistics from the point of view of Cognitive Grammar. Among the problems discussed are F. de Saussure's idea of the linguistic sign, some aspects of N. Chomsky's generative grammar, the nature of semantic representation, defining and definitions, metaphor, etc.

General linguistics

The course is designed to familiarize the students with major writings on language (especially semantics) in the 20th and 21st c. The arrangements is basically chronological but also thematic. The students read (excerpts) of major linguistic works in original and present them in class.

Monographic lectures

Gender linguistics (year I)

The lectures are devoted to gender linguistics, which is concerned with the relationship between the category of sex and gender, and language. We analyse numerous types of gender asymmetries occurring in English and Polish, with reference to various other languages of the world, present in their vocabulary, grammar, forms of address, names and different texts. We also deal with the social and cultural impact of these asymmetries.

Specialized seminars

Anglo-Irish literature

This one semester course focuses on selected works of Anglo-Irish fiction as well as on film adaptations of them. The aim of the course is to acquaint the students with works by such writers as Sheridan Le Fanu, Bram Stoker, Elizabeth Bowen, Brendan Behan. The course addresses the question of Irishness and Anglo-Irish relations as shown in literature and film.

Literature into Film: Anglo-Irish Drama

The course offers an insight into the work of playwrights: A rare chance for those to learn something about modern Irish drama, the course will focus specifically on the works of such dramatists as G.B. Shaw, W.B. Yeats, Sean O'Casey, Brian Friel and others, exploring various meanings of Irishness as well as Anglo-Irish relations rendered both in specific plays and their film adaptations.

Translating cultures

The course is hoped to lead students to finer and keener perception of mechanisms of cross-cultural/cross-literary transfer, as well as of the nature of a literary masterpiece, of its stylistic, literary historical, cultural (inter-cultural) and social contexts. It will consist in examination and discussion of students' own translations of short passages from masterpieces (selected by students) of English/American literature into Polish. The masterpieces selected will be sensitive to problems of cross-cultural/cross-literary transfer. They will be by various authors, of various literary modes, genres, tendencies and epochs, etc. Students' translations will be also compared with published translations of these passages. Students will be graded on the basis of evaluation of their translations and their contribution to class. No semester paper is required.

Towards Imagination and Feeling: the Gothic

The course takes a nostalgic (?) look at Gothic fiction. Beginning with a discussion of both the sources and the machinery of the Gothic novel, I propose to look at the evolution of the Gothic, and to examine the various ways in which relatively new kinds of popular literature/culture continue to exploit Gothic elements. One of the focuses of the course will be the figure of a vampire – its multiple literary and cinematographic occurrences.

The West

The course – based on video and printed materials – gives students an opportunity to explore the topic of the American West. It emphasizes the special role of the West in American history and in the development of contemporary American society. The course covers topics such as: exploration, westward expansion, lawlessness (Wild West), American Indians, cowboy life, Gold Rush, nature and landscape, and many others.

Discourse analysis

The class is concerned with the linguistic analysis of connected speech and examines attempts to study the organisation of language above the sentence level, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts. It follows that discourse analysis is also concerned with language use in social contexts, and in particular with interaction between speakers.

Stylistics/Cognitive poetics

The course is designed to convince the unconvinced, and to supply the convinced with many valuable insights, that linguistics is after all useful in analyzing literary texts and that literature does not function in a separate world impregnable to systematic linguistic analysis.

M.A. seminars

Literature and translation

The seminar will accommodate papers in the following academic areas:

1/ XIX-XX century literature in English, written in all countries except USA (prose, poetry and drama). M.A. paper projects dealing with any possible literary phenomena within this time frame are welcome: any possible aspects, trends, writers, works; paper projects representing any possible way of treatment, as well as theoretical and methodological approach to the studied material. Within the field outlined above my preference goes to a/ projects in prose rather than poetry or drama; b/ students with definite ideas concerning their projects.

2/ Translations from literature in English into Polish or in Polish into English. A student will be requested to write a 30 long translation of a short story or poems in English into Polish or in Polish into English, supplied with about 50 pages long commentary on various dilemmas, difficulties and choices made during such translation (framed with references to critical works on translations and translation theory).

Oscar Wilde and His Works

A chance for whoever wishes to become acquainted with arts of the fin-de-siecle approached through diverse works of Oscar Wilde (poetry, essays, short and fairy stories, novel, drama, letters, journalism). Among possible aspects to concentrate on you will find: art and life in Wilde's works; eros and logos; Wilde as decadent writer; the yellow city; social problems in Wilde's stories; specificity of Wilde's language; fallenness and its impersonations etc. The only seminar that allows you to "go Wilde"..

Film

In this seminar film is primarily treated as a narrative art as opposed to simply a form of entertainment. The first semester constitutes an introduction to cinema studies: problems such as different film narrative strategies from classical Hollywood style to art cinema, etc. will be examined. The preliminary thesis and a working plan are also developed. In the second semester students will prepare and give a short topic presentation and submit a seminar paper. Humanistic themes will be encouraged.

Americans and the City; Americans and the Wilderness

The course is an exploration of American experience of two radically distinct realms – the city and the wilderness – as this experience has been presented in literary texts, paintings, photographs, popular songs and films. The texts selected for study are meant to demonstrate how American perception of the two realms has evolved over the centuries, and how this evolution reflected the changing philosophical, ideological and artistic concerns of the times.

Native American Writing in the Twentieth Century

The course is devoted to poetry and fiction by contemporary American Indian authors. Texts by modern day Lakota, Chippewa, Tlingit, Kiowa, Spokane and Mohawk poets and novelists are read for the information they offer on Indian life in America today and as literary works expressing the effort of their authors to negotiate between tribal traditions and modern

American culture. The supplementary material includes documentaries about Native American life and films by indigenous directors. One lecture introduces students to the fascinating phenomenon of contemporary Native American visual arts.

Translation of literature in English

The principal objective of the translation seminar is to write an MA thesis on translating a chosen literary text from English into Polish or from Polish into English. The seminar will enable students to acquire a basic knowledge of translation theory and its main issues such as, among others, un/translatability, equivalence, tension between accuracy and naturalness, the role of a cultural transfer, translating collocations and idioms. A theoretical introduction is a starting point for analysing and comparing various translations of chosen literary texts, thus preparing students for writing their own translations and theoretical commentaries.

Modern phonology

The seminar is devoted to the introduction to modern phonology. Several major approaches to the analysis of phonological systems are presented and discussed, starting with the structural and classical generative models, through a variety of nonlinear frameworks (Autosegmental Phonology, Feature Geometry) to nonderivational models such as Optimality Theory. We demonstrate how different theoretical frameworks can be applied to the description of selected aspects of the phonological systems of English and Polish.

Grammaticalization

Objectives: (i) to make students interested in the phenomenon of grammaticalization understood to be a kind of language change, in the context of both theoretical and historical linguistics; (ii) to facilitate writing an MA thesis with the analytical part (final chapter) based on historical textual material (i.e. modals in Chaucer); (iii) to help students succeed in taking their final MA examination.

Description: Grammaticalization can be defined as the process whereby an (ordinary) lexical word becomes a (special) grammatical word, and, once grammaticalized, it continues to acquire new grammatical functions. For example, the ancestor of the present-day English future marker *will* is *willan* meaning 'intend', 'wish', 'desire'. In other words, Old English *willan* gradually lost its force as a full lexical verb and became grammaticalized as the modal auxiliary *will*, to the effect that *will* has no other meaning today than the one of a grammatical marker. Similarly, English prepositions and conjunctions like *behind*, *across*, *because* were originally prepositional phrases containing the nouns *hind*, *cross*, *cause*, whereas the modals derive from Old English main verbs (e.g., *can*<*cunnan* 'to know', or *may*<*magan* 'to be strong').

Cognitive Linguistics

Seminar papers are meant to discuss issues relating to lexis, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The analysis is expected to be carried out in the spirit of cognitive linguistics. Examples of MA papers: Plant idioms in English and Polish. A Cognitive Approach; Reflexivisation Phenomena in English and Polish. A Cognitive Perspective; Agentive Derivatives in English and Polish. A Cognitive View; The Language of Propaganda. An Analysis of George Bush's Selected Political Speeches and others.