



## COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
<b>Introduction to the Theory of Literature</b>	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
<b>Coordinating:</b> Assoc. prof. dr. Jūratė Levina <b>Other:</b>	A. J. Greimas Centre for Semiotics and Literary Theory Institute of Literary, Cultural, and Translation Studies Faculty of Philology

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
1 <sup>st</sup> (BA)	Compulsory

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Classroom and independent work	Spring semester (4)	English

Requisites	
<b>Prerequisites:</b> A very good command of English (B2)	<b>Co-requisites (if relevant):</b>

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	150	48	102

Purpose of the course unit		
<p>This reading-intensive module introduces students to the fundamental notions and major perspectives of the theory of literature and trains practical skills of theoretical thinking in the framework of contemporary discourse in the humanities. Students learn about ways in which literary discourse functions in culture and acquire terms that will enable them to identify, understand, and examine sociocultural phenomena of literary and related domains. In seminars and interactive lectures, students will build practical skills in the interpretative reading of a theoretical text, critical thought, and collaborative discussion, aimed especially at the recognition and deconstruction of prejudices in literary, scholarly, and other public sociocultural discourses, including their own assumptions.</p>		
Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Students will: – learn to examine cultural phenomena; select, compare, and critically assess information; raise and discuss problematic issues with an open mind, identifying and deconstructing stereotypical assumptions;	Interactive lectures, group discussions, summary and interpretative analysis of theoretical works on literature and related issues orally and in writing.	Assessment of regular class work, seminar assignments, and final examination as described in the Assessment strategy below.
– acquire a knowledge and understanding of major notions in literature and skills to use them appropriately, including the basics of the classical methods of philological analysis and contemporary trends of scholarship in literature and the humanities;	Independent creative mapping of the relations between theoretical tenets; critical exposition of issues in interactive lectures and group discussions in seminars; summary and interpretative analysis of theoretical works orally and in writing.	
– enhance skills in collecting, analysing, classifying, and critical assessment of material from a variety of sources, including application of basic techniques of philological research.	Classifying material and information, group debates, discussion of exemplary analyses of literary works.	

Content	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	Contact hours, total	Individual work	Tasks for individual work
1. The origins, development, and practice of the theory of literature and its basic notions. Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i> : The mimetic structure of poetry and other arts. The kinds of poetry. The theory of drama. Poetic plausibility and truth.	2		2				4	6	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> (Aristotle 28-141; NATC1 90-117; NATC2 88-115).
2. The work of art as a thing, object, and medium of aesthetic experience. Ideality and materiality of a work of art. The work's historical singularity, reproducibility, and re-contextualisation. The political functions of art.	2		2				4	6	Hannah Arendt, "The permanence of the world and the work of art" (Arendt 167-74); Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (Benjamin 181-203).
3. Literature as discourse of communication. The author as genius, writer, and function. Modes and models of reading and the reader. The validity and validation of interpretation.	2		2				4	6	Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" (Foucault; NATC1 1622-36; NATC2 1475-90).
4. The work and the text of literature. The autonomy and functional integrity of the text and its analysis. Intertextuality and contextuality. Style, genre, and discourse. Structural and hermeneutic reading.	2		2				4	6	Tzvetan Todorov, "Structural Analysis of Narrative" (Todorov; NATC1 2099-106; NATC2 2023-30)
5. Literal and figurative language. Linguistic norm, deviation, and foregrounding in poetry and prose. Description and narration; theme, motif, and action. Typologies of actors and narrators. The functions of phonic and graphic patterning.	2		2				4	6	Paul Ricœur, "Metaphor and Symbol" (Ricœur 45-69)
6. Literature as a discourse of anthropological knowledge. Figuration of nature by ritual, symbol, and myth. Archetype and its functions. Archaic and historical models of space, time, and being.	2		2				4	6	Mircea Eliade, Foreword to <i>Patterns in Comparative Religion &amp; The Morphology and Function of Myths</i> (Eliade 26-30, 441-67).
7. Major models of constructing the history of literature. The notions of an epoch, period, movement, and school. National, world, and comparative literature. Tradition and novelty in literature. The poetics of history.	2		2				4	6	Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" (White; NATC1 1712-29; NATC2 1536-53).
8. Literature as a socio-political institution. The politics of knowledge and its literary forms. Models of society and culture in literature. Cultural hegemony and pluralism in literary discourse.	2	2					4	6	Edward W. Said, from Introduction <i>Orientalism &amp; Style, Expertise, Vision</i> (Said 1-15, 226-54).
9. The psychoanalytic model of reading. The unconscious and its manifestations in life and literature. Literary techniques of psychoanalysis.	2		2				4	6	Sigmund Freud, The "Uncanny" (NATC1 913-56; NATC2 814-41).
10. Models of the linguistic order of subjectivity in culture. Notions of the body and its linguistic manifestations. The politics of speech and writing.	2		2				4	6	Hélène Cixous, The Laugh of the Medusa (Cixous; NATC1 2039-56; NATC2 1942-59).

11. Performative play and representation. The structure, genres, and functions of theatre in contemporary media and social life. Role, identity, and self-experience.	2	2				4	6	Judith Butler. From Preface to <i>Gender Trouble</i> & “Subversive bodily acts”: IV. Bodily inscriptions, performative subversions (Butler xxvii-xxix, 163-80; NATC1 2488–501; NATC2 2540-53).
12. Models of reinforcement and reinterpretation of the cultural tradition in literary and theoretical discourse. Contemporary trends in theory and literary writing.	2	2				4	6	Kate Rigby, “Earth, World, Text” (Rigby)
Preparation for the exam.							30	
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>				<b>48</b>	<b>102</b>	

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Classroom work	30 %	Semester	<p>Preparation for and engagement in lectures: knowledge of the set reading, effort and ability to ask informed questions and discuss them in class or the VLE Forum for study exchange.</p> <p>Preparation and active engagement in seminars: a grasp of the set text and the issues of its concern, demonstrated by way of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– clear summaries of the text or its parts and clarifying comments with necessary reference to contextual material, effective original examples to explicate the subject matter, and critical assessment of the argument;</li> <li>– complementary and constructive response to the propositions and questions of group mates in class or the VLE Forum for study exchange.</li> </ul>
<p>Written and oral closed book examination in class. Students are given two questions and up to 30 minutes to write preparatory notes for an oral discussion of the questions with the examiner. The oral discussion is audio-recorded and the notes are submitted for assessment of a student’s performance according to the outlined criteria.</p> <p>Question 1 asks to elaborate on a given topic from the list in the Contents column above (e. g., “Archetype and its functions.”).</p> <p>Question 2 asks to highlight major issues raised in a given seminar texts and comment on them with reference to relevant contexts and critical assessment.</p>	70 %	Examination session	<p>Knowledge of the module material, an understanding of the major issues of the theory of literature in the context of the humanities, and an ability of critical assessment, demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– knowledge of the corpus of the module, including set reading, seminar texts, lectures and seminar discussions, witnessed by the scope of reference to phenomena examined in these sources and an ability to summarise, compare, and assess relevant material from them;</li> <li>– understanding of the major issues of the theory of literature, demonstrated by a developed ability to define key notions from different perspectives and in the variety of terms that have been used in the module, compare and confront incompatible definitions, explicate them by providing and examining original examples, and assess their relevance to contemporary setting of literary phenomena.</li> </ul>

Author	Year of publication	Title & source	Publishing place and house or web link
<b>Reference</b>			
Cuddon, J. A.	1991	<i>A Dictionary of Literary Terms</i>	Oxford: Blackwell. VUL Philology

Greene, Roland et al (eds)	2012	<i>The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics</i>	Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. VUL Philology
Habib, M. A. R.	2008 (2005)	<i>A History of Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to the Present.</i>	Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing. VUL Philology
Habib, M. A. R.	2011	<i>Literary Criticism from Plato to the Present: An Introduction</i>	Newark, US: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .
Leitch, Vincent B. et al (eds)	2001, 2010	<i>The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism.</i> 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition. (NATC1&2)	New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2010. VUL A. J. Greimas Centre, Philology
Lentricchia, Frank, and Thomas McLaughlin	1995	<i>Critical Terms for Literary Study</i>	Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. VUL Philology
Waugh, Patricia (ed.)	2006	<i>Literary Theory and Criticism. An Oxford Guide</i>	Oxford: Oxford University Press. VUL Philology.
<b>Set reading</b>			
Balme, Christopher B.	2008	<i>The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies</i>	Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. VUL <a href="#">Cambridge Core</a> .
Bennett, Andrew and Nicolas Royle	1995	<i>An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory.</i> Fourth Edition.	Harlow, England: Pearson Education Ltd. VUL Philology, <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .
Chatman, Seymour	1965	<i>A Theory of Meter</i>	Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, Inc. VUL <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .
Chatman, Seymour	1978	<i>Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film</i>	Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. VUL Philology, <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .
Culler, Jonathan	2000 (1997)	<i>Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction</i>	Oxford: Oxford University Press. VUL Philology
Curran, Angela	2016	<i>Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Aristotle and the Poetics</i>	London and New York: Routledge. VUL Philology, <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .
Frow, John	2005	<i>Genre</i>	London and New York: Routledge. VUL Philology, <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .
Frye, Northrop	1971 (1957)	<i>Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays</i>	Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. VUL Philology, <a href="#">ProQuest</a> . <a href="#">Internet Archive</a> .
Hurley, Michael D. and Michael O'Neil	2012	<i>The Cambridge Introduction to Poetic Form</i>	Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. VUL Philology, <a href="#">Cambridge Core</a> .
Puckett, Kent	2016	<i>Narrative Theory: A Critical Introduction</i>	Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <a href="#">Cambridge Core</a> .
Shepherd, Simon	2016	<i>The Cambridge Introduction to Performance Theory</i>	Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <a href="#">Cambridge Core</a> .
Short, Mick	1996	<i>Exploring Language of Poems, Plays and Prose</i>	London: Longman. <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .

Wellek, René and Austin Warren	1949	<i>Theory of Literature</i>	New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. VUL holdings, <a href="#">EBSCOhost</a> . <a href="#">Internet Archive</a> .
Wolosky, Shira	2001	<i>The Art of Poetry: How to Read a Poem</i>	Oxford: Oxford University Press. VUL <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .
<b>Seminar texts</b>			
Arendt, Hannah	1991	“The permanence of the world and the work of art”, <i>The Human Condition</i> (167–174)	Chicago: University of Chicago Press. VUL
Aristotle, transl. Stephen Halliwell; Richard Janko	1995, 2001, 2010	<i>Poetics</i> , in: Aristotle, Longinus, Demetrius. <i>Poetics</i> . Longinus: <i>On the Sublime</i> . Demetrius: <i>On Style</i> (28–141, 1–28 for Halliwell’s Introduction); NATC1 (90–117), NATC2 (88–115).	Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Loeb Classical Library 199. <a href="#">VUL access online</a> .
Benjamin, Walter, transl. Harry Zohn	1992	<i>Illuminations</i> , “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (181–203)	London: Harper Collins, Fontana Press. VUL <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .
Butler, Judith	2006	From Preface and “Subversive bodily acts” (IV. Bodily inscriptions, performative subversions) of <i>Gender Trouble</i> (xxvii–xxix, 163–180). NATC1 (2488–2501), NATC2 (2540–2553).	Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group. VUL <a href="#">EBSCOhost</a> .
Cixous, Hélène	1976	“The Laugh of the Medusa”, <i>Signs</i> 1.4: 875–893. NATC1 (2039–2056), NATC2 (1942–1959).	<a href="#">JSTOR</a> , VUL.
Eliade, Mircea, transl. Rosemary Sheed	1996	Foreword, “The Morphology and Function of Myths”, in: <i>Patterns in Comparative Religion</i> (26–30, 441–467).	Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. VUL <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .
Foucault, Michel, transl. Donald F. Bouchard & Simon Sherry	1981	“What is an Author?”, in <i>Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews</i> ; NATC1 (1622–1636), NATC2 (1475–1490).	Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. VUL. Moodle.
Freud, Sigmund, transl. James Strachey	1976	“The ‘Uncanny’”, <i>New Literary History</i> 7.3: 525–645.	VUL, <a href="#">ProQuest</a> , <a href="#">JSTOR</a> .
Ricoeur, Paul, transl. David Pellauer	1976	“Metaphor and Symbol”, <i>Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning</i> (45–69).	Texas: The Texas Christian University Press. VUL Philology. Moodle.
Rigby, Kate	2004	“Earth, World, Text”, <i>New Literary History</i> 35.3: 427–442.	<a href="#">JSTOR</a>
Said, Edward W.	2014	From Introduction, “Style, Expertise, Vision.” <i>Orientalism</i> (1–15, 226–254).	New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. VUL <a href="#">ProQuest</a> .
Todorov, Tzvetan, transl. Arnold Weinstein	1969	“Structural Analysis of Narrative.” <i>Novel: A Forum on Fiction</i> 3.1: 70–76. NATC1 (2099–2106), NATC2 (2023–2030)	<a href="#">JSTOR</a> , VUL.
White, Hayden	1974	“The Historical Text as Literary Artefact”, <i>Clio</i> 3.3: 277–303. NATC1 (1712–1729), NATC2 (1536–1553)	<a href="#">ProQuest</a> , VUL.
<b>Further reading</b>			
All resources made available by the Vilnius University Library, including the collections the reading rooms and electronic resources accessible through the <a href="#">Virtual Library Catalogue</a> , may be consulted to complement the set reading.			