



Universidad
de Alcalá

GUÍA DOCENTE

**Ética y literatura: La renovación de la
ficción histórica en la narrativa inglesa e
irlandesa contemporánea**

**Ethics and Literature: The Renaissance of
British and Irish Contemporary Historical
Fiction**

**Máster Universitario en Investigación en
Literaturas Anglófonas e Hispánicas
Contemporáneas**

Universidad de Alcalá

Curso Académico 2019/20

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Nombre de la asignatura:	Ética y literatura: La renovación de la ficción histórica en la narrativa inglesa e irlandesa contemporánea Ethics and Literature: The Renaissance of British and Irish Contemporary Historical Fiction
Código:	
Titulación en la que se imparte:	Máster Univ. en Investigación en Literaturas Anglófonas e Hispánicas Contemporáneas
Departamento y Área de Conocimiento:	Filología Moderna
Carácter:	Optativo
Créditos ECTS:	6
Curso y cuatrimestre:	Primero
Profesorado:	Marisol Morales Ladrón Marisol.morales@uah.es
Horario de Tutoría:	Por determinar
Idioma en el que se imparte:	Inglés

1. PRESENTATION

This course aims at familiarizing students with a variety of ethic and aesthetic theoretical proposals deriving from different disciplines and cultures, including those put forward by French philosophers Paul Ricouer and Pierre Nora, with a view to apply them to the reading of literary texts and, more specifically, to the contemporary historical fiction produced in Britain and Ireland. This subgenre, which does not have the same function or popularity it used to enjoy in the XIXth century, has blossomed in recent years as a result of the renewed approaches that have been adopted to interpret history, which have underlined its uses, abuses and misuses, and of the contributions from the field of memory studies, which have unearthed marginal or silenced figures from the past, including women and the “others” of society.

2. COMPETENCES

Basic competences

- To encourage students to apply the acquired theoretical and contextual knowledge to the reading of literary texts

- To foster the students' ability to integrate original notions and to put forward innovative postulates from ideas that could trigger reflections upon social and ethical responsibilities of applied knowledge.
- To urge students to deliver their own conclusions and the critical foundations on which they are sustained to specialized and non-specialized audiences
- To help students acquire the necessary learning skills for the development of autonomous research skills.

Generic competences

- To acquire an advanced, coherent and comprehensive knowledge of the history of contemporary literature
- To interweave the general historical knowledge of contemporary literature with the analysis of its representative literary works.
- To avail of conceptual, analytical and methodological tools with which to accurately approach a literary work from a wide-ranging array of different critical perspectives.
- To carry out cogent literary research projects

Subject specific competences

- To be able to identify, select and apply critical tools to the analysis of contemporary literary texts.
- To outline essential landmarks in the shaping of preeminent topics and themes in contemporary literature
- To be capable of identifying genuine interconnections among texts, authors, movements and themes that stem from previously acquired methodological tools.
- To be able to interpret contemporary literary texts in a coherent, original and accurate way, bearing in mind the literary and extra-literary socio-historical context that surrounds their production and dissemination.

3. COURSE CONTENTS

UNITS	ECTS
1. Ethical literary criticism versus the ethical turn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions of literary responsibility • The Ethical approach 	1,5
2. The (re)construction of the past <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical revisionism • Memory, trauma, history 	1,5
3. The historical turn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gender approach: women writing back • The neohistorical novel 	1

4. Memory narratives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female narratives of revolution • Bionarratives: recovering women from the past 	1
5. Alternative approaches to historicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postethics, mnemofictions and ventriloquism • Factual fictions and counterfactual histories 	1

A week-by-week schedule of lectures and seminar topics, reading assignments, class discussions and tutorials will be provided at the start of the course.

4. TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

Classes are divided into lectures, seminars, workshops and tutorials, which include group work, class discussions, critical reading and writing, and oral presentations. Students are expected to read the set texts before they are discussed in class. There can be no substitute for reading the original work and it is the student's response to and knowledge of those works that mainly matter.

4.1. Student Workload (150 hours)

Class-contact hours	24 face-to-face hours:
Guided independent learning:	126 Hours devoted to the reading of a number of set texts, the preparation of an oral report, and the writing of a final essay. These learning activities will be guided by the lecturer.

4.2. Learning Activities

Course time is devoted to seminars, class discussions, critical reading, critical writing and oral presentations. All seminars will presuppose completion of the reading assigned for their particular date.

Students are greatly encouraged towards independent and autonomous study. As part of their individual learning time, students should work on their written and oral assignments.

Students are expected to read the set texts before they are discussed in the seminars. There can be no substitute for reading the original work and it is the students' response to and knowledge of those works that mainly matter.

Students will also be requested to attend individual tutorials or group workshops. In these sessions, the teacher will try to solve doubts about their written/oral assignments and to guide students in the elaboration of their final essays and Master's Dissertations.

5. ASSESSMENT

Assessment procedures

Following the implementation of the "*Normativa de evaluación de los aprendizajes*", students will be assessed through their continuous work.

- *Continuous assessment*

Seminar work, an oral report and a final essay will be taken into account to assess the range of the knowledge and different skills that students will be developing. The criteria used by the lecturers are specified below.

- *Final evaluation*

Those students who do not follow or fail the continuous assessment scheme must complete the following activities to pass the subject:

- Delivering an oral presentation. The content and approach of the speech should be agreed upon with the lecturer beforehand.
- Handing in a long essay following the guidelines discussed in the previous section. The topic and approach of the paper should be agreed upon with the lecturer beforehand.

Assessment criteria

The final results of the course will be structured around the following criteria:

- 25%: Participation in class discussions. Students will have to actively participate in class proving that they can engage in discussions connected with the set texts for the course.
- 25%: Oral presentation: Student will be expected to deliver an oral report on any of the topics studied in class.
- 50%: A final essay. Students will practice their argumentative and discursive skills when they complete an original critical paper of around ten to fifteen pages based on any of the topics announced in class.

Assessment instruments

The assessment of students' achieved learning outcomes will be based on the following components:

- Class participation
- Oral presentation
- Final essay

Students are required to attend all the lectures and seminars. The class participation component will be assessed in terms of the level of students' engagement in the seminars, the quality of their contributions, their preparation for class activities and their attitude. A detailed rubric for participation in class will be provided by the teacher.

- **Marking criteria:**

- Matrícula de Honor (Outstanding): the best student of the class will get an outstanding grade, which will presuppose a high level of knowledge of the subject-matter of the course and of his/her ability to write and communicate effectively in the English language. Originality and depth in the critical analysis of the texts will also be expected, together with an excellent use of bibliographical material.
- Sobresaliente (Excellent): excellent students will show a high degree of knowledge of the contents of the course as well as a use of the English language at a proficiency level. Both written assignments and oral reports will have no spelling errors or grammatical mistakes. Students will also show an excellent capacity at providing critical arguments.
- Notable (Very good): students will show a good knowledge of the contents of the course and an ability to interact and argue convincingly, both in class and in their written assessments. The use of bibliographical material will be effective and coherent. The use of the English language will be at a proficiency level.
- Aprobado (Satisfactory): students will just show a basic knowledge of the contents of the course. The level of English will be placed at an advanced level and the depth of critical discussion will just be sufficient. Research and argumentation will abound in generalisations and few noteworthy original ideas.
- Suspenso (Fail): students will present important gaps in their knowledge of the contents of the course. Their level of English will be basic and will present grammatical mistakes and spelling or comprehensive errors. The level of critical judgement will be insufficient with a lack of originality, independent thought and a weak use of bibliographical resources.

- **Please note the following:**

- i. A good level of English (beginning with a C.1) will be required and assessed along the course: during the oral participation in class, in the written assignments and in the final essay and/or exam. For this purpose, the teacher will follow the minimum standards established by the Department of Modern Philology as referred above.

- ii. Plagiarism will be penalised. If you happen to plagiarise, the first time this occurs your assignment will be marked with a zero, and the second you will receive a fail grade in all your written assignments. Remember that you commit plagiarism any time you present the words or ideas of others as if they were your own, do not quote a source or omit specific quotations of your sources.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

In addition to the books recommended here, a detailed bibliography of literary histories, reference books, anthologies and literary criticism on the authors discussed could also be provided.

- Byatt, A. S. *On histories and stories. Selected essays*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2001.
- Connolly, Linda, and Tina O'Toole. *Documenting Irish Feminisms: The Second Wave*. Dublin: The Wodfield P, 2005
- Coughlan, Patricia and Tina O'Toole, eds. *Irish Literature: Feminist Perspectives*. Dublin: Carysfort P, 2008.
- Ferriter, Diarmaid. *The Transformation of Ireland. 1900-2000*. London: Profile Books, 2004.
- Fleishman, Avrom. *The English historical novel*. Baltimore, MD & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.
- Garratt, Robert F. *Trauma and History in the Irish Novel: The Return of the Dead*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2011.
- Hand, Derek. *A History of the Irish Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011.
- Ingman, Heather. *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women: Nation and Gender*. Ashgate: Aldershot, 2007.
- Jernigan, Daniel, et al. eds. *Literature and Ethics: Questions of Responsibility in Literary Studies*. New York: Cambria P, 2009.
- Jeffers, Jennifer M. *The Irish Novel at the End of the Twentieth Century: Gender, Bodies, and Power*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.
- Keen, Suzanne. "The historical turn in British fiction." *A concise companion to contemporary British fiction*. Ed. James F. English. Malden, MA & Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. 167–187.
- McDiarmid, Lucy. *At Home in the Revolution. What Women Said and did in 1916*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2015.
- Margalit, Avishai. *The Ethics of Memory*. Cambridge: Massachusetts, 2002.
- Meaney, Gerardine. *Gender, Ireland and Cultural Change: Race, Sex and Nation*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Miller, J. Hillis. *The Ethics of Reading*. New York: Columbia UP, 1987.
- O'Brien, George. *The Irish Novel: 1960-2010*. Cork: Cork UP, 2012.
- O'Toole, Tina, Gillian McIntosh, and Muireann O'Cinnéide. ed. *Women Writing War. Ireland 1880-1922*. Dublin: UCD, 2016.
- Peach, Linden. *The Contemporary Irish Novel: Critical Readings*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Pine, Emily. *The Politics of Irish Memory: Performing Remembrance in Contemporary Irish Culture*
- Plate, Liedeke. *Transforming Memories in Contemporary Women's Rewriting*. London: Macmillan, 2011.

- Ricoeur, Paul. "Memory and Forgetting." *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*. Ed. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. 5-11.
- Rousselot, Elodie, ed. *Exoticizing the past in contemporary neo-historical fiction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Scott, Brewster and Michael Parker (eds). *Irish literature since 1990: Diverse Voices*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2009.
- Tighe, Carl. *Writing and Responsibility*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Wallace, D. *The Woman's Historical Novel: British Women Writers, 1900-2000*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.