



Universidad  
de Alcalá

# GUÍA DOCENTE

## La Realidad a Través del Espejo del *Dirty Realism* en la Literatura en Lengua Inglesa

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

# Universidad de Alcalá

---

**Curso Académico 2019/20**

## GUÍA DOCENTE

Nombre de la asignatura: La realidad a través del espejo del *Dirty Realism* en la literatura en lengua inglesa

Código:

Titulación en la que se imparte: Máster Univ. en Investigación en Literaturas Anglófonas e Hispánicas Contemporáneas

Departamento y Área de Conocimiento: Filología Moderna / Filología Inglesa

Carácter: Optativo

Créditos ECTS: 6

Cuatrimestre: 2º

Profesorado: Bruno Echaury Galván

Horario de Tutoría: **Por determinar**

Idioma en el que se imparte: Inglés

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This subject studies the different stages of the literary movement known as Dirty Realism in the United States. From pioneers as John Fante to salient figures like Charles Bukowski and Raymond Carver or contemporary exponents as Chuck Palahniuk, this module seeks to analyze different aspects of North American society through the prism of this literary movement. In this vein, students will learn the most notable formal conventions of relevant works by dirty realists and their forerunners. In addition, they will analyze how context (social, cultural, political, economic) influenced the works written by the abovementioned authors and how, through the portrait of individuals and their environment, they managed to encapsulate a wider reality that draws a comprehensive map of the underside of the American Dream.

### 2. COMPETENCES

#### Basic competences

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

### General 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.

### Specific competences

- To be able to identify, select and apply critical tools to the analysis of contemporary literary texts.
- 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. CONTENTS

Content Units	Overall ECTS credits
An introduction to Dirty Realism	0.5
Antecedents	0.5
Dirty Realism: The dirty mirror of the US	0.5
The brotherhood of the dirt: John Fante	1
Notes of the dirty old Buk: Charles Bukowski	1.5
What we talk about when we talk about Raymond Carver	1.5
Aftermath: The legacy of Dirty Realism	0.5

## 4. TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

### 4.1. Student workload

Class-contact hours:	27
Student study hours:	123
Total hours	150

### 4.2. Methodology, materials and didactic resources

In class	Theoretical explanations Class discussions and activities Oral presentations
Independent work	Reading and analyzing texts Conducting research for papers and activities Completing written assignments Preparing oral presentations
Tutorials	Solving doubts about the contents of the course Guidance for the final paper (and other activities)

The explanations, analysis, and discussion conducted during face-to-face lessons will be based on a wide range of theoretical and literary texts (those listed in the bibliography among others).

Most of these materials will be uploaded to the e-learning platform Blackboard, which will also be used for communication purposes and to complete certain activities.

## 5. ASSESSMENT: Procedures and assessment criteria

### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

#### a) On-going assessment

The assessment of the subject will be based on three main pillars:

- 1) Classroom work, through active participation in the debates that will be proposed during the semester. Students' performance will be assessed according to their participation and the quality of their contributions.
- 2) Weekly activities: Students will have to complete a number of activities on a weekly basis. These assignments encompass creative and academic written works, oral presentations, or reflection on specific questions proposed by the lecturer. Deadlines **MUST** be met in all cases.
- 3) Final essay: Students will have to complete a long academic paper on one of the lines of research suggested by the lecturer,

In addition:

- Participation in class is HIGHLY encouraged, and it will be assessed accordingly.
- Students must complete all the readings proposed by the lecturer in due time. Failing to do so will be penalized.
- Students should keep an eye on the virtual platform Blackboard. Additional activities (and materials) may be uploaded there.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarizing implies failing the subject automatically.

## b) 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.

There will be a resit opportunity at the end of the semester that will mirror the process of the regular final evaluation.

## GRADING CRITERIA

**Outstanding (MH):** Students display an outstanding understanding of the aims and contents of the course. All assessment criteria have been achieved at an exceptionally high level. Performance in all the tasks shows that students have read and thought at a level well beyond what is expected in the module. Students attend lectures and are always well prepared for discussion in seminars.

- **Excellent (SB):** Students display an excellent understanding of the aims and contents of the module. All assessment criteria have been achieved at a very high standard. Performance in all the tasks is excellent and includes all the characteristics expected for this type of work. Students attend lectures and are practically always well prepared for discussion in seminars, with almost no absences.

- **Very Good (N):** Students display a very good understanding of the aims and contents of the module. All assessment criteria have been met fully and many have been achieved at a good or very good standard. Performance in all the tasks shows a good knowledge of the syllabus contents. Students attend lectures and seminars, with few absences, and have done most of the preparation for them. They have a good foundation in the prescribed readings and provide interesting insights to class discussions.

- **Satisfactory (A):** Students show a satisfactory understanding of the aims and contents of the module. All assessment criteria have been met, but some barely exceed the threshold standard to pass the module. Performance in all the tasks shows some of the appropriate characteristics in relation to content, organization, and expression. Students are present in lectures and seminars, with few absences, and occasionally contribute to discussions.

- **Fail (S):** Students show an unsatisfactory understanding of the aims and contents of the module. Some assessment criteria do not reach the minimum standard to pass the module. Performance in all the tasks shows limited grasp of essential concepts and/or minimal research. Students have multiple absences and when they come, they are often not prepared or they barely participate in the dynamics of the lesson.

## 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bufford, B. (1983) *Granta: Dirty Realism*. London: Granta.

Collins, R. (2000). *John Fante: A literary portrait*. Toronto; Buffalo; Lancaster: Guernica.

Cooper, S., & Fine, D. (1999). *John Fante a critical gathering*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

Duvall, J.N. (2012). *The Cambridge companion to American fiction after 1945*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Harrison, R. (1994). *Against the American Dream: Essays on Charles Bukowski*. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press.

Kordich, C. (2000). *John Fante his novels and novellas*. New York: Twayne.

Kuhn, C., & Rubin, L. (2009). *Reading Chuck Palahniuk: American monsters and literary mayhem*. New York; London: Routledge.

Lainsbury, G. P. (2004). *The Carver chronotope: Inside the life-world of Raymond Carver's fiction*. New York; London: Routledge.

Nesset, K. (1995). *The stories of Raymond Carver: a critical study*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Rebein, R. (2015). *Hicks, tribes, and dirty realists: American fiction after Postmodernism*. Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky.

Santana, C. (2013). *Forth and back: Translation, Dirty Realism, and the Spanish novel (1975–1995)*. Plymouth: Bucknell University Press.

Smith, J., & Locklin, G. (2000). *"Art, Survival and So Forth": The Poetry of Charles Bukowski*. Hull: Wrecking Ball Press.

Weaver, G. (1983). *The American Short Story 1945–1980: A Critical History*. Boston: Twayne,

Western Literature Association (1997). *Updating the literary West*. Michigan: Texas Christian University Press.

Additional materials will be provided/suggested by the lecturer throughout the course.