UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Comparative Literature

2223-2-F0101R017

Course title

Facing the Other. Europeans and natives of far-off worlds

Topics and course structure

An approach to literary studies conceived as critical representation of culture and of cultures, without predetermined linguistic or chronological boundaries. The analysis of texts, themes and poetics aims to put in evidence the relationship between things and words, discourse and reality, historical contexts and symbolic forms. After a general introduction to Comparative Literature, this year the lecture course will focus on some literary works, belonging to different historical periods, which represent Europeans facing the natives of far-off worlds. After a premise devoted to William Shakespeare and the imaginary Caribbeans of the Tempest, we will deal with Kipling's India, Conrad's Congo, Flaiano's Ethiopia, and Coetzee's South Africa. The issue is declined in very different ways, from refusal to fascination, from identification to the loss of self; nevertheless, the experience always upsets the protagonists and shakes the perception of their own identity. Facing the Other questions oneself and foces to revise one's ideas of humanity.

Objectives

The student will become familiar with the idea that literature represents not only a thesaurus of themes and topics which most human sciences usually deal with, but also a way to develop formalized patterns of experience, in which a key role is played by formal features (language, style, modes, genres).

Methodologies

Lectures and discussion. Text analysis: linguistic and rhetorical features, narrative modes, cultural patterns. Exercises in oral presentation.

Online and offline teaching materials

Programme and references for attending students

Institutional module:

- César Dominguez, Haun Saussy, Dario Villanueva, Introducing Comparative Literature. New Trends and Application, Routledge

Monographical module:

- Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (1899)
- Two texts among the following:

1. William Shakespeare, The Tempest (1611)
2. Rudyard Kipling, Kim (1901)
3. Ennio Flaiano, Tempo di uccidere (1947)
4. J.M. Coetzee, In the Heart of the Country (1976)

Critical readings:
• Stefano Brugnolo, La tentazione dell'Altro. Avventure dell'identità occidentale da Conrad a Coetzee (Carocci)
Additional readings will be uploaded on the didactic platform.

Programme and references for non-attending students

No distinction is made between attending and non-attending students.

Assessment methods

Oral test. Evaluation is based on the following factors: pertinence and complexity, text comprehension, familiarity with the literary texts in programme, capacity for argumentation and personal interpretation, interaction, ability to establish connections, clarity of exposition, linguistic appropriateness.

Office hours

Student reception by appointment: contact the professor by email (mario.barenghi@unimib.it)

Programme validity

Until February 2025.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS