



Comparative Literature Course Descriptor

Course Title	Comparative Literature	Faculty	English
Course Code	NCHEN612	Course Leader	Dr Catherine Brown
Credit Points	30	Teaching Period	Michaelmas and Hilary
FHEQ Level	Level 6	Date Approved	June 2020
Compulsory/ Optional	Compulsory for majors; optional for minors		
Pre-requisites	None		
Co-requisites	None		

COURSE SUMMARY

This course embraces the College's interdisciplinary nature by questioning, and inviting students to look beyond, the linguistic and disciplinary barriers suggested by the subject title: English. The lectures investigate comparative literary practice of a range of kinds, as well as surveying the history and nature of the discipline of comparative literature, in order to provide students with a grounding for the critical dissertation on which they are examined for this course, in which they will be required to bring an Anglophone work of literature into comparison with at least one other work of literature or work of art in another form. It should be noted that the remit of 'comparative literature' used for this course is considerably broader than that involved in much 'comparative literature' as institutionalised. Not only may different art forms be brought into relation with each other, but so may *any* two works of literature - provided that they are treated within the spirit of comparativism.

The course is predicated on, and seeks to inculcate, several ethical principles and practices that are inherent in comparative practice: impartiality, empiricism, openness to less familiar modes of thinking and feeling, the ability to mediate between different cultures and languages (taking those terms both more and less literally - as a novel, for example, may have a 'culture' and a 'language' of its own), the tendency to place everything in context, the ability to perceive both commonality between things which are apparently different and differences between things which are apparently similar, and the disposition both to celebrate commonality and to respect difference, whilst holding in balance a simultaneous sense of both.

COURSE AIMS

The course aims to:

- Provide an introduction to the nature, history and methods of comparative literature.

- Provide a theoretical grounding, and inspiration, for the dissertation by means of which it is examined.
- Advocate and inculcate a range ethical principles inherent in the practice of comparison.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1c command an overview of the history of comparative literature
- K2c understand some of the issues involved in the comparison of cultural objects
- K3c reflect on the relationship between literature and other art forms, and between literary criticism and other disciplines in the arts and humanities

SUBJECT SPECIFIC SKILLS

- S1c write a piece of critical comparative literary analysis, comprehending and developing intricate concepts with relation to verbal art
- S2c present persuasive written and oral arguments about verbal art coherently
- S3c adjudicate between and use competing methodologies in comparative literature

TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- T1c defend a written argument in a viva voce with advanced communication skills
- T2c critically appreciate the extent to which one's intellectual, cultural, and linguistic environment is limited by language and nationalism
- T3c manage independent study time in order to produce a presentation and a dissertation by given deadlines

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Students will have the opportunity to engage with:

- 1 x virtual learning environment (VLE)
- 12 x large-group hours
- 4 x tutorial hours (individual tutorial)
- Weekly office hours

Students are required to attend and participate in all timetabled sessions for this course and, with the ongoing support available, to manage their directed learning and independent study.

Total study hours for this course are: 300.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

- Develop presentation skills through individual presentations.

- Develop independent thinking and decision-making through deciding on one’s own comparative project.
- Gain experience of meeting a major project deadline, and of managing one’s work and time in the months leading up to that deadline.

ASSESSMENT

FORMATIVE

Students will be formatively assessed during the course by means of the production of drafts. These do not count towards the end of year results, but will provide students with developmental feedback.

SUMMATIVE

Assessment will be in two forms:

AE:	Assessment Activity	Weighting (%)	Online submission	Duration	Length
1	Presentation	15	No	25 minutes	N/A
2	Dissertation	85	Yes	N/A	7,000 words plus an abstract of up to 100 words

FEEDBACK

Students will receive formal feedback in a variety of ways: written (including via email correspondence); oral (within one-to-one tutorials or on an *ad hoc* basis); and indirectly through discussion during supervisions. Students will also attend the formal meeting, Collections, at the end of Michaelmas and Hilary, in which they will receive constructive and developmental feedback on their term’s performance.

Feedback is provided on written assignments (including essays, briefings, and reports) and through generic internal examiners’ reports, both of which are posted on the College’s VLE.

INDICATIVE READING

Note: Comprehensive and current reading lists for courses are produced annually in the Course Syllabus or other documentation provided to students; the indicative reading list provided below is used as part of the approval/modification process only.

BOOKS

Bernheimer, C. (ed.) (1995), *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press

JOURNALS

Comparative Critical Studies

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

<https://www.acla.org>

INDICATIVE TOPICS

- The history of comparative literature as a subject, in its relations to other comparative subjects
 - The theory and practice of comparison
 - How to compare literature of different cultures and/or languages
 - How to compare literature with other art forms
 - How to frame and research for a dissertation
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Title: NCHEN612 Comparative Literature Course Descriptor					
Approved by: Academic Board					
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2.0	June 2021	June 2021	Catherine Brown	1 Academic Handbook > Course Descriptors 2 VLE	April 2025
1.0	June 2020	June 2020	Catherine Brown	1 Academic Handbook > Course Descriptors 2 VLE	April 2025
Modifications (As per AQF4)					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Modification (including category number)		
2.0	June 2021	June 2021	Category 2: Change to 'Teaching and Learning Strategy'		