



Universidad
de Alcalá

GUÍA DOCENTE

Contemporary British Women Writers

**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:	Contemporary British Women Writers
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:	Silvia García Hernández
Horario de Tutoría:	Por determinar
Idioma en el que se imparte:	Inglés

1. INTRODUCTION

In this module, students will explore recent developments in contemporary British women's fictional writing, and the ways in which these authors have expanded the literary tradition by challenging mainstream movements that placed them at the margins of the male-dominated literary canon. Throughout critical analysis and discussion of both representative fictional texts and theoretical studies, students will examine contemporary women's writing strategies, themes and stylistic trends as well as understand how the historical, socio-cultural, political and personal environments have influenced these women's lives and their literary creations.

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.

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 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. CONTENTS

Units/Contents	ECTS (tentative schedule)
British Women Writing Fiction: An Introduction.	0.5
Contemporary Feminism and Female Writing: narrative techniques, theories and criticism.	0.5
Re-defining Body Politics, Sexuality and Identity: Zoe Fairbairns, Sara Maitland and Jeanette Winterson.	1
Michèle Roberts's "ex-centric" fictions: re-writing women's lives.	1
Challenging conventions: subversion, deconstruction and transformation of Fay Weldon's disobedient female protagonists.	1
Hilary Mantel: the unconventional historical novelist.	1
The margin at the centre: Black British Women Fiction.	0.5
What's next? New voices in British fiction written by women	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 Discussions and activities Oral presentations
Independent work	Reading and analysing texts critically 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 that will be provided throughout the course.

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 (20%), through active participation in the debates that will be proposed along the semester. Students' performance will be assessed according to their participation and the quality of their contributions.
- 2) Weekly activities (40%): 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 (40%): 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.
- Students are expected to practise academic honesty. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in automatic failure of this course.

b) Final evaluation

Should a student, for some reason, need to opt for final assessment, s/he will have to ask for permission in writing to the director of the programme of study.

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 (50%). 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 (50%). 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

- Alexander, Flora. *Contemporary Women Novelists*. London: Edward Arnold, 1989.
- Arnold, Lucy. *Reading Hilary Mantel: Haunted Decades*. London: Bloomsbury, 2019.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Childs, Peter. *Contemporary Novelists: British Fiction since 1970*. 2nd ed. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Eagleton, Mary. *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*. 3rd ed. Malden and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2011.
- Eagleton, Mary and Emma Parker, eds. *The History of British Women's Writing. 1970-Present*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. *Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.
- Gruss, Susanne. *The Pleasure of the Feminist Text: Reading Michèle Roberts and Angela Carter*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009.
- Horner, Avril and Sue Zlosnik, eds. *Women and the Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.
- Hosmer, Robert E. C. *Contemporary British Women Writers: Narrative Strategies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993.
- Neumeier, Beate, ed. *Engendering Realism and Postmodernism: Contemporary Women Writers in Britain*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2001.
- Parker, Emma, ed. *Contemporary British Women Writers*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004.
- Pollard, Eileen and Ginette Carpenter, eds. *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. London: Bloomsbury, 2018.
- Reisman, Mara E. *Fay Weldon: Feminism and British Culture: Challenging Cultural and Literary Conventions*. Lanham and London: Lexington Books, 2018.
- Sacido-Romero, Jorge and Laura Lojo-Rodríguez, eds. *Gender and Short Fiction: Women's Tales in Contemporary Britain*. New York: Routledge, 2018.
- Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing, revised and expanded edition*. London: Virago Press, 1999.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern*. London: Routledge, 1989.

Werlock, Abby. H. P., ed. *British Women Writing Fiction*. Tuscaloosa & London: The University of Alabama Press, 2000.

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