



## **Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit**

**Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit - 2020-2021**

## Literature, Culture and Society

---

Course Code	L_ALBALES101
Credits	6
Period	P1
Course Level	100
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Humanities
Course Coordinator	dr. A.S. Raghunath
Examiner	dr. A.S. Raghunath
Teaching Staff	dr. A.S. Raghunath
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Practical, Seminar

---

### Course Objective

This course trains students in the close reading of, and critical reflection on, literary and critical texts from a variety of national, cultural and historical backgrounds, and from diverse disciplinary angles. Students learn about social and academic debates regarding the relationship between literature and society. Students practice with written and verbal presentations of their own research. Students learn how to provide their peers with constructive feedback.

### Course Content

For centuries, literary and other cultural texts have changed the way people think and look at the world. They reveal social injustices and societal ills, offering ideas and ammunition for social change, thereby helping people to imagine different, better realities. A single text may trigger an individual's struggle for emancipation, but also that of a group or a nation. This course will explore the important ways in which literary texts have contributed to societal change and have liberated people throughout the centuries up to the present.

The texts we discuss have instigated individual readers as well as collectivities to discover and become aware of injustices, unfairness and abuse. This course analyzes that process, using the following questions as leading threads in the discussions: Which rhetorical strategies employed in the texts evoke the readers' empathy and possible agency? How do the texts simultaneously assist in emboldening the reader, strengthening an emerging community, and gaining acceptance from a wider audience? In which way do they balance realities that are already being lived and imagined possibilities that have yet to materialize? How do they interact with other expressions of the struggle for emancipation, by way of imitation, opposition, appropriation? And, finally, how do they function within the communities that they have

helped found, how are they remembered, recreated, redefined, and to which purposes?

### **Teaching Methods**

Students and instructor meet three times per week: Lectures, 1 x 2 hours per week. Seminar meetings, 2 x 2 hours per week.

### **Method of Assessment**

Assessment:

Participation 30% (including class participation; group presentation; Canvas posts)

Written exam 40%

Final report 30%

Students will only receive credits for the course if their grade for the written exam is 5.5 or higher. They are not allowed to compensate an exam grade that is below 5.5 with other partial grades.

### **Literature**

Primary and secondary sources; to be announced on Canvas.

### **Target Audience**

First year students of Literature & Society: English

### **Additional Information**

This course is obligatory in the first year. Attendance required: 80% (including lectures, seminars, practicums). Students who miss more than 20% will not receive credits for the course.

### **Custom Course Registration**

Sign up procedure: There is a slightly different enrollment procedure for this module. The standard procedure of the Faculty of Humanities has students sign up for (i) the module, (ii) the form of tuition (lecture and/or preferred seminar group), and (iii) the exam. However, for this module the instructor will assign the students to the seminar groups. Therefore, students should sign up for (i) the module, (ii) the lectures, and (iii) the exam, but not for the seminar groups.

### **Recommended background knowledge**

The history and literature of social movements such as feminism and the abolitionist and anti-apartheid movements.