

STUDY GUIDE

IMPROVE AS A READER

Banned, Beloved, and Global: Understanding Fiction
from the English-Speaking World

26-27 S2

Organised by

University of Vaasa

1. IDENTIFYING DATA.		
· Course Name.	Improve as a Reader - Banned, Beloved, and Global: Understanding Fiction from the English-Speaking World	
· Coordinating University.	University of Vaasa	
· Partner Universities Involved.	N/A	
· Course Field(s).	Modern languages and literature	
· Related Study Programme.	N/A	
· ISCED Code.	0231	
· SDG.	https://sdgs.un.org/goals ; 1,3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 16	
· Study Level.	(M, D) + staff	
· EUNICE Key Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green – strongly • Orange - moderately • Red – partially • Blank cell - not at all 	
	Problem solving	partially
	Teamworking	moderately
	Communication	strongly
	Self-management	strongly

		Cognitive flexibility	strongly	
		Digital competence	not at all	
		Technical competence	not at all	
		Global intercultural competence	strongly	

· Number of ECTS credits allocated.	3
· Mode of Delivery.	Online self-study
· Language of Instruction.	English
· Course Dates.	11.2. - 15.4.2027
· Precise Schedule of the Lectures.	One introductory synchronous meeting in the beginning, 11.2.2027 at 10-12 am EET, but no other synchronous lectures, all assignments asynchronously on Moodle.
· Key Words.	Reading skills, English, literary texts, stylistic devices
· Catchy Phrase.	Read Smarter. Understand Deeper.

· Prerequisites and co-requisites.	Students need to have completed a B2 level course on Bachelor level prior to this course. The course is available to all students at M and D level and staff members of the Alliance.
· Number of EUNICE students that can attend the Course.	30
· Number of EUNICE students that can attend the course per institution	3
· Course inscription procedure(s).	Standard EUNICE procedure

2. CONTACT DETAILS.

· Department.	The Language Centre Linginno
· Name of Lecturer.	Simone Sundqvist
· E-mail.	simone.sundqvist@uwasa.fi
· Other Lecturers.	

3. COURSE CONTENT.

Reading two longer fictional works together with short stories and excerpts and shorter analyses on these, writing a review, a reading diary

Discussing the selected works that are on the reading list. Reasons for banning or encouraging reading certain works. Discussing the relationship between reality and literary texts. . Evaluating how social circumstances are reflected in literary text.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES.

Students are able to:

- read longer literary texts in English with understanding of subtleties and nuances
- reflect critically and effectively communicate about what they have read
- describe the role of creative texts and evaluate how these relate to the contemporary world
- identify major works of English-language fiction and the authors commonly studied in higher education worldwide
- identify reasons for banning literary works in various contexts

5. OBJECTIVES.

1. Identify major works in the anglophone literary tradition.
2. Read and interpret a wide range of literary genres.
3. Explain and critically evaluate how writers deliberately break or bend linguistic conventions through unusual syntax, inventive vocabulary, or stylistic experimentation, and discuss the effect these choices have on the reader.
4. Explain the reasons and consequences of banning books.

6. COURSE ORGANISATION.

UNITS

1.	Foundations of Literary Engagement. Your relationship to literature, Plot or character focus? Introduction to poetry
2.	Narrative technique and voice. Reading diary of the first novel
3.	Exploring Short Fiction and Global Perspectives Literature circles analyzing short stories centering on individuals in tension with society and their insight, ambiguity, and social critique as well as crime and mystery fiction. Introduction to post-colonial literature.
4.	Identity, power, and belonging. Book review of the second novel.

PLANNED LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND TEACHING METHODS.

One lecture, two group work assignments.

7. ASSESSMENT METHODS, CRITERIA AND PERIOD.

Eight assessed submission assignments. Six of these are individual assignments and two are collaborative learning assignments.

Course assessment: 1–5 / fail (0)

OBSERVATIONS.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND TEACHING MATERIALS.

Short stories and excerpts are found on the Moodle platform.

Students choose two books from the following list. These books are usually available in university libraries, the city public libraries and classic works where the copyright has expired can be found at e.g.

<https://www.gutenberg.org>

<https://americanliterature.com/books/>

<https://freeclassicebooks.com/>

1. 19th-Century British and American Literature (Victorian, Realistic & Romantic)

Austen, Jane – *Pride and Prejudice*; *Sense and Sensibility*

Brontë, Anne – *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

Brontë, Charlotte – *Jane Eyre*; *Shirley*; *Villette*

Brontë, Emily – *Wuthering Heights*

Dickens, Charles – *David Copperfield*; *Great Expectations*; *Oliver Twist*

Hardy, Thomas – *Jude the Obscure*; *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

Hawthorne, Nathaniel – *The Scarlet Letter*

Thoreau, Henry David – *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (autobiography/memoir)

Wollstonecraft, Mary – *On the Vindication of Women's Rights* (social criticism)

2. Early 20th-Century Modernism & Proto-Modernism

Faulkner, William – *As I Lay Dying*; *The Sound and the Fury*

Fitzgerald, F. Scott – *Tender is the Night*

Huxley, Aldous – *A Brave New World*

Joyce, James – *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

London, Jack – The Iron Heel
 Nabokov, Vladimir – Lolita
 Naipaul, V. S. – Miguel Street; The Suffrage of Elvira
 Orwell, George – Nineteen Eighty-Four
 Rhys, Jean – The Wide Sargasso Sea
 Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft – Frankenstein
 Steinbeck, John – East of Eden; Grapes of Wrath, Of Mice and Men
 Wilde, Oscar – The Picture of Dorian Gray

3. Post-WWII American & British Literature (mid-20th century)

Angelou, Maya – I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (autobiography/memoir)
 Ellison, Ralph – Invisible Man
 Lee, Harper – To Kill a Mockingbird
 Morrison, Toni – Sula; Tar Baby; The Bluest Eye
 O’Dell, Tawni – Angels Burning; Back Roads
 Rand, Ayn – Atlas Shrugged
 Walker, Alice – The Color Purple
 Wright, Richard – Native Son

4. Late 20th–21st-Century Contemporary Fiction

Alderman, Naomi – Disobedience
 Atwood, Margaret – The Blind Assassin; The Robber’s Bride
 Cummins, Jeanine – American Dirt
 Feldman, Deborah – Unorthodox (memoir)
 Franzen, Jonathan – Freedom; Purity; The Corrections
 Guo, Xiaolu – 20 Fragments of a Ravenous Youth; A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers
 Hamid, Mohsin – Exit West; How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia; The Last White Man; The Reluctant Fundamentalist
 Honeyman, Gail – Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine
 Kingsolver, Barbara – Demon Copperhead; The Poisonwood Bible
 McCourt, Frank – Angela’s Ashes (memoir)
 McEwan, Ian – Atonement
 Messud, Claire – The Emperor’s Children; The Woman Upstairs
 Moshfegh, Ottessa – Eileen
 Roy, Arundhati – The God of Small Things
 Stuart, Douglas – Shuggie Bain
 Tartt, Donna – The Secret History
 Thomas, Angie – The Hate U Give
 Westover, Tara – Educated (memoir)

5. Postcolonial & Diasporic Literature (Global Anglophone)

Adébáyò, Ayòbámi – Stay With Me

Guo, Xiaolu – (also listed above – contemporary/personal diaspora)
Hamid, Mohsin – (also above – South Asian diaspora)
Lahiri, Jhumpa – The Interpreter of Maladies (short story collection)
Naipaul, V. S. – Miguel Street; The Suffrage of Elvira
Rhys, Jean – The Wide Sargasso Sea
Roy, Arundhati – The God of Small Things