

ECOPOETICS. Sustainability and Wellbeing in British Poetry
ECOPOETICA: Sostenibilità e benessere nella poesia britannica
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English Literature II
MA Course in FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

Academic Year 2018-2019

Obiettivi formativi / Teaching Goals

Gli studenti approfondiranno le loro conoscenze della letteratura e della cultura britannica in una prospettiva teorica, metodologica, diacronica e sincronica.

La trattazione di argomenti teorici e metodologici mira a mettere in luce la dimensione metaletteraria. Lo studio di specifici autori e testi è finalizzato a: inquadrare il contesto storico-culturale della Gran Bretagna e dell'Europa; utilizzare gli strumenti critici per indagare i testi letterari.

Particolare attenzione sarà dedicata all'acquisizione da parte degli studenti di abilità richieste in settori professionali quali l'insegnamento della letteratura e l'editoria letteraria, che richiedono la comprensione delle forme e dei generi letterari nella loro evoluzione attraverso la storia e in relazione ad altre espressioni culturali.

Students will widen their knowledge of British literature and culture from a theoretical, methodological, diachronic and synchronic perspective.

Discussion of theoretical and methodological topics will highlight the metaliterary dimension. The study of specific authors and texts is aimed at: presenting the historical and cultural contexts in Great Britain and Europe; applying critical tools for examining literary texts.

Particular attention will be devoted to the students' acquisition of skills required in job sectors such as literature teaching and publishing, which involve understanding how literary forms and genres have evolved through history and in relation to other cultural expressions.

Contenuti del corso / Contents of the Course

La letteratura guarda costantemente avanti e indietro per recuperare le radici di elaborazioni sociali, politiche, culturali e speculare sulle loro trasmutazioni. Società e interazioni umane sostenibili o insostenibili sono sempre legate a visioni, anticipazioni, estrapolazioni.

Questo corso sulla sostenibilità e il benessere nella poesia britannica esplora le mutazioni dell'umanità e del suo ambiente osservate e rappresentate dai poeti. Inizieremo esaminando come il pensiero ecologico abbia pervaso la teoria letteraria e la critica, evidenziando che l'ambiente è fisico, ontologico, etico e psicologico, infiltra la vita umana e non umana nella sua realtà quotidiana. Continueremo esaminando la poesia della natura, che nel canone letterario occidentale comprende: la pastorale classica; versioni rinascimentali della pastorale; poesia paesaggistica del XVIII secolo; poesie dei Romantici sulla natura; il genere contemporaneo della ecopoesia. La ecopoesia sottolinea l'interconnessione fra la vita umana e non umana in un'epoca di inedito impatto antropico sull'ambiente e prefigura il futuro del nostro pianeta riesaminando il nostro rapporto con il mondo naturale.

Lecture approfondite si concentreranno su:

la poesia sulla natura nel Romanticismo;

la poesia sulla natura in epoca vittoriana;

la poesia ecologica contemporanea.

Literature constantly looks backward and forward to retrieve the roots of social, political, cultural mind-sets and speculate on their transmutations. Sustainable or unsustainable societies and human interactions are always attached to visions, anticipations, extrapolations. This course on sustainability and wellbeing in British poetry explores the mutations of humankind and the environment observed and represented by poets.

We will start by examining how ecological thought has pervaded literary theory and critique, highlighting that the environment is physical, ontological, ethical, and psychological, infiltrating human and nonhuman life in its everyday reality.

We will focus on nature poetry, which in the western literary canon comprises: classical pastoral; Renaissance versions of pastoral; 18th-century landscape poetry; Romantic poems on nature; the contemporary genre of ecological poetry. Ecopoetry emphasises the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman life in a time of unprecedented anthropogenic impact on the environment and envisions the future of our planet by re-examining our relationship with the natural world.

Close reading will concentrate on:

Nature poetry in Romanticism;

Nature poetry in the Victorian Age;

Contemporary Ecological poetry.

Modalità di verifica dell'apprendimento / Learning Assessment

The exam in English consists of:

- A. a written essay on the topics tackled during the classes and defined in the Contents of the course;
- B. an oral exam, focusing on the history of English literature as well as on the topics tackled during the classes.

The written part of the exam can be taken separately from and before the oral part only if you choose the first date available after the end of the course. After that date the written and the oral part of the exam will have to be taken jointly on the same day.

All primary and secondary works in the programme can be downloaded from Materiale didattico.

L'esame in lingua inglese si articola in:

- A. una prova scritta, che verte su argomenti trattati nel corso monografico e indicati nei Contenuti del corso;
- B. una prova orale, incentrata sulla storia della letteratura e sul corso monografico.

La prova scritta può essere sostenuta separatamente dalla prova orale solo nell'appello previsto alla fine del corso e rivolto agli studenti frequentanti. A partire dall'appello successivo, le due prove devono essere sostenute unitamente nello stesso appello.

Tutti i testi primari e critici in programma saranno resi disponibili.

Agli studenti frequentanti si richiede:

- 1.a) lo studio di 2 saggi o capitoli sulla teoria e metodologia;
- 1.b) lo studio dei testi primari in programma;
- 1.c) lo studio dei testi critici sui testi primari, precisamente: 1 su William Wordsworth, 1 su John Clare, 1 su William Morris, 2 sulla Contemporary Ecological Poetry;
- 2) la conoscenza di un secolo della letteratura inglese a scelta.

Agli studenti non frequentanti si richiede:

- 1.a) lo studio di 4 saggi o capitoli sulla teoria e metodologia;
 - 1.b) lo studio dei testi primari in programma;
 - 1.c) lo studio dei testi critici sui testi primari, precisamente: 1 su William Wordsworth, 1 su John Clare, 1 su William Morris, 2 sulla Contemporary Ecological Poetry.
- 2) la conoscenza di due secoli della letteratura inglese a scelta.

Assignments for the students who attend the course:

- 1.a) the study of 2 essays or chapters on theory and methodology;
 - 1.b) the study of the primary works tackled during the classes;
 - 1.c) the study of the critical essays on the primary works, namely: 1 about William Wordsworth, 1 about John Clare, 1 about William Morris, 2 about Contemporary Ecological Poetry;
- 2) the study of a century of history of English literature.

Assignments for the students who do not attend the course:

- 1.a) the study of 4 essays or chapters on theory and methodology;
 - 1.b) the study of the primary works in the bibliography;
 - 1.c) the study of the critical essays on the primary works, namely: 1 about William Wordsworth, 1 about John Clare, 1 about William Morris, 2 about Contemporary Ecological Poetry;
- 2) the study of two centuries of history of English literature.

Testi di riferimento / Syllabus

Testi primari / Primary Texts

I. NATURE POETRY IN ROMANTICISM

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

“Calm is all nature as a resting wheel” (1802?)

John Clare (1793-1864)

“All nature has a feeling” (date unknown)

II. NATURE POETRY IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

William Morris (1834-1896)

“The Lapse of the Year”, in *A Book of Verse*, 1870

The Earthly Paradise, 1868-1870

III. CONTEMPORARY ECOLOGICAL POETRY

Carol Rumens, “2084” (2009), <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2009/sep/26/2084-carol-rumens>,

Kathleen Jamie, “The Spider” (2009), <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2009/sep/26/the-spider-kathleen-jamie>

Andrew Motion, “The Sorcerer’s Mirror” (2009), <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2009/sep/26/the-sorcers-mirror-andrew-motion>.

Carol Ann Duffy, “Keep it in the Ground”, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/27/keep-it-in-the-ground-a-poem-by-carol-ann-duffy>

Keep It in the Ground (2015), curated by British poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy and published in *The Guardian* newspaper in 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2015/nov/20/our-melting-shifting-liquid-world-celebrities-read-poems-on-climate-change>. In particular:

Matthew Hollis, “Causeway”

Michael Longley, “Storm”

Jackie Kay, “Extinction”

Lachlan McKinnon, “California Dreaming”

Alice Oswald, “Fox”, in *Falling Awake*, 2016

Testi critici sulla teoria e la metodologia / Critical Texts on Theory and Methodology

In ordine cronologico / In Chronological Order

Jean Arnold, Lawrence Buell, Michael P. Cohen, Elizabeth Dodd, Simon C. Estok, Ursula K. Heise, Jonathan Levin, Patrick D. Murphy, Andrea Parra, William Slaymaker, Scott Slovic, Timothy Sweet and Louise Westling, *Forum on Literatures of the Environment*, PMLA, Vol. 114, No. 5 (Oct., 1999), pp. 1089-1104.

Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000) [Biblioteca A. Bassi].

Kate Rigby, “Earth, World, Text: On the (Im)possibility of Ecopoiesis”, in *New Literary History*, Vol. 35, No. 3, Critical Inquiries, Explorations, and Explanations (Summer, 2004), pp. 427-442.

Louise Westling, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) [Biblioteca A. Bassi].

Edward O. Wilson, *Half-earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016) [Biblioteca A. Bassi].

Paola Spinuzzi and Massimiliano Mazzanti, eds, *Cultures of Sustainability and Wellbeing: Theories, Histories and Policies* (New York and London: Routledge, 2018).

Testi critici sui testi primari / Critical Texts on Primary Texts

I. NATURE POETRY IN ROMANTICISM

William Wordsworth

Arthur S. Pfeffer and James A. W. Heffernan, “Wordsworth on Imagination”, *PMLA*, Vol. 84, No. 1 (Jan., 1969), pp. 141-146.

Karl Kroeber, “Constable and Wordsworth: The Ecological Moment of Romantic Art”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 34 (1971), pp. 377-386.

John Clare

Sarah Houghton, "The 'Community' of John Clare's Helpston", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 46, No. 4, The Nineteenth Century (Autumn, 2006), pp. 781-802.

Alan Bewell, "John Clare and the Ghosts of Natures Past", *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 65, No. 4 (March 2011), pp. 548-578.

II. NATURE POETRY IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

William Morris

Vita Fortunati and Paola Spinozzi, "Dialectics between Labour and Rest in Morris's Utopia: *News from Nowhere* (1890)", in *Utopias. Cadernos de Literatura Comparada*, 6/7 Dezembro 2003, Org. Fátima Vieira e Jorge Miguel Bastos da Silva (Porto: Granito Editores e Livreiros, 2003), pp. 119-137.

John Holmes, "Sustaining the Earthly Paradise", in *Sustainability and the Victorians*, ed. Wendy Parkins (New York and London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 32-50.

III. CONTEMPORARY ECOLOGICAL POETRY

Adam Trexler and Adeline Johns-Putra, "Climate Change in Literature and Literary Criticism", *WIREs Climate Change*, Vol. 2 (March/April 2011), pp. 185-200. doi: 10.1002/wcc.105.

Malcolm Miles, *Eco-Aesthetics: Art, Literature and Architecture in a Period of Climate Change* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014) [Biblioteca A. Bassi].

Adeline Johns-Putra, "Climate Change in Literature and Literary Studies: From Cli-Fi, Climate Change Theater and Ecopoetry to Ecocriticism and Climate Change Criticism", *WIREs Climate Change*, Volume 7 (March/April 2016), pp. 266-282. doi: 10.1002/wcc.38.

HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

A) Andrew Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

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B) Edward Albert, *History of English Literature*, 5th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

C) *The New Cambridge History of English Literature*

Table of Contents available at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/series/new-cambridge-history-of-english-literature/B453DBCE2E05A655AD55BB0DB4A25AC0>

D) *Oxford English Literary History*

Table of Contents available at <https://global.oup.com/academic/content/series/o/oxford-english-literary-history-oeih/?lang=en&cc=it>

E) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*

Table of Contents available at <https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/>