
HUMANITIES

DEGREE: BACHELOR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ACADEMIC YEAR:

DEGREE COURSE YEAR: FIRST SECOND THIRD FOURTH

SEMESTER: 1º SEMESTER 2º SEMESTER

CATEGORY: BASIC COMPULSORY OPTIONAL

NO. OF CREDITS (ECTS): 6 3

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH SPANISH

PREREQUISITES: NONE

1. SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to major thinkers and pivotal ideas from the mid-19th century to the present day. Students will engage in course material through close reading of primary texts, in-class discussions, online reading responses, and critical essays. Main themes include Charles Darwin's natural selection, Structuralism, Cultural and Linguistic Relativism, Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital and habitus, and Benedict Anderson's imagined communities.

2. OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS

Objectives

- Acquire fluency in core intellectual developments of modern society over the past 150 years.
- To articulate and trace the development of key ideas about language, culture, and society.
- Explore the development of ideas in critical context.

Skills

- Use of and sensitivity towards primary texts.
- The analysis and critical assessment of arguments.
- The ability to formulate and express a persuasive argument or position in written work.
- The ability to intervene effectively in discussion.

3. CONTENT

SEMINAR 1: INTRODUCTION

Description

Introduction to the course. Outline of course goals. Overview of early perspectives on language and the mind from classical thinkers and the Bible and their prevalence up to the 19th century.

Reading

SEMINAR 2: DARWIN, AN INTRODUCTION

Description

An introduction to central concepts in Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, including variation in nature and the struggle for existence. Consideration of the cultural and intellectual environment leading up to Darwin, including important thinkers, such as Malthus and Lamarck, and influential ideas of the period.

Reading

SEMINAR 3: DARWIN AND THE THEORY OF NATURAL SELECTION

Description

Examination of Darwin's theory of natural selection; a look at why the theory has remained intellectually important from the mid-19th century up to the present day. Effects of Darwin's theories in other fields of inquiry.

Reading

SEMINAR 4: SAUSSURE AND STRUCTURALISM

Description

A look at the beginnings of the structuralism movement that was introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure's lectures and which dramatically reframed the study of human language.

Reading

SEMINAR 5: LÉVI-STRAUSS AND STRUCTURALISM

Description

Introduction to Structural Anthropology. Claude Lévi-Strauss' extension of Saussure's theories to the field of anthropology.

Reading

SEMINAR 6: THE SAPIR-WHORF HYPOTHESIS

Description

A look at the intellectual trend of linguistic and cultural relativism in the United States, centered on the research and writings of Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf.

Reading

ESSAY 1 DUE

SEMINAR 7: MEAD AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Description

Readings from Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, reporting ethnographic research in Samoan villages. An examination of the old "nature versus nurture" debate and cultural relativism in the field of anthropology.

Reading

SEMINAR 8: CHOMSKY AND UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR

Description

Analysis of Chomsky's universal grammar, which claims that language is an abstract, culturally independent entity. His theories represented a departure from the earlier schools of structuralism and relativism, moving linguistics away from fields it had shared a close connection with, including anthropology and literary criticism.

Reading

SEMINAR 9: GUEST LECTURE (TBD)

SEMINAR 10: LAKOFF AND METAPHOR

Description

Late 20th century research at the intersection of linguistics and psychology led to new insights into connections between language and culture. The traditions of cognitive linguistics and metaphor theory are examined as alternatives to Chomsky's theory of universal grammar.

Reading

SEMINAR 11: ANDERSON AND IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

Description

Exploration of Benedict Anderson's concept "imagined communities" and the role that language plays in building a national consciousness.

Reading

SEMINAR 12: BOURDIEU AND HABITUS

Description

Analysis of Pierre Bourdieu's central concept "habitus."

Reading

ESSAY 2 DUE

SEMINAR 13: BOURDIEU AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

Description

Analysis of Pierre Bourdieu's central concept "cultural capital."

Reading

SEMINAR 14: LANGUAGE & THE MIND—FINDINGS FROM PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

Description

Work in psychology has increased understanding of the relationship between language and thought, but the formalist vs. functionalist debate persists.

Reading

SEMINAR 15: REVIEW & RECAP

Description

Review of main course concepts and preparation for final exam.

Reading:

No reading

FINAL EXAM

4. METHODOLOGY AND ECTS WEIGHTING

The course consists of a blend of discussion and lecture, based on material presented in class as well as engagement with the assignments. Interactivity and engagement is critical to the learning process and students will be encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas about the core themes of the class.

Course material of 6 credits ECTS (6 x 25 h/credit = 150 h. of course work/student)						
Activities	Sessions	Classroom hours	Factor	Individual Study	Total Hours	ECTS
Theoretical Classes	30	45	1,5	93,5	138,5	5,54
Practical Classes	0	0	1,5	0	0	0
Seminars		0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous Activities		0	0	0	0	0
Group Tutorials		0	0	0	0	0
Individual Tutorials		8,5	0	0	8,5	0,3
Exams		3,0	0	0	3,0	0,16
Total	30	56,5		93,5	150	6

5. EVALUATION SYSTEM

5.1. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Students must fulfill the following requirements as part of the course:

- 1) Write three essays on course topics.
- 2) Engage and be prepared to discuss in class the core ideas and readings of the course. This requires that students complete all reading ahead of class and be attentive to the vocabulary, critical concepts and other ideas that are contained in all the course material.
- 3) Submit weekly reading responses.
- 4) Pass the Final Exam.
- 5) Attend at least 70% of the class. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their attendance record and ensure that they fulfill this requirement.

5.2. EVALUATION AND WEIGHTING CRITERIA

The breakdown of the final grade is as follows.

2 essays, 800-1200 words	40%
Final Exam	30%
Class Participation	20%
Reading Statements	10%

Essays

You are required to write two short essays over the course of the semester. Instructions and topics assignments will be provided after the course has commenced.

Reading Statements

You are required to provide over the course of the semester ten statements of core concepts or ideas derived from the reading. Statements are due before the start of the corresponding class. Further details regarding the reading statements, written assignments, standards for participation, and the final exam will be provided at the beginning of the course.

5.3. RETAKE POLICY

- ❑ Each student has 4 chances to pass any given course distributed in two consecutive academic years (regular period and July period).
- ❑ Students who do not comply with the 70% attendance rule will lose their 1st and 2nd chance, and go directly to the 3rd one (they will need to enroll again in this course next academic year).
- ❑ Grading for retakes will be subject to the following rules:
 - Students failing the course in the first regular period will have to do a retake in July (except those not complying with the attendance rules, which are banned from this possibility).
 - Dates and location of the July retakes will be posted in advance and will not be changed. Please take this into consideration when planning your summer.
 - The retake will consist of an exam testing mastery of both factual and conceptual components of the course.
 - Note differences in the retake policy between the July period and the ordinary period:
 - ✓ July retake: students must pass an exam during the designated exam period; no exceptions or date changes; at the instructor's discretion, the student might also be required to submit additional written work, such as an essay or research paper
 - ✓ Retake in the ordinary period: students must fulfil the overall course requirements.
 - The maximum grade that a student may obtain in the retake will be 8 out of 10.

6. USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS

This subject does not require the use of a laptop in class; nevertheless, if you want to bring your laptop, please contact your professor.