

**Module title:** Literature, Dictatorship and Cultural Memory in the Hispanic World

**Module code:** COM5043

**Credit value:** 15

**Level:** 5

**Pre-requisite modules:**

### **Content Description**

In the twentieth century, Spain and many Latin American countries shared the common experience of dictatorship. By focusing on a representative sample of texts from the twentieth and early twenty-first century (mostly narratives and a play) from Spain, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, El Salvador and Guatemala, this module aims to study Hispanic writers within their historical and political contexts, paying particular attention to the so-called dictator novels. We will explore how specific authors write and represent military dictatorship and how they reexamine the role of literature as a productive social text in the light of repression and censorship. In this context, this module will examine critically issues of 'official history', cultural memory, oral history, gender, national identity and exile in Spain and Latin America, relevant to this day.

### **Module Aims**

1. The module aims to provide second and final year students with an advanced level understanding of the disruptive effect of dictatorships on the intellectual development of the Spanish and Latin American world. It will also cover how literature and cultural memory will add a new dimension to our understanding of traumatic events in twentieth-century history. Students will learn how specific authors use different narrative strategies to name the 'unnameable' (Fernando Reati) and how fiction is used as a productive mechanism for rethinking trauma, power and the self.
2. Explore, compare and contrast representations of social and political conflict and dictatorships in a range of twentieth and twenty-first-century Latin American and Spanish literary texts.
3. Examine critically representations of dictatorships in Hispanic literature with regards to and in the context of different dictatorships in a selection of six countries (Spain, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, El Salvador and Guatemala), with attention to issues of social inequality, gender, urban violence, exile, and historical and cultural memory.
4. Consider writing as a site of resistance within authoritarian regimes.
5. Acquire a sound understanding of the historical background and trajectory of some of the most relevant socio-political events in Latin America and Spain as explored through canon-forming twentieth and twenty first-century literature.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Academic Content:

- A1 To develop critical awareness of the impact of twentieth-century socio-political events and dictatorships in Latin American and Spanish literature in the course of the 20th and 21st centuries.
- A2 To know the historical setting (in Spain, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, El Salvador and Guatemala) informing the literature studied in this module.
- A3 To define key concepts (e.g., in relation to dictatorship, exile, gender and national identity and cultural memory) and literary contexts.

A4 To identify different literary periods in Latin America and Spain (especially in relation to social changes and waves of exile and how these have affected the literary output and canon formation of Spain and Latin America).

A5 To understand key processes of change within Latin American and Spanish history.

A6 To engage with critical sources and describe arguments and material on recent Latin American and Spanish literary Studies.

A7 To show a comprehensive understanding of literary analysis in general.

Disciplinary Skills – able to:

B1 To interpret knowledge in the discipline and apply it in the analysis of selected texts.

B2 To examine critically theories and literary practices to demonstrate a conceptual understanding that enables students to evaluate critically current research in Hispanic Studies.

B3 To classify authors and texts in relation to the literary history of the country.

B4 To differentiate between opinions and facts, 'absolute' and 'relative' truths and question issues of 'truth' and 'reality' particularly concerning ideologically charged analyses.

B5 To analyse recent literature and examine literary responses to social changes and examine the relationship between power, dictatorship and writing.

B6 To plan, organize and undertake research relevant to level 5 of study in order to produce high quality essays.

B7 To construct own synthesis (recognizing the advantages and disadvantages of the methodology used) drawing on various critical approaches attempting to reconstruct the past and analyse the present, in relation to class, race, gender, culture, religious belief, politics and literary history.

B8 To judge the effectiveness of literature in challenging state practices and assess to what extent writers have been able to challenge the state.

Attributes:

C1 To show clarity of communication in different contexts.

C2 To debate effectively and constructively in relation to the analysis of texts studied in this module and beyond.

C3 To organize concepts and present convincing arguments, articulating both orally and in writing in a professional and concise manner.

C4 To engage critically with knowledge and have a global perspective when defending opinions in relation to factual information.

### Activity Hours

Activity Type	Time spent (hours)
Lecture	11
Seminar	11
Guided independent study	128
Total	150

### Indicative Reading List

- Spain: Dulce Chacón, The Sleeping Voice
- Chile: Ariel Dorfman, Death and the Maiden

- Uruguay: Cristina Peri Rossi, *The Ship of Fools*
- Argentina: Luisa Valenzuela, *The Lizard's Tail*.
- El Salvador: Horacio Castellanos Moya, *Seneslessness*.
- Guatemala: Rodrigo Rey Rosa, *Human Matter*.