

MA Literary Studies: Literature in Society. Europe and Beyond

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**Universiteit
Leiden**
The Netherlands

MA Literary Studies Tracks 2019-20

Italian
Literature
&
Culture

German
Literature
&
Culture

Literature
&
Society

French
Literature
&
Culture

English
Literature
&
Culture

‘Literature in Society’

- How do literature and film relate to contemporary political and social issues?
- Politics
- Identity
- Migration
- Memory
- Environment
- Mobility [...]

Literature & film reflect on social and political issues but also shape them.



‘Europe and Beyond’

- Identity, migration, memory are transnational, global issues
→ study literature in a comparative perspective:
- Confrontations between European literatures
- Confrontations between European and non-European literatures



Travelling languages and literatures

- Literature as a vehicle of travelling (European and non-European) languages, themes, genres, literary forms...
- Focus of the track is modern/contemporary
- The effect of colonization and decolonization in the travelling of literatures:
 - travelling European literatures
 - Example: North African francophone literatures
 - inversely, overseas literatures travel around the world: migrant literatures, world literature...

Our specific approach of literature and film

- Object-centered: importance of the socio-historical context and of close reading primary literature
- The place of literary theory
- Focus on literature in Western European languages: English/American, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese (all read in English)
- ‘Literature in Society’: a joint initiative of the following MA tracks: English, French, German and Italian Literature and Culture + the MA’s North American Studies, Latin America Studies, Modern Dutch literature and culture.

Structure of the programme

4 electives (40 EC) + masterthesis (20 EC) = 60 EC

1) start in September:

- first term: 3 electives (30 EC)
- second term: 1 elective (10 EC) + masterthesis (20 EC)

2) start in February:

- second term: 3 electives (30 EC)
- first term: 1 elective (10 EC) + masterthesis (20 EC)

Attention: February start is not advised (for practical reasons)!

Our programme in 2019-20

First term:

Course 1 (10 EC) required: Literature in Society. Narrative, Fiction and Voice

Course 2 (10 EC) required: choose (Re)mapping the City **or** Displacement and Belonging. Refugees in Contemporary Literature

Course 3: elective (10 EC): choose a course mentioned under Course 2 or one of the following:

- a) European Modernism
- b) Working Through 9/11

Second term:

Course 2 (10 EC) required: choose Speculative Fiction **or** Crisis , Literature and the Humanities:

Course 3: elective (10 EC): American Comics against the Grain

Course 4 : elective (10 EC): choose a course listed above or a course on literature and culture from a related MA* or an internship* .

Master thesis « Literature in Society » (20 EC)

*only with prior approval of the Board of Exams.

Core course: Literature in Society. Narrative, Fiction and Voice

- How do fictional narratives in literature and film reflect upon social and political issues? How do they shape our views on politics, trauma, environment and global identity?
- A few titles of classes:
 - Politics: Thinking through Post-Apartheid with Coetzee, *Disgrace*.
 - Trauma and Memory: the trauma of slavery in Tony Morrison's *Beloved*
 - Mobility: the transnational road movie and the politics of life in transit
 - Happiness: Tom Lanoye, *Fortunate slaves*.

A team-taught course with staff from Literary Studies, Modern Dutch Literature and Culture, North American Studies and Latin America Studies.

Elective: (Re)mapping the City in Modern Literature and Visual Cultures

- The City as a physical, spatial phenomenon but also as a mental artifact → study the representations of cities in literature and film
- Themes: the city night stroller, the ‘flâneur’ and the ‘flâneuse’, the invention of daily life, the contemporary megalopolis, the Postcolonial city...
- A transnational approach: confronting French and South-American (Brazilian) literature and film.



What is a research seminar ? (10 EC)

- **tuition:** 2/3 hrs a week
- approx. 1 day **preparation** a week: study of compulsory literature and seminar preparation
- **oral presentation** (including preparation): \pm 20 hrs
- written **paper:** \pm 140 hrs

Assessment method (example)

- active **participation** in weekly seminars (10%)
- **oral presentation** (20%)
- written **paper** (5000 words): (70%)
- Research MA students write an extra 3000 word paper on a topic to be decided with tutor.



Knowledge & skills

Knowledge:

- In depth knowledge of a selection of European and non-European literature and culture
- Ability to reflect on the relevance of literature for social and political issues
- Ability to study literature with a comparative, transnational approach

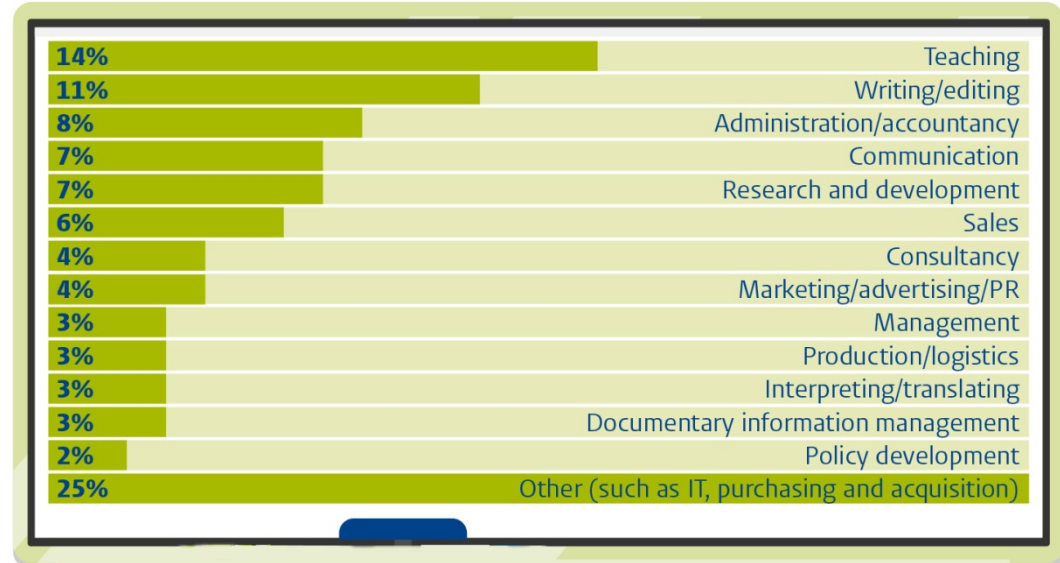
Skills:

- Comparative and analytical skills
- Critical and independent thinking
- Excellent oral and written skills
- Good verbal and written academic English
- Solving complex challenges - together with other students

Your future field of work?

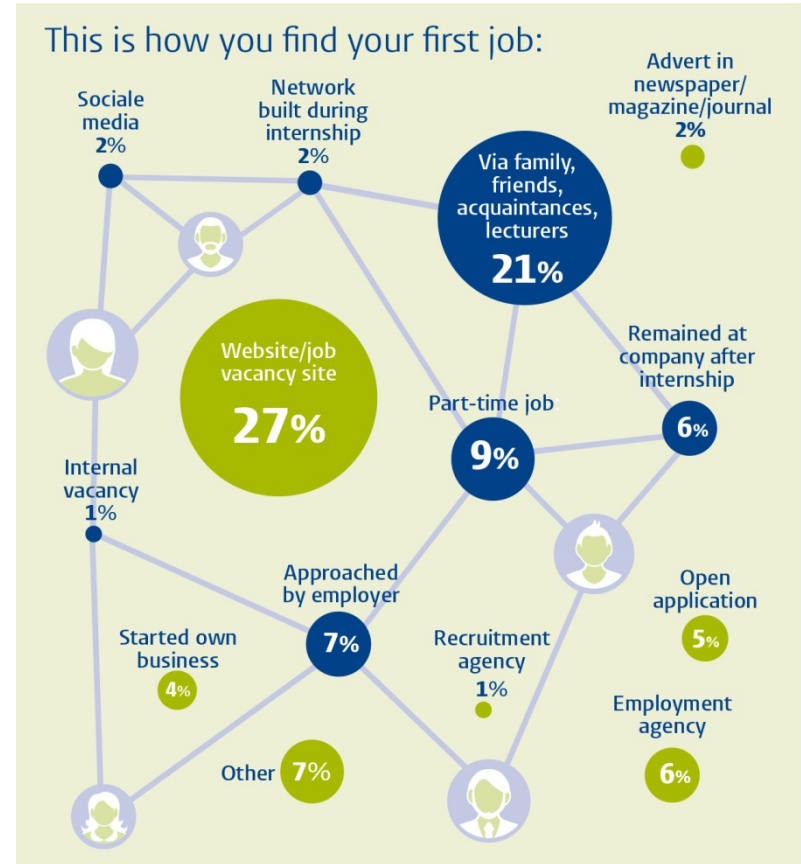
What graduates do in their first jobs:

- A few examples:
- **Desk editor**
- **Journalist**
- **Freelance copy editor**
- **Teacher in adult education**
- **Job in the cultural area (museums, theaters...)**
- **PhD candidate** at Leiden University
- **Marketing Communications Writer**
- **Translator** for government or business or literary translator



Your future prospects?

- 71% of alumni find a first job within 2 months.
- 74% find a professional university or academic level job.
- More or less 48% find their first job through their personal network (family, friends, lecturers, internship, job)
- 27% find first job via vacancy, 6% are asked to continue to work at the organization of their internship.



What kind of preparation works?

- **A master's degree pays off:** In their first job master's students often occupy higher-level positions than bachelor's students
- Graduates with **internship experience** are more likely to have obtained the job they wanted: **56%** compared to graduates who did not have this experience: **48%**
- **Relevant (part-time) work experience** also has a positive effect on obtaining the job you aspire to have: 56% of graduates with work experience compared to 46% of graduates without work experienced obtained their **desired job**
- Contact [Career Service](#) for advice on internships and work preparation

What are the biggest factors in career success?



Entry requirements

Applicants must meet the following [entry requirements](#):

A BA in Humanities:

- BA's in Languages and Cultures: (almost) automatic admittance
- “generalist” Humanities’ BA’s: for instance “International Studies” (UL), “Taal- en cultuurstudies” (UU), Cultuurwetenschappen (UvA), Europese Studies (UvA), Literatuur en samenleving (VU), BA’s from University Colleges:
 - admittance provided you have done at least 30 EC literature courses. A bridging programme of 5-30 EC may be required in case of deficiencies.
- other BA’s in the Humanities:
 - admittance provided you have done at least 30 EC literature courses. A bridging programme of 5-30 EC may be required in case of deficiencies.

Student life in Leiden

- Historical city with several theatres, cinemas and museums
- Good public transport connections to Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague
- Over 30 different student associations, several of which welcome International and MA students
- University facilities for sports, art and music



Apply now!

Have you made your decision yet?

Start your application for the [MA in Literature in Society. Europe and Beyond](#)

Questions?

- On practical matters, please get in touch with the Coordinator of Studies, Jurjen Donkers, j.donkers@hum.leidenuniv.nl
- On the contents of ‘Literature in Society please get in touch with Dr. Annelies Schulte Nordholt: A.E.Schulte@hum.leidenuniv.nl