



Open Classroom

Open Classroom course, February 2019, UdL:

Literature, creativity and ageing: old age and contemporary authors

Presentation

The notion of old age or the concept of ageing has changed radically in recent decades, thanks to numerous scientific and social advances produced in Western societies that have not only extended life but have also led to a radically different way of understanding growing old. Literature and the arts in general reflect these changes and invite us to reconsider what we understand by ageing, and even to challenge stereotypical ideas that we have assimilated through a culture which only celebrates youth.

The course presents the case of some well-known authors of contemporary literature, through whom we can review the complexity and richness of ageing, and we can even express our own personal experience. It also provides an introduction to the analysis and commentary of literary texts in a relaxed and accessible way, using texts and quotes extracted from the work or biography of the analysed authors.

PROGRAMME:

Date	Researcher	Session title	Author studied	Texts studied	A brief description
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06/02/2019	Núria Casado Gual	Introduction to literary gerontology (first part) and (second part) "Joan Margarit, poemas a la luz de la vejez"	Joan Margarit	Selection of poems from his last five collections published between 2010 and 2017	Introduction to cultural and literary gerontology through its main initiators with examples derived from authors worked in the context of the project. Case study through the study of Joan Margarit's poems of old age. Observation of the formal and thematic characteristics of his late work.
13/02/2019	Maricel Oro Piqueras	Ageing, death and irony in Julian Barnes's "The Fruit Cage."	Julian Barnes	"The Fruit Cage" / "La jaula para frutas"	A brief overview of the concept of ageing, love and desire and death through irony in the work of Julian Barnes. Analysis of the short story "The fruit cage" as part of the volume "The Lemon Table" published in 2004.



20/02/2019	Emma Domínguez Rue	Age and Wisdom: The Amateur Detective in Alexander McCall-Smith's work.	Alexander McCall-Smith	<i>The Sunday Philosophy Club</i>	<p>A brief review of the detective figure in the crime novel and characteristics of the amateur detective, with emphasis on the interaction between age and wisdom in the work of Alexander McCall-Smith and his amateur detective Isabel Dalhousie in the series of novels "<i>The Sunday Philosophy Club</i>".</p>
					<p>The session was divided into two parts. In the first part, a discussion on ageing and gender, based on the reading of two poems chosen by the researcher and contemporary Canadian writer Lorna Crozier. In the second part, the course</p>



27/02/2019	Núria Mina Riera	Gender and ageing	Lorna Crozier	<p>2 poems: participants were asked to write an acrostic poem for their homework with the title "Old Woman/Man" according to their gender. The session was concluded with a final translation discussion of all the topics covered during the course, emphasizing the possible positive effects that literature and creativity have had on participants' perceptions of ageing.</p> <p>"Taking Measure" (<i>Small Mechanics</i>, 2011) and "Mirando a mi amante" (<i>What the Living Won't Let Go</i>, 1999, by Carmen Leñero)</p>
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The first results – common themes found in the four sessions:

Sessions on 13/02/2019 by Maricel Oró Piqueras and on 20/02/2019 by Emma Domínguez Rue:

- Love
- Everyday morality
- Tolerance increasing with age
- Wisdom
- Getting away from stereotypes

Sessions on 06/02/2019 by Nuria Casado Gual and on 27/02/2019 by Nuria Mina Riera:

- Experience meaning wisdom and freedom
- The distance between literature and the reality of ageing
- Gender differences
- The concept of freedom



- The positive and negative feelings of loneliness
- Personal and social concepts of ageing
- Alzheimer as a great taboo
- “The mirror stage of old age”, the external image
- Death
- The meaning of loss
- Wisdom

Planned activities:

Extension of this action of dissemination and field study in other groups (to be specified soon) and analysis of the results in the form of an article.

Images by Marília Simari Crozara



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