

## **SYLLABUS FOR THE COURSE *PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE***

### **SUMMARY DESCRIPTION**

The course aims at the philosophical elucidation of the nature of literature and proposes a systematic study of the multiform and reciprocal relations between philosophy and literature. It focuses on the contribution of literary forms to the expression and exposition of philosophical thought and of the latter to the elaboration of style and to the promotion of different kinds of literary writing. It draws on a variety of literary texts from ancient Greek tragedy to contemporary poetry and prose, by many authors, from Sophocles and Euripides to Fyodor Dostoevsky, Thomas Mann, Albert Camus, T.S. Eliot, Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges and Wallace Stevens. It examines the hypothesis of an eventual “end” of literature, because of an excessive emphasis on philosophical thinking and conversely of an eventual “end” of philosophy, because of an excessive concern with its literary embodiment, with a view to defending certain conceptions of the demarcation between the two domains.

### **TENTATIVE OUTLINE OF LECTURES**

- 1 – 2. Introduction. Conceptions of literature. The problem of definition. External and internal relations between philosophy and literature. Exchanges and tensions
- 3 - 5. Philosophy *in* and *through* literature. The philosophical significance of different literary genres. A study of various examples
- 6 - 8. Semantic, epistemological and ontological issues concerning literary texts
- 9 – 10. Literary theory and literary criticism. Their philosophical presuppositions and dimensions
- 11 – 12. Literature *in* philosophy. On the form and style of philosophical works.
- 13 – 14. The idea of a “philosophical end” of literature and of a “literary end” of philosophy
15. Conclusions – Reiterating the differences between philosophy and literature – What can philosophers learn from literature?

## **METHOD OF EVALUATION**

A written exam and/or a term paper at the end of the course – Participation in class discussions

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Hagberg, Garry and Jost, Walter (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Philosophy of Literature*, Malden MA and Oxford: Wiley & Blackwell, 2010

John, Eileen and McIver Lopes, Dominic (eds.) *Philosophy of Literature: Contemporary and Classic Readings*, Malden MA and Oxford: Wiley @ Blackwell, 2004

Skilleas, Ole, Martin, *Philosophy and Literature*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

- Extensive lecture notes will be provided in class, including a bibliography for each particular issue to be examined