

Module	Understanding Narratives
Course code	BAJO-UN
Credits	10
Allocation of marks	60% Continuous Assessment 40% Written Examination

Module Objectives

Narratives are used by individuals and audiences to understand and make sense of the world they live in. This module allows learners to reflect on the narratives we tell of ourselves and the narratives that others tell to us. The aim of this module is therefore to equip learners with the language and skills necessary to 'read' texts. Texts, in this context, are understood in its broadest sense and include newspaper articles, books, television and film.

The module aims to explore what we mean by narrative and key terms are analysed including genre, representation, myths, image, codes, meaning and structure. This module also looks at some contemporary screen narratives. The ultimate aim of the module is to encourage learners to become active readers of texts.

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to understand, evaluate and analyse a text
2. Discuss narrative forms and key concepts such as genre, representation, stories, myths, intertextuality and points of view
3. Conduct informed independent research
4. Produce work that makes use of sources in an ethical manner

Module Curriculum

- What is narrative?
All media texts including advertisements, news stories, and films have narratives. The term 'narrative' has multiple meanings and is used in a variety of ways. This section of the module examines different texts and analyse their narrative structure. Suggested texts include Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*, Chinua *Achebe Things Fall Apart* and Brian Friel's play 'Faith Healer'.
- Interpreting a Text
Using some of the texts detailed in the first topic, this section of the module considers various approaches to narrative theory and looks specifically at the text and the possible factors that affect how we interpret it. This section examines, by analyzing a text, how the reader make sense of a text and what interpretations can be made.
- Genre

This section of the module examines common components of key genres and also looks at some mutations of genres. Suggested genres to examine include gangster, western, police, romance, fantasy. How texts are sorted into types and what function does genre serve are explored in this section. The aim of this section is that learners begin to recognise conventions of the text.

- **Signification and Codes**

This section of the module looks how to critically read texts and explores signs and codes. Denotative and connotative meanings are examined and the aim is to introduce two key approaches to understand the textual construction of visual media products; mise-en-scene analyses and semiotics.

- **Narrative & The Digital World**

In this section we look at how the way we tell and respond to stories has changed with emerging technology. The narrative possibilities that digital media presents in particular are explored. A number of questions are posed such as: will new media produce new narratives? And how new media impact on traditional ways of telling a story?

- **The difference between prose and film narration.**

This section recognises that the two dominant ways of experiencing fiction available to us today are through novels (including short stories) and film (including television). In this section we examine the institutional differences between film and prose narration. Analysing the work of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* also allows us to introduce learners to the concept of New Journalism.

Reading lists and other learning materials

Recommended Reading

Carter, A. (1990) *The Bloody Chamber* London: Penguin Books

Friel, B.(2001) *Faith Healer* London: Faber & Faber

Capote, T. (1966) *In Cold Blood* London: Penguin Books

Achebe, C. (1958) Things Fall Apart London: Penguin Books

Secondary Reading

Barry, P. (2009) 'Narratology' in *Beginning Theory* Manchester: Manchester University Press

Journal: *Sight and Sound*

Eagleton, T. (1996) *Literary Theory: An Introduction* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers

Monaco, J. (2000) *How to Read a Film* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Montgomery, M., Durant, A., Fabb, N., Furniss, T. and Mills, S. (1992) *Advanced Reading Skills for Learners of English Literature* London: Routledge