

# Minority Studies



DR. SALMA KAOUTHAR  
LETAIEF

UNIVERSITE DE BLIDA 2  
FACULTE DES LETTRES  
ET LANGUES

DEPARTEMENT D'ANGLAIS

EMAIL : SK.LETAIEF@UNIV-  
BLIDA2.DZ

5.0

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# Objectives

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- Understand the concept of minority and how it emerged
- Understand the relation that links Minority Studies to politics and literature
- Read texts closely and understand their place in their historical context.
- Comprehend the reasons why authors have politicised minority literature
- Have an educated grasp of the overall issues of “minority” literature.
- Demonstrate an understanding of concepts fundamental to the analysis of minority literature
- The ability to write analytical essays on minority texts in relation to critical theories and concepts

***Pr-requisites:***

The student should preferably have previous knowledge about:

- Reasons that lead to immigration
- The policies of Multiculturalism in the West
- Minority groups and authors that belong to minority groups

# I Entery-Test

## Exercise

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According to your acquired knowledge, what led to the emergence of Minority Studies

- Immigration
- Globalization
- Wars
- Social injustices
- Lack of representation
- None of the above

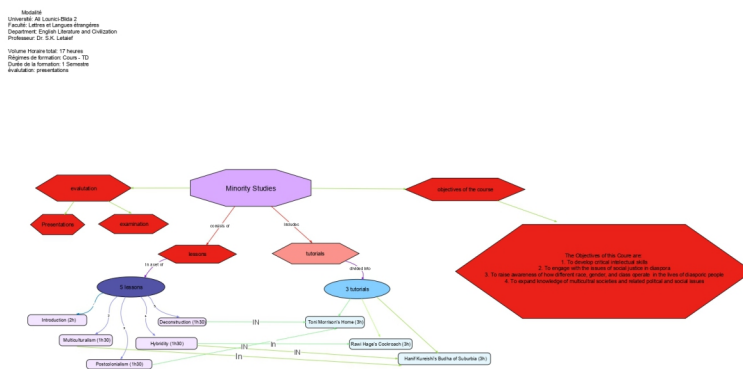


**+** *Extra*

The concept minority refers to groups of people who differ from the majority of the population of the State in some of their:

- *language*
- *religion*
- *Ethnic and symbolic elements*

**📎 Note:** Before we start: find below the mental card for the course



*Minority Studies' Mental Card*

## 2. Distinctive Traits of Minorities

### 2.1. Language

#### 🔍 Definition

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For most people and human groups, *language*<sup>\*</sup> is a *key* element of *one's identity*. *Language*, as any other *cultural trait*, has aspects or manifestations that are difficult to define objectively. Even a seemingly basic fact, such as that of setting out *everyone's language, can be very complex*, considering the combination of *personal, social* and *psychological factors* that operate on it. Therefore, we tend to *identify* an individual's language with that of their parents (together or separately), but this *language* (or languages) may in turn *differ* from the language spoken in their families; the language they know best; the language they use the most in their daily lives; the language they feel most identified with; or the language with which others identify them. The choice of one or another of these possibilities is indeed a *question of identity*, whereby an individual may become a member of a *majority* or a *minority*.

### 2.2. Religion

#### 🔍 Definition

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*Religions*<sup>\*</sup> have been an important source of *cultural diversity* throughout history. Social evolution has radically changed the public role of religions in modern European societies, highly secularised today compared to previous periods in history. However, this does not lessen the *significance of the religious* fact in the *definition of collective identities*, since the *dominant religion* has strongly *determined cultural evolution* in each context. It must be understood that, by including *religion as an objective element of identity in the case of minorities*, we are in turn referring to the religious affiliation or tradition. In this sense, this continues to have an undeniable bearing even though specific religious practices may have fallen into disuse.

### 2.3. Ethnic Traits

#### 🔍 Definition

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The term *ethnicity*<sup>\*</sup> has been traditionally understood as a *group of human beings* that have some somatic, linguistic or *cultural affinities*, but the distinction between the concept of ethnicity and those of cultural people or nation is not always clearly defined. There are no international legal or political documents that offer a definition of ethnicity or expressions like "ethnic groups", "ethnic minorities" or "ethnic communities". What is clear is that the term *ethnicity* has been used since the end of World War II to *replace that of race* with regards to *minorities*. Therefore, the references to "*racial minorities*" in international documents prior to 1939 became references to "*ethnic minorities*" as of 1945.

## 3. Literature and Minorities

### 3.1. Literature of Minorities

#### Definition

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From a *literal* point of view, the term *minority* can be used to designate any group of people identified around a specific characteristic that would account for less than half of the individuals within a given field of reference.

#### Extra

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A *Minor literature* is rather that which a minority constructs within a *major language*.

#### Method

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To identify *Minority literature*, these themes ought to be looked for and analysed in a given literary text:

- *Otherness*
- *Identity crisis*
- *Marginalization*
- *Displacement*
- *Discrimination*
- *Racism*
- *Hybridity*
- *Multiculturalism*

### 3.2. Characteristics of Minor Literature

#### Fundamental

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The three *characteristics* \* of minor literature are:

- *The deterritorialization of language*: language is affected with a high coefficient of *deterritorialization*.
- *The connection of the individual to a political immediacy*: Minor literature is *highly political*. It is a revolutionary literature that forces each individual to connect immediately to politics
- *The collective assemblage of enunciation*: Minor literature takes on a *collective value*. what each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others aren't in agreement. The political domain has contaminated every statement.

See "Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari-20th Century Theorist/UGC NTA NET JRF ENGLISH literature Theory"

## 4. Quiz:

### Critical Reviewing

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According to what you have learnt in this chapter, identify the major issues related to minority literature.



# References

1

Ruiz Vieytez, E. J. (2016). "Cultural Traits as Defining Elements of Minority Groups". *The Age of Human Rights Journal*, (7), 6–28. <https://doi.org/10.17561/tahrj.n7.2>

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Deleuze, Gilles, et al. "Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature: The Components of Expression." *New Literary History*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1985, pp. 591–608. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/468842>. Accessed 22 Mar. 2023.