

Winter Semester 2023/24

Prof Dr Cecile Sandten

Lecture

History of Literatures in English I: From the Renaissance to Romanticism Wed, 09:15-10:45
2/N013 (C10.013)

Content

Britain possesses a rich literary heritage. This lecture course will provide insights into the richness, diversity, and continuity of that tradition. The lecture will cover the canon of English literature from the Renaissance to the Romantic period. The various schools and the historical periods that represent English literature include: Renaissance and Reformation Literature 1510-1620; Revolution and Restoration Literature 1620-1690; Eighteenth-Century Literature 1690-1780; and the Literature of the Romantic Period 1780-1830. Shakespeare, a towering figure of the English literary pantheon, will take centre stage. In addition, the writings of other major literary figures such as John Donne, John Milton, Aphra Behn, Daniel Defoe, William Blake or William Wordsworth will remain central to the lecture course.

Objectives

Students will learn the biographical details, and the socio-cultural contexts in which the literatures were produced. In addition, students will be able to articulate the genealogical roots of literature and literary figures between various historical periods, and their succession and continuity to present times.

Prerequisites

None

Requirements for credits

Regular participation is required. In addition, students are expected to read all assigned texts for the lecture course. For the successful completion of this course, students must write one essay at the end of the teaching period. SELAEn5 students have to write three lecture minutes from three lectures of their choice (processing time: three weeks).

Set texts

William Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Arden 3rd: 9781408133491)

William Shakespeare: *The Tempest* (Arden 3rd: 978-1-4081-3347-7)

Aphra Behn: *Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave* (1688) (Norton: 9780393970142)

Daniel Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) (Oxford World's Classics: 9780199553976)

Seminar

Writing B(l)ack in the Union Jack Tue, 11:30-13:00 2/TW9/113 (C34.113)

Content

Due to its colonial legacy, British society is characterised by complex social, cultural and racial encounters. By introducing students to the works of Black and Asian writers in Britain, this seminar offers historically informed literary and cultural contexts for an understanding of contemporary British multi-ethnic society. Dealing with literary representations of diasporic identities, students will engage with the questions of belonging, the search for identity, the concept of 'home' and the hybrid notion of living 'in-between' two cultures.

Objectives

Focusing on Britain's diverse cultural heritage, students will explore a wide spectrum of literary and theoretical texts from a postcolonial perspective, ranging from Sam Selvon's novel *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), Buchi Emecheta's semi-autobiographical text *Second-Class Citizen* (1974), Hanif Kureishi's film-script (and film) *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), Meera Syal's novel *Anita and Me* (1996), and sit coms, short stories, poems and critical essays by selected authors. Thus, students will get an in-depth knowledge of the literary, cultural and socio-historical contexts in and against which Black and Asian British literature is written and read.

Prerequisites

A completed BA in English.

Requirements for credit

Active participation in every session of the class based on students' close readings of the selected texts is required.

Set texts

Emecheta, Buchi (1974): *Second-Class Citizen*. Allison & Busby, London.

Kureishi, Hanif (1985): *My Beautiful Laundrette*. Filmscript.

Selvon, Sam (1956): *The Lonely Londoners*. Longman.

Syal, Meera (1996): *Anita and Me*. Flamingo.

A reader with selected poems, short stories and theoretical texts will be provided at the beginning of the semester (OPAL).

Seminar

Postcolonial Shakespeare Rewrites Tue, 13:45-15:15 2/W037 (C25.037)

Content

The idea that postcolonial texts are often in direct opposition to canonical European texts and thus function as a kind of counter-discourse or “writing back” is generally accepted within postcolonial theory. Rewrites of Shakespeare, in particular, have been the focus of such counter discursive strategies. Caryl Phillips, who was born in St. Kitts and brought up in Britain, is well known for his postcolonial rewrites of canonical European texts. His fifth novel, *The Nature of Blood* (1997), can be read as a fierce postcolonial Shakespeare rewrite that examines a number of key issues manifest in postcolonial writing, one of them the bleak pain of the “other”: By tying different time frames together in four distinct narratives Phillips demonstrates how little difference

there is in the treatment of minorities outside their own lands, whether they be Jews or people of colour, or both.

Objectives

In this seminar, students will be made familiar with the postcolonial strategy of “writing back” by taking a closer look at an *Othello*-and-*The Merchant of Venice* rewrite, namely Phillips’s novel *The Nature of Blood* which will, in addition, be read in conjunction with Anne Frank’s *The Diary of a Young Girl*. As will be illustrated, Phillips’s text, just like so many other Shakespeare rewrites, draws on the ambiguities inherent in the pre-texts, in order to engage in a dialogue with the Renaissance texts and activate a re-thinking of their relevancies for Western and postcolonial societies. Through this cross-cultural reading, students will be introduced to seminal theoretical concepts pertaining to Postcolonial Studies.

Prerequisites

A completed BA in English.

Requirements for credits

M_AA_1: Active participation in every session of the class based on the student’s close reading of the seminar texts is expected.

M_AA_3: PVL: Oral presentation (25 minutes) and regular participation in every session of the class based on the student’s close reading of the selected texts is expected. Oral exam (15 minutes).

Set texts

Phillips, Caryl. *The Nature of Blood*. Vintage.

Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. (Arden, 1472571762)

Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. (Arden, 9789382563235)

Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl*. The Definite Edition. Penguin.

A reader with selected theoretical texts will be provided at the beginning of the semester (OPAL).

Colloquium

Examenskolloquium / Research Colloquium

Wed, 11:30-13:00

2/39/233 (C46.233)

Content

The Examenskolloquium/Research Colloquium is open to students who are preparing for their final oral and written exams. It is intended to give students a platform to present their projects and to raise questions and/or difficulties they may be facing at an early stage of their research. Further, students are encouraged to engage in critical discussions and gain feedback from their peers concerning their research projects. We will also discuss a wide range of general topics and individual topics required for final exams.

Requirements for credits

The format of this seminar consists of a close reading of texts, discussions and thesis presentations (abstract, outline, or single chapters). Each student will present an oral report (approx. 15 minutes), chair a session or prepare questions for a discussion (PVL).

Set texts/required reading

A reader with seminal material will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

Doctoral Colloquium

Blockseminar, 9:00-16:30

RH 233 or 022 (and online)

Content

This course aims to provide support for post-graduate students who are developing their dissertation ideas and first draft outlines. The focus of this seminar will be on research in English Literature (including close readings of secondary theoretical texts and primary texts, but also the students' own written work). Post-graduate candidates who engage in interdisciplinary approaches and topics beyond English Literature are most welcome to participate to enhance the group's interdisciplinary awareness.

Objectives

This seminar will also offer special supervision through individual counseling. Moreover, the seminar will support doctoral and post-doctoral candidates on a professional level, especially with regard to topics such as scholarly writing for publication, pedagogic issues of teaching at university level, as well as information on how to apply for positions in the job market. In addition, support to present their work at (international) conferences will be given, as well as information on careers and funding support for scholarship applications and opportunities for gaining key supplementary qualifications.

Prerequisites

Participants must have completed a Master or Doctoral thesis graded at least 2,0.

Dr. Mandy Beck

Lecture

Introduction to the Study of Literatures in English Wed, 11:30-13:00 2/N013 (C10.013)

Content

Conducting literary studies at university level, this lecture course will provide an accessible introduction to the fundamentals of literary analyses, such as terms, concepts and methods. A number of texts of different genres (i.e. poetry, drama and narrative fiction including examples from the so-called New English Literatures), covering a period from the 17th to 21st century, have been selected. Discussions in class and short assignments will emphasize close reading skills and the development of effective strategies for critical and analytical thinking.

Prerequisites

None

Requirements for credits

Apart from regular attendance, active participation will be expected: as this lecture class also is a community, you are all asked to support that community also as part of your credit points.

Please note: LAGS students are required to attend at least 10 sessions and write a portfolio in order to complete the course.

Required textbooks

A reader with seminal material will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

Ansgar und Vera Nünning (latest edition): *Introduction to the Study of English and American Literature*. Klett Verlag.

In addition, a reader with primary texts for reading and exercises will be available at the beginning of the semester.

Seminar

Brexit Literature Wed, 15:30-17:00

2/N102

Content

The result of the Brexit referendum in 2016 marks one of the most crucial setbacks in the history of the European project. So far, the negative impact of Brexit on the political climate, international relations, economics, trade, healthcare and society is unmatched, and the long-term implications for the United Kingdom are still to be assessed. Apart from having become a harsh reality, however, Brexit's momentousness can also be observed in cultural and literary works that explicitly or implicitly respond to it. Accordingly, this seminar offers a look into different literary genres, ranging from novels, poetry to drama, which belong to the new genre of "Brexit" (Shaw 2021), as well as connected artistic forms like cartoons, artworks and short films. Essential for illuminating Brexit's characteristics is an understanding of related issues, such as history, cultural identity, defining national narratives (e.g. World War II, the British Empire and its decline), but also more recent phenomena, such as populism and post-truth.

This literary seminar will be enhanced by a seminar in British Social and Cultural Studies which focuses on Brexit.

There will also be a public lecture (in German) at the end of November in cooperation with the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft in Chemnitz.

Objectives

The objective of this seminar is to explore the various forms of “Brexit”, which expresses the “socio-cultural, economic, racial or cosmopolitical consequences of Britain’s withdrawal” (Shaw 2018). This requires a look into the UK’s role within the European Union, the relevance of a shared European heritage, the rise of Euroscepticism throughout the 20th century alongside Britain’s island mentality. Students will engage with different literary and critical texts to learn about the origins and consequences of Brexit.

Prerequisites

In order to participate, students of Anglistik/Amerikanistik need to have completed the lecture course “Introduction to the Study of Literatures in English” successfully (does not apply to ERASMUS students).

Requirements for credits

The format of this seminar will consist of close readings, discussions and contributions. For the PVL, each student can either do an oral presentation (approx. 20 minutes) or complete a written task (1500-2000 words), and write a substantial seminar paper (10-12 pages) for the PL.

Set texts

Khan, Robert and Tom Salinski (2019): *Brexit*. London: Oberon Books. [ISBN 9781786826787]

McEwan, Ian (2019): *The Cockroach*. London: Jonathan Cape. [ISBN 9781529112924]

A Reader will be provided before the beginning of the semester.

Dr. Indrani Karmakar

Seminar

Food and Identity in Postcolonial Literatures Tue, 11:30-13:00 2/D221 (C24.221)

Content

This course approaches postcolonial literature through its connection with food, both in terms of thematics and aesthetics. While food and eating constitute the fundamental human somatic activity, they are also crucial elements of subjectivity, carrying with them social inscriptions. In a postcolonial (and diasporic) context, foods often have histories intertwined with the colonial legacies. From production and consumption, to its absence or excess, food is intimately linked to social relations. In this course, using literary fiction, memoir and film, we explore how food acquires meaning in specific socio-cultural contexts, acting as a fulcrum for identities and cultures.

Objectives

Students will be introduced to a corpus of postcolonial literature as well as theoretical texts related to postcolonial studies, diaspora and migration, and critical food studies. In addition to identifying and examining key debates that the literary engagements with food bring to the table (such as authenticity, heritage, cultural identity, domestic labour, to name a few), students will be able to 'savour' the aesthetics of foods in the texts.

Prerequisites

A Completed BA in English

Requirements for credits

Active participation in every session of the class is expected. A presentation or partner or group presentation of 20 minutes (PVL) as well as the final oral examination (15 minutes) are required.

Set texts

A Reader will be provided before the beginning of the semester.