

The Old Man and the Gun

Masculinity and Violence in Ernest Hemingway's Writings

Lecturer: PD Dr. Stefan L. Brandt, Guest professor

Basic information: Proseminar, 2 SWS, ECTS-Studium, ECTS-Credits: 7; application at KOS.

Room and time: AR-K 1-122/123, Thursdays, 10:00-12:00.

First session: October 18, 2007.

Modules: LCMS-BA-M2.1 (Textstrukturen) ab 2; AmL-2 (Theorie, Geschichte und autorenspezifische Ausprägungen literarischer Gattungen) ab 2; ENG-GYM-2.2 (Text im Kontext) ab 2; ENG-BK-M1.3 (Text im Kontext) ab 2; SekI & II-B4 (Amerikanische Literatur) ab 2.

Short description: During his life, Ernest Hemingway was associated with both an exaggerated masculinity and an affinity to violence – an impression fostered by the writer himself in numerous self-depictions as a fearless hunter and war hero. Despite these obvious markers of tough-guy masculinity and audacity in times of war, there have always been ambivalent signifiers in the Hemingway persona. These signifiers pointed to both his self-declared ›grace under pressure‹ and the suppressed sides of his personality (gender ambiguity, tormenting doubts regarding his strength of mind, detestation of speech as a vehicle of communication). This seminar will examine the many-faceted and sometimes contradictory designs of Hemingway's writings, focusing on a wide range of novels (*A Farewell to Arms*, 1929, and *Across the River and into the Trees*, 1950), short stories (›A Soldier's Home‹, 1925, ›The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber‹, 1936, ›The Butterfly and the Tank‹, 1938), personal letters, and war reports (from World Wars I and II, the Greco-Turkish War, and the Spanish Civil War). In addition to Hemingway's own works, we will analyze two celebrated film versions of his novels (*For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 1943, and *The Old Man and the Sea*, 1958) and watch parts from the awarded four-part television series on Hemingway.

Credit requirements:

For 5 or 7 credit points: regular attendance, lively participation in class discussions, and at least 10 entries in the discussion forum before the session (1/3), an oral presentation as part of an expert group (1/3), and a final paper (8-10 pgs. / 13-15 pgs.) (1/3). For 2 credit points: attendance, participation in class discussions, and 9 entries in the discussion forum before the session (50%), oral presentation as part of an expert group (50%).

Ernest Hemingway on safari, 1934
Serengeti plain



Deadline for Final Papers: Friday, February 29, 2008. Note: There is no (!) extension of this deadline.



Syllabus:

- 18. Oct. Introduction**
- 25. Oct. The Birth of the Masculine >Code Hero<**
»Ten Indians« (1927), pp. 253-57; »Indian Camp« (1925), pp. 67-70.
- 01. Nov. No class (Allerheiligen)**
Relax and enjoy!
- 08. Nov. Hemingway and Gender (1st theory session)**
Peter Messent, »Gender Role and Sexuality«, from: *Ernest Hemingway* (1992), pp. 83-123.
- 15. Nov. Violence and Survival: Hemingway's Philosophy of >Grace under Pressure<**
»The Battler« (1925), pp. 97-104; »The Killers« (1927), pp. 215-22.
- 22. Nov. Machismo and Bull-Fighting**
»The Undefeated« (1927), pp. 183-205.
- 29. Nov. Trauma and Recovery**
Excerpts from *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), ch. 1-6; 16-20; 25-26; 30; 39-40.
- 06. Dec. Death and Masculinity**
»The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber« (1936), pp. 5-28.
- 13. Dec. Solitude and Reminiscing**
The Snows of Kilimanjaro (film, dir. Henry King, 1952) *
- 20. Dec. The Spanish Civil War**
War reports and political statements (1937), »A New Kind of War«, »The Chauffeurs of Madrid«, »Dying, Well or Badly«, »A Program for U.S. Realism«, pp. 281-98.
- Christmas break!**
- 10. Jan. The Hemingway Code(s) (2nd theory session)**
Earl Rovit, »The Code: A Revaluation«, from *Ernest Hemingway* (1963), pp. 107-25.
- 17. Jan. Morality and Manliness**
Excerpts from *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940); »Guerilla Warfare«; »El Sordo's Last Stand«, pp. 176-200.
- 24. Jan. Hollywood's Fight against Fascism**
For Whom the Bell Tolls (film, Sam Wood, 1943), based on Hemingway's novel *
- 31. Jan. Remembering World War II**
Excerpts from *Across the River and into the Trees* (1950), »The Taking of Paris«; »The Valhalla Express«; »The Pistol-Slappers«; »The Chain of Command«, »The Ivy Leaf«, »The Dead«, pp. 215-38.
- 07. Feb. Hemingway's Parable: >A Man Can Be Destroyed But Not Defeated<**
The Old Man and the Sea (film, dir. John Sturges, 1958) *

* These films are available on DVD. They can be checked out from our Sekretariat. Room AR-H 213.
Please note: Make sure you return the movie by 10 in the morning the next weekday!