

# Veranstaltungen der Abteilung Literatur

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## Wintersemester 2016/17

### Bachelor

#### *Orientierungsmodul Literatur – Seminar*

32200 Florian Sedlmeier

#### **Introduction to Literary Studies I**

Do 10-12, Raum 203

The seminar familiarizes students with some of the most basic tools of literary analysis. Focused on short stories, poems and plays, the course covers a wide range of genres and texts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Students will learn how to close-read literary texts, using concepts from narratology and rhetoric, among others; but they will also learn how to contextualize and historicize literary texts.

For an active participation credit (3 ECTS) students are asked to give a presentation, write an excerpt and a review. For a graded “Schein” (7 ECTS) students have to write three short essays on top of that.

#### *Vertiefungsseminare Literatur*

32201 Sabine Engwer

#### **Post-Bellum, Pre-Harlem”: The Literature of the Nadir (1877-1915)**

The Post-Reconstruction period, famously termed the “Nadir of Race Relations” by African-American historian Rayford Logan, spans the era from the end of Reconstruction in the 1870s to the early years of the twentieth century. This period was characterized by a severe backlash against the newly-freed African-American population through the institutionalized racism of the “Jim Crow” laws and a significant rise in lynchings in the South of the United States. For writers of color at the time, this climate of repression led to a decidedly political agenda for their literary work. The battle for equality, political enfranchisement and against the ubiquitous racism they experienced, informed their writing significantly. It is the aim of this BA seminar to familiarize students with the literary responses of African-American authors to the pervasive racism and repression they experienced in their everyday lives. We will critically examine texts from the era, both literary and non-fictional, contextualize them historically and unearth the various narrative strategies employed by their

authors in their quest to achieve political impact and influence within the African-American community and beyond.

This course will be taught as a partial "Blockseminar": We will at first meet weekly and then add one or two longer block sessions, depending on students' preferences and schedules. The class will thus end with the beginning of the winter break.

32202 James Dorson

**Native American Literature**

Mo, 16-18, Raum 203

This class explores some of the key themes and styles that have been central to Native American cultures and literatures from pre-colonial times to the present. We will analyze how Native American storytellers and writers have made sense of the world and encounters with European settlers and Western value systems through genres as diverse as creation myths, trickster tales, autobiography, the short story, novels, and poetry. Reading these genres in their historical contexts, we will seek to understand the distinctive cultural perspectives and challenges facing Indian tribes across North America, as well as the changing cultural forms in which these challenges have been expressed and negotiated. We will pay particular attention to issues of cultural "authenticity," conflicting forms of knowledge, land rights, authorship, and how traditional oral forms are maintained and revised in contemporary genres.

32203 Tobias Jochum

**Frontera Fictions: Life and Death at the U.S.-Mexico Border**

Mo, 12-14, Raum 201

Migration, maquiladoras, militarization, massacres—violence and vulnerabilities along the Northern Mexico border are troubling established border theories around emancipatory hybridization practices and postmodern cultural experimentation. Gloria Anzaldúa's image of the border as an open wound "where the Third World grates against the First and bleeds" re-emerges as an urgent call for a more site-specific, ethically engaged critique to account for not only transcultural flows and fusions but also the polarizing forces and frictions of the bifurcated border space. This course aims to challenge U.S.-centric views on the border with a truly hemispheric approach as we engage with a diverse range of literatures and lived experiences from both sides of the line. As projected fears and desires clash with local resistance and self-representation in these texts, we gain a more nuanced

understanding of the real and imaginary borderlands as multiple and mutable, constructed through constant (re)negotiations of place, class, gender, sexuality, and race.

Primary readings will include selections by Chicano/a authors (Sandra Cisneros, Oscar Zeta Acosta, et al), short stories and literary nonfiction by U.S. and Mexican border writers, and novels by Roberto Bolaño, Yuri Herrera, and Don Winslow.

32205 Birte Wege

### **BA-Colloquium**

Di, 14-16, Raum 340

## **Master**

### *Modul A*

32210 MaryAnn Snyder-Körber

### **Postmodernism**

(Vorlesung)

Mi, 16-18, Raum 201

What is the postmodern? Proposed answers include, but are not limited to, the end of history, grand narratives, and "magic" in the world as well as the condition of late capitalism, fundamental irony, and perpetual play. This course is devoted to exploring the question (and answers) of the postmodern. To this end, sessions consider postmodernism from the vantage points of history and theory along with a range of cultural and literary forms. Key theoretical analyses such as Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1979), and Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism* (1979) will be an important focus as will the relation of the postmodern to the "ground zeros" of global war and the Holocaust. We will also look at postmodernism in terms of the visual arts (particularly pop art), music (from the compositions of John Cage to popular forms such as punk and hip hop), architecture and the built environment (Las Vegas and Los Angeles), and, not least, literary experimentation. The course offers the opportunity to look at authors commonly connected with the postmodern such as John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Richard Brautigan, E.L Doctorow, Joseph Heller, Thomas Pynchon, and Kurt Vonnegut. However, a further aim of the course is to consider authors at the fringes of this overwhelmingly male and rather pale canon such as Kathy Acker, Gloria Anzaldua, and Ishmael Reed.

In terms of structure, lectures will alternate with more in-depth discussion sessions. Thus, please come prepared to read and interact with a variety of materials!

For preparation, I recommend acquiring and reading through the theoretic texts by Baudrillard, Jameson, and, most especially, Lyotard.

32211 Birte Wege, HS

### **Interventions of the Stage**

Di, 10-12, Raum 201

From Early Republic women playwrights interrogating the question of American womanhood, to early twentieth century 'lynching plays' and their contribution to the efforts of the anti-lynching movement, and mid-century investigations of issues of social justice, to, finally, contemporary works of verbatim theatre taking on, and providing counterpoint to, prevalent media narratives on social protest, American Drama has a history of, as Theresa Saxon observes, engaging in social debates, "operating as a platform for examining construction of racial, ethnic, gendered, national and ultimately human identities".

This seminar will explore how the unique affordances of the dramatic form are put to use in a broad range of works seeking to give voice to those marginalized by hegemonic discourse. We will combine readings of primary texts from the long history of drama in North America with both theory of the form and various theories pertaining to the social aspects the individual works engage with.

## *Modul B*

32212 Florian Sedlmeier, HS

### **Art or Propaganda? Writing and Blackness, 1925-2011**

Do, 16-18, Raum 201

The seminar takes as its cue the title of an Alain Locke essay which, three years after *The New Negro* (1925) and in the inaugural issue of the journal *Harlem*, makes explicit a central concern of discussions about black literature: Should it be art or propaganda? The title is a provocation, of course, but its context is a debate between Locke and W.E.B. Du Bois, from which we can extrapolate crucial queries: What do "propaganda" and "art", or perhaps codifications of the political and the poetic, signify at respective historical moments? And what are the corresponding notions of authorship, literature, and readership? The perhaps obvious working hypothesis of the seminar is that the nexus blackness and writing, ever since the Harlem Renaissance and until Kenneth Warren's (2011) historicizing of the very notion of African American literature, revolves around these questions. Most of the syllabus consists of key debates, of influential essays, manifestoes, and

scholarship; theories of blackness and black literature will be examined from within and beyond the confines of narratives such as the nation or the Black Atlantic. The selection of literary texts, by contrast, will exclude many of the canonical signposts: seminal writers such as Ralph Ellison or Toni Morrison figure as essayists rather than novelists, and we will read Ann Petry's *The Street* rather than Richard Wright's *Native Son*. This divergence – canonical debates and largely understudied literature – should make for an interesting tension, complicating received understandings of the nexus writing and blackness.

## *Modul C*

32213 James Dorson, HS

### **American Fictions of Management**

Di, 14-16, Raum 201

This class presents a literary history of the concept of management in the United States from its industrial beginnings to its post-industrial transformations. Few social phenomena have been as influential in shaping modern America as the theory and practice of management, yet it remains a largely unexplored field of inquiry in literary and cultural studies. In this class we will examine how literary writers have responded to and shaped the rise and development of managerial culture in the United States. By reading management literature and theory alongside literary fiction, we will trace the concept of management from Benjamin Franklin's self-management over the "managerial revolution" (Burnham) at the turn of the twentieth century, to the Human Relations Movement and the golden age of bureaucracy in the 1950s, to conclude with the post-industrial transformation of management in what has been called the "new capitalism" (Sennett) or the "new spirit of capitalism" (Boltanski and Chiapello). We will pay particular attention to how literary texts in form and content negotiate ideas such as efficiency, control, rationality, standardization, incentive, the "human element," and self-management.

Besides management literature and theory, stories and excerpts, we will read the following four novels: Jack London's *Martin Eden* (1909), Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *What Diantha Did* (1912), Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (1952), and Helen Phillips's *The Beautiful Bureaucrat* (2015).

## *Interdisziplinäres Studium: Aktuelle Themen und Forschungsfelder der Nordamerikastudien 1 oder 2*

32214 MaryAnn Snyder-Körber/Sebastian Jobs, OS

### **Configurations of the Black Atlantic**

Do, 12-14, Raum 340

First published in 1993, Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* launches a compelling two-part argument. First, Gilroy argues against narrow national and regional confines and for a fundamentally hybrid Black Atlantic culture. That is, as the blurb on the book jacket proclaims, "a culture that is not specifically African, American, Caribbean or British, but all of these at once." Secondly and equally importantly, *The Black Atlantic* asserts the fundamental significance of this culture for the constitution of historical modernity.

This interdisciplinary seminar sets out to revisit Gilroy's landmark study, but also to test its proposals by honing in on particular configurations of Black Atlantic connection from the 18th century to the present. Planned foci include: circulations and insurgencies of the Caribbean, American hemispheric dimensions of race chattel slavery and abolitionism, "Back to Africa" movements, and, in conclusion, revisitations and refinements of Gilroy's arguments in recent work such as Lisa Lowe's *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (2015) and Alexander G. Weheliye's *Habeas Viscus* (2014).

The seminar will be both reading and research intensive. Independent work in expert groups is planned. The seminar concludes with a two-day conference on February 2nd and 3rd that will bring together established researchers with the contributions of younger scholars from the course.

## *Interdisziplinäres Studium: Aktuelle Themen und Forschungsfelder der Nordamerikastudien 3*

32220 James Dorson/Jonathan Fox, RV

### **Ringvorlesung, WS 2016/17: Literatur/Wirtschaft**

Mi 18-20, Raum 340