

**Literature Department Course Offering
Winter Semester 2021/22**

All courses of the literature department (except UNA A) will be taught in-person. All room assignments are based on the Institute's COVID-19 hygiene guidelines. All instructors will communicate further details about their teaching modes via Blackboard, where all courses will be set up to let students self-enroll (and self-unenroll) so that they can access course syllabi. As usual, students are also automatically added to Blackboard when they sign up for their courses on Campus Management. If you run into any problems using Blackboard or if you have other concerns regarding your participation, please contact your instructor individually (via email) as soon as possible. Please confirm the course times and room numbers in the official course catalog (Vorlesungsverzeichnis) and also check the JFKI website regularly for further updates.

A. Bachelor-Program

| Course | Title | Lecturer |
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| Fundamentals course 32001-W21 | Understanding North America | Ulla Haselstein, Sebastian Jobs, Alexander Starre Fri 10-12, 14-16, ONLINE |
| <p>This comprehensive course introduces students to the fundamentals of the interdisciplinary field of North American Studies. "Understanding North America" (UNA) follows a two-semester format, with the first part (UNA-A) covering the disciplines of literary studies, cultural studies, and history. The second part (UNA-B) will be offered during the summer term and expands the overall framework with the disciplinary perspectives of sociology, economics, and political science. While UNA is one of the most challenging courses at the John F. Kennedy-Institute, it will reward students with insights into multiple disciplines along with a solid foundation of knowledge and skills for further studies. This class consists of a lecture part and the tutorials. Due to the current health situation all lectures will be online events. The lecture videos for the respective week will be available on the course VBrick channel on Mondays (link on Blackboard). In addition to that, each week there will be a question-and-answer session online (link on Blackboard), in which we will discuss the contents of the lectures</p> | | |

Introductory Module: Basics of literary scientific Working Methods

| Course | Title | Lecturer |
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| PS 32200-W21 | Introduction to Literature I | Ulla Haselstein Fri 10-12, R 340, in-person teaching |
| <p>In this seminar, students will be introduced to the basic terms and methods for analyzing and interpreting literary texts. We will read classic works of 19th and 20th-century American literature, focusing on prose, drama, and poetry. We will discuss how narrative functions, learn how to perform in-depth close readings of prose as well as poetry, and how to analyze drama. This seminar provides a better understanding of how literature works and offers students a vital toolbox to be used throughout their studies.</p> <p>Please note: This course will be taught in-person (on campus). This course will not collide with "Understanding North America A" as the first part of UNA A will be taught asynchronously online.</p> | | |

Intensive Module A: Literary Epochs

| Course | Title | Lecturer |
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| VS 32201-W20 | Reframing the Unfinished in the American Novel of the 1990s | Simone Sannio Tue 14-16, 203 in-person teaching |
| <p>This course will focus on a selection of novels from the 1990s that include within their plots fictitious unfinished texts, or other unfinished works of art, as media of textual self-reflection. Our twofold aim will be to define the varied use of the incomplete as an aesthetic principle in this literary form and to retrace its transformations during a transitional period in US culture. To this end, we will read both fiction and non-fiction writings by some of the defining novelists of the era, including Don DeLillo, Michael Chabon, and Colson Whitehead. Besides looking at the peculiar ways in which these authors subvert the Aristotelian ideal of narrative closure, we will also consider how</p> | | |

their works respond to multiple “narratives of the End” that were popular in the 1990s, most notably by exposing at the textual level the decade’s obsession with endings. For this reason, each primary text will be framed within the larger debate over the state of literature at the close of the 20th century, a pivotal historical and cultural moment that coincided in the popular and scholarly imagination with a series of perceived “conclusions” to which these novels resist in varying degrees: among them, the end of the Cold War and the end of the millennium, but also the so-called “end of history”, the end of postmodernism, the “end of the book” as a medium, and the often-announced “death of the novel”. // Students planning to take this course should enroll via Blackboard before the first session

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| VS 32205-W21 | Horrible Knowledge: What the Gothic Knows | James Dorson Thu 10-12, R 203, in- peron teaching |
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Dark forests, secret chambers, hidden doors, eerie sounds, dense fogs, mysterious villains—such are the stock tropes of Gothic fiction. The Gothic mode per definition presents an obstacle to clear sight and empirical knowledge. Rather than illuminate a topic, the senses are betrayed: The Gothic’s task is not to enlighten but to endarken; it shrouds, cloaks, deceives, mystifies. And yet, the Gothic doesn’t only obfuscate knowledge; it also knows something. Scholarship has long associated the mode with the return of the repressed, with giving voice to the dispossessed, with the surfacing of the uncanny, with unspeakable history, with the haunting of the mistreated. In other words, the Gothic deals with the unreal in order to articulate the terrors of reality. It sheds light through darkness, if you will. This class will examine the particular types of horrible knowledge that the Gothic articulates. Divided into four sections, the class will analyze Gothic framings in literature of anti-Black violence, indigenous genocide, capitalist exploitation, and sexual repression.

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| VS 32204-W21 | B.A. Colloquium Literature/Culture | James Dorson Wed 12-14, R 319 in-person teaching |
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This course will provide guidance to students who are preparing for or are in the process of writing their bachelor’s thesis. The colloquium will be divided into two parts. The first part will center on questions such as finding a topic, literature research, methodologies and theories, and academic writing. The second part of the course will take the form of a symposium where students

give presentations on their proposed topics and the progress of their research so far.

VS 1627a-W21
(also module B: Literary
Forms)

(in cooperation with
Szondi Institute)

Literature and
Journalism

Florian Sedlmeier
Thu 10-12, in-person
teaching; Please note: J
30/109
(Habelschwerdter Allee
45)

The consolidation of literature under the conditions of modernity can hardly be separated from the development of journalism. Starting in the eighteenth century, many authors begin their careers as journalists, using the new publication opportunities afforded by the growing market of periodicals. In the context of the U.S., which this seminar focuses on, the mid-nineteenth century marks a crucial turning point: the gradual shift from transcendentalism to literary realism and naturalism relies on techniques associated with the rise of empiricism (documentation, experience, observation) to claim a new factuality for literature. By the end of the nineteenth century, the field of journalism itself is structured by a distinction between information and storytelling (Schudson), but the emergent investigative journalism of “muckrakers” such as Upton Sinclair and Nelly Bly or the pamphlets of Ida Wells-Barnett on lynching may be said to collapse it. As much as modernist writers such as Ernest Hemingway and John dos Passos thematically, stylistically, and formally build on their early work as correspondents and reporters, they also insist on differences between journalism and literature, assigning greater prestige and valence to the latter. With the new journalism of the 1960s, including Hunter S. Thompson’s immersive gonzo journalism and Joan Didion’s cultural essays, the boundaries between high literature and low journalism are once more destabilized. The genres of the nonfiction novel and the magazine feature, written by high profile authors, also gain traction and find their contemporary manifestations in the work of Dave Eggers and others. Reading texts from C19 to C21, we will trace these and other developments with a focus on various codifications of the distinction between fact and fiction

B. Master Program

| Course | Title | Lecturer |
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| VL 32210-W21 (also B.A. module A: Literary Epochs) | The Harlem Renaissance | Ulla Haselstein Wed 10-12, R 340, in- person teaching |
| <p>The Harlem Renaissance is a period of African American literature and art in which writers, visual artists, and Jazz musicians created new forms and and formats to bring together elements of African and Western artistic traditions. They articulated the difference of African American cultural identity from the white mainstream and criticized the institutionalized racism and social inequalities of contemporary American society. We will begin by discussing W.E.B. DuBois's Souls of Black Folk and contrast it with Alain Locke's famous anthology The New Negro. We will discuss novels by Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen, and Claude McKay, poetry by Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Jean Toomer, paintings by Aaron Douglas, sculpture by Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, photographs by James Van der Zee, and music by Louis Armstrong and Paul Robeson.</p> | | |
| HS/SE C 32213-W21 (Textual Analysis) | Novels of Adventure | Ulla Haselstein Thu 14-16, R 201, in- person teaching |
| <p>D.H. Lawrence once spoke about the "old-fashioned American classics" as "children's books" - a view that he resisted by arguing that these texts articulate "a new voice" that contemporary readers needed to listen to. The term "children's books" refers to the fact that many 19th century American novels are novels of adventure. The seminar will discuss typical features of adventure novels, the reasons for their popularity, and their ideological dimensions. We will analyze some key texts, such J.F. Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans, Catherine Sedgwick's Hope Leslie, H. Melville's Typee and M. Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. We will also see how Melville and Twain revised the form of the adventure novel in Moby Dick and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and in conclusion discuss a recent novel by Robert Coover, Huck Out West.</p> | | |
| H/SE B 16441a-W21 (Literary Theory) (in cooperation with Szondi Institute) | Authorship: Individual, Collaborative, Collective | Florian Sedlmeier Wed 14-16, J 30/109 (Habelschwerdter Allee 45), in-person teaching |
| <p>The invention of individual possessive authorship is crucial to literature under the conditions of modernity, not least because it rests on the emergence of</p> | | |

the author as a professional who becomes gradually protected by copyright law. Various challenges in twentieth-century criticism sought to destabilize the category of the author by proclaiming its “death” (Roland Barthes), by exposing the critics’ “intentional fallacy” (W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley), and by scrutinizing the legitimacy of different versions of biographical readings. Historical reading practices tell a different story, though, if we consider that nineteenth-century readers often imagined having a conversation with the author through the characters in a novel (Barbara Hochman). As more recent interventions have made clear, the author keeps coming back. The names of individual authors continue to organize the literary field and its prize culture, the literary market with its promotional strategies, but also the archiving of literary texts; and statements of writers on their texts remain crucial sources for their reception. At the same time, the notion of individual authorship has been eroded from several other perspectives. Feminist and postcolonial critiques have retrieved notions of autobiographical experience, authorial positionality, and demographic representativeness, thus reconfiguring individual in a tension with collective authorship. Historically, Black and Indigenous writers in particular had long been denied the capacity to write belles-lettres. With their status as artists and individuals called into question, they had to rely on unequal collaborations with white editors and translators. In still another vein, following the work of Robert Darnton and others, scholars invested in the history of publication media have also shown the complex collaborations between various agents to publish books and magazines, further complicating the construction of authorship. We will follow these trajectories to probe the ways in which individual authorship retains its discursive authority, but appears in dialectical tension with notions of collaboration and collectivity.

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| HS/SE C (Textual Analysis) 32212-W21 | The Post-Catastrophic Imagination in Recent Speculative Climate Fiction | James Dorson Tue, 10-12, R 319 in-person teaching |
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The emergency is now, as the climate movement tells us. Yet the global scale and unpredictability of the climate crisis, even as it unfolds around us, makes anthropogenic climate change and its consequences difficult to imagine. “How can we conceive of a threat that is so ungraspable and so vast that it eludes the scales of human experience,” as Eva Horn asks in *The Future as Catastrophe*. If the realist novel is inadequate for this task, the mantle of rendering climate change visible and conceivable has been taken up with increasing urgency and creativity by a number of writers of speculative fiction in recent years. The cultural climate has also changed in the past decade,

shifting from a spate of dystopic climate novels and films in the first decade of the century to a number of novels imagining how to reorganize society after climate catastrophe has struck or how to live with a new climate reality. Rather than representing climate change in abstract terms as disaster striking out of the blue, these texts root the causes of environmental despoliation in the fossil economy and/or a lineage settler-colonial destruction. This is not demobilizing doom gloom but creative responses that light up the epistemological darkness of the climate future with tangible visions of survival, resistance, and alternatives. The first part of the class will contextualize the politics, theory, and cultures of climate. The greater part of the class will be dedicated to analyzing the following four speculative novels: Cherie Dimaline’s *The Marrow Thieves* (2017), Paolo Bacigalupi’s *The Water Knife* (2015), N. K. Jemisin’s *The Fifth Season* (2015), and Kim Stanley Robinson’s *The Ministry of the Future* (2020).

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| Interdisciplinary Studies - Seminar 32114-W21 | A Genealogy of the Human Mind – Tracing Intelligence Discourses from Locke to Neoliberalism | Maxi Albrecht/Thomas Howard Tue 12-14, R 340, in-person teaching |
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Across US history, public, economic, and scholarly discourses engage questions as to the nature of human intelligence. These discourses contain a multitude of fractures and conflicts, ranging from the seemingly base question how to define intelligence in the first place, debates about a single form of intelligence or multiple forms, as well as a myriad of socio-culturally based discriminations with regard to questions of race, gender and class. These intelligence discourses stand in close relation to fundamental questions of human nature and the formation of hegemonic and marginalized subjectivities. This course will trace a genealogy of human intelligence discourses beginning with John Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1695), a foundational text of the US-American liberal tradition. Topics include racial intelligence discourse, including the debate between W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, feminist discourse and the integration of education, intelligence testing, and the multiple intelligence discourse of the late 20th century. Texts include psychological and sociological writing, nonfiction essays and treatises, and economic self-help literature, as well as consider new media.

C. Lecture Series, WS 2021/22:

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| Lecture Series V 32000-W20 | WHAT STANDS BETWEEN US AND WHAT STANDS BEFORE US - Pasts, Presents and Futures of (In-)Equality in the US | Christian Lammert / Julia Püschel, Wed 16- 18, Online Event |
| <p>Equality and inequality are central to the inherent logics of democracy and capitalism. Equal political rights and legal rights and access to public goods on the one side, unequal economic incentives and interests within markets on the other side. For sure, there are different and contradicting logics with regard to (in-) equality in democracy and capitalism. Within the ideal concept of liberal democracy, both support each other and provide a strong balanced net of various interests within societies producing social cohesion with the state/government playing a crucial role in accommodating those two different dimensions. In this lecture series we will approach the concept of (in-) equality from different disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, particularly along the dimensions of race, class, gender and space. Topics might include (1) the development of economic and political inequality in the United States, (2) the idea and hollowing-out of the middle class, (3) processes of marginalization in the US political decision making process, (4) judicial and political challenges to the right to vote, (5) cultural consequences of living in an underrepresented community, (5) reparation for slavery and racial discrimination, (6) imaginations of equality and inequality, (7) intersectionality, (8) forms of structural racism embedded in the institutions and the society and (9) spatial manifestations of inequality (international comparisons with Europe, China and interregional divergences). At the same time, we might pay attention to the analytical concepts employed within different disciplines and explicitly reflect the subjacent assumptions of these concepts.</p> | | |

D. Graduate School

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| OS 32217 | Methods in Literary and Cultural Studies | Ulla Haselstein, Thu: 18- 20, R 201, in-person teaching |
| This class is for members of the Graduate School of North American Studies and faculty only. | | |