

Veranstaltungen der Abteilung Literatur

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Sommersemester 2018 Bachelor

Orientierungsmodul Literatur – Seminar

32200 Birte Wege

Introduction to Literary Studies II

Mo 10-12 Uhr, Raum 203

This seminar complements the class “Introduction to Literary Studies I,” familiarizing students further with conventions of genre and methods of interpretation. We will begin with an introduction to literary theory. We will then explore influential formats of criticism such as the essay and the manifesto. The third portion of the seminar will focus on literary modes of cultural expression that are of particular relevance to American literary history and American culture at large. The assigned texts will cover several centuries, and include forms and genres such as the conversion narrative, slave narrative, autobiography, and comics.

Vertiefungsseminare Literatur

32201 James Dorson

Writing the Early Republic: Nation-Building, Print Culture, and the Novel (Vertiefung A & B)

Do 12-14 Uhr, Raum 203

This class explores the relationship between the early American novel and the formation of the US nation-state. The widespread dissemination of print culture in the eighteenth century was inseparable from the emergence of the modern nation-state. As a hybrid “unofficial” form that combines various genres and has no formal links to state power, the advent of the novel as a popular form in the early Republic played an important role both in the formation of national identity as well as its ongoing critical interrogation. Through readings of three of the first American novels from the 1790s, we will examine how popular genres such as the picaresque, the seduction novel, and the gothic romance participated in the imagination of a distinctly American culture after the revolutionary war, but also how the specificity of the novel form at the same time unsettles a sense national coherence by bringing to light cultural anxieties, ideological fractures, and the often violent struggles that go hand-in-hand with the creation of a national state and cultural identity. Alongside formative texts in the constitution of the US nation-state (Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* and “The Declaration of Independence”) as well as secondary literature on print culture in the early Republic, we will read the following three novels: Susanna Rowson’s *Charlotte Temple* (1791),

Royall Tyler's *The Algerian Captive* (1797), and Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland* (1798).

32202 Siofra McSherry

The Witch: Magic and Resistance in the 20th Century (Vertiefung A & B)

Mo 18-20 Uhr, Raum 201

In this seminar we will explore the intersections between the figure of the witch and sites of political resistance within twentieth century American literary history. Taking a literary studies approach, we will trace the many incarnations of the witch—from society's scapegoat to a person of power—as she (or he) appears in major texts such as Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, and less well-known works by Katherine Dunham and Dion Fortune. Themes we will explore include anthropological and cultural understandings of the figure of the witch, African diasporic religious practices, and the cross-pollinations between esotericism and modernism.

32203 Birte Wege

Art of Science Fiction (Vertiefung A & B)

Do 14-16 Uhr, Raum 203

Science fiction has long allowed authors to explore new ideas, philosophies, and technologies in thought-provoking ways. In spite of this, in the first half of the 20th Century, much science fiction writing was considered formulaic and stylistically conservative. Since the 1960s, however, and the 'New Wave' in SciFi, American writers in particular have left behind many established conventions to produce work that is both challenging and innovative, and has gained increased recognition and relevance beyond the confines of the genre. In this seminar, we will analyze works by some of the most significant American science fiction writers from the 1960s to the present, including Philip K. Dick, Ursula K. LeGuin, Octavia E. Butler, Samuel R. Delany, William Gibson, and others. Our discussion will also include SciFi works in film and comics form. We will examine how these writers (and artists) make use of the unique specificities of the SciFi genre to address, both in content and form, a variety of political, social, and cultural issues, including race, gender, capitalist society, and developments in technology.

32204 Thomas Dikant

Race and American Literature (Vertiefung A & B)

Di 18-20 Uhr, Raum 203

Race is an inescapable fact of American life. With the rise of social movements like Black Lives Matter and the revival of white supremacy, the idea of a post-racial America has shown itself to be nothing but a short-lived dream. In this seminar, we will cast a light on the present moment of race relations in the U.S. through an engagement with its history in American literature. We will study how African- and European-American writers such as Phyllis Wheatley, Thomas Jefferson, Frederick Douglass, Herman Melville, Charles Chesnutt, Kate Chopin, W. E. B. Du Bois, William Faulkner, James

Baldwin, and Toni Morrison engage with the question of race from the founding of the nation to the present moment.

Colloquium

32105 Alexander Starre:
BA-Colloquium Kultur/Literatur
Mi 12-14 Uhr, Raum 203

This colloquium is divided into two parts: during the first half of the term, we will engage with the mechanics of scholarly writing, strategies for research, as well as the formatting and editing of a final thesis. Later in the course, participants will be asked to present their ongoing project to receive feedback from the group. Aside from this presentation, students need to complete two assignments and submit a written proposal for their BA thesis to receive credit.

Master *Modul A*

32210 Ulla Haselstein:
Consciousness II
Do 10-12, Raum 201

As in the previous semester, this class will be team-taught by Profs Haselstein and Ickstadt. Modernism is perhaps most characteristically marked by the shift from the notion of a (pre)given ('objective') reality to the reality of subjective consciousness. This shift can be noticed in philosophy (William James, Henri Bergson), in psychoanalysis (Freud), and in literature. In the previous semester, the seminar discussed the beginnings of this subjective turn in 19th century fiction, especially around the turn of the century (Flaubert, Howells, James). In this semester, it will deal with the (re)presentation of consciousness, which highlights the simultaneity of diverse mental processes, including processes of repression, condensation and displacement. We will study modernist texts by the late Henry James, Marcel Proust, Gertrude Stein and James Joyce as well as Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner. Excerpts and short texts will be made available electronically. The novels by Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner should be purchased and read in their entirety.

Modul B

32112 Thomas Dikant
Law and Literature (HS)
Do 16-18, Raum 201

In this seminar, we will look at one of the central questions at the intersection of law and literature: what (or who) is a person? Beginning with the U.S. Constitution's infamous formula to count slaves as "three fifth of all other persons," we will discuss various topics dealing with the question of legal and literary personhood, including slavery, corporate personhood, abortion, and contemporary debates on biotechnology. We will read novels, short stories, and poems by writers such as Harriet Jacobs, Frank Norris, Anne Sexton, and Philip K. Dick, as well as theoretical works by Barbara Johnson, Colin Dayan, and Lauren Berlant and selected primary legal texts such as the 14th Amendment and *Roe v. Wade*. Through these readings, students will also be introduced to the interdisciplinary study of law and literature.

Modul C

32213 Sean Bonney
Amiri Baraka (HS)
Fr 14-16 Uhr, Raum 203

Amiri Baraka is widely considered to be one of the most significant figures in African-American literature in the second half of the Twentieth Century, with work encompassing poetry, drama, music criticism and political theory. His work has been a key influence on most African-American artworks that have emerged in recent years, from performance poetry through to hip-hop to dance and film. The course will engage with the full scope of his work, using the work of this singular figure as a lens through which to view the development of African-American artistic radicalism from the Civil Rights period, through the militancy of Malcolm X and the Black Liberation Movement and on into contemporary struggles associated with the Black Lives Matter movement and the rise of the far right in the contemporary political landscape of the United States. In particular, we will discuss through close readings of Baraka's work the political significance of the artwork, and how poetics and musical forms offer means of political engagement that are not possible through more conventional methods of political intervention. It must be pointed out that Amiri Baraka's work remains highly controversial, and there is much in his work that we will find to be uncomfortable and even offensive. We will not shy away from these aspects of his work (aspects that Baraka himself was highly critical of in later years). Because of this, students who are considering taking the course but are worried they may be triggered in some way are more than welcome to make an appointment with me to discuss these aspects of the work before the course begins. Having said that, this promises to be a unique course, and an opportunity to engage deeply with the work of this singular and vastly influential writer.

32114 James Dorson
Evolution and Literature (Seminar)
Mi 12-14 Uhr, Raum 201

Darwin's seminal thesis in *On the Origin of Species* (1859) that nature is not designed by an original creator but evolves through a gradual process of genetic variation and

selection under environmental pressures had revolutionary potential for all branches of knowledge. It also had a profound impact on literature. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth century saw writers struggling to come to terms with the implications of evolutionary theory. The Darwinian emphasis on chance over design and process over creation paved the way for new experiments with literary form. The language of evolution also lent itself to radically different social and political ideologies that transformed the literary imagination—from social conservatism and eugenics to utopian feminism and socialism. This class probes the formal and political implications of evolutionary theory on the early twentieth-century literary imagination in the US. We will read excerpts from Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871); we will examine how literary criticism has discussed evolutionary theory by reading excerpts from Gillian Beer's formative study *Darwin's Plots* (1983), as well as texts on the recent emergence of the field of literary Darwinism. The primary texts we will read are Frank Norris's *McTeague* (1899), Edith Wharton's *Sanctuary* (1903), James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912), and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915). We will end the class by considering more recent implications of evolutionary theory by reading Donna Haraway's feminist "The Cyborg Manifesto" (1984) and Octavia Butler's science fiction story "Bloodchild" (1995).

32115 James Dorson

Mastercolloquium Literatur/Kultur (C)

Fr 10-12 Uhr, Raum 201

Interdisziplinäres Modul

32611 Ulla Haselstein/Harald Wenzel

Theories of Attention (+ 32612L Reading Course, or Literature Master HS Module B)

Do 14-16, Raum 319

Attention is a scarce good – and whoever can steer it, whether by pointing with an index finger to something significant or by gluing us to a screen, can redefine communication and culture or even dominate our personal desires.

This course attempts a theoretical and historical inquiry into attention – triggered by the most recent social media's capture and exploitation of it and its traces. That implies a look at its roots in perception and in shared intentionality, at its social, cultural and philosophical, but also at its emotional, neural and physiological bases, at its anchorage in modern media systems, its hidden mechanisms, its addictive potential. We will look at modernist art and literature as based on contemporaneous psychological research on attention, which created the new aesthetic concept of defamiliarization that in turn became the foundation for fashion and advertising campaigns.

Big Data mining, micro-targeting and the bombardment with granular messages we have already made attention the raw material of a new stage of capitalist reproduction - we have already entered a new stage of alienation. Is there any escape?

Recommended literature:

Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* [1896], New York 1991: Zone Books.

Georg Franck, *Ökonomie der Aufmerksamkeit*, München 1998: Carl Hanser

Michael Harris, *The End of Absence. Reclaiming What We Have Lost in a World of Constant Connection*, New York 2014: Penguin

Graduiertenschule:

32230 Ulla Haselstein

Literary Theory

Di 10-12, Villa, Lansstr. 5

The seminar, open to PhD and advanced MA students, will have two parts. In the first, we will focus on theories of postcoloniality, transculturality and diaspora as a preparation for the second part, which will use the insights of theoretical discourses in readings of literary works by bestselling author Junot Diaz – *Drown*, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, *This Is How You Lose Her* and *Islandborn*. The second part will be team-taught with Visiting Professor José David Saldívar from Stanford University, who is a renowned expert on border literature, Chicano literature, and hemispheric literature (Caribbean literature, Latin American literature). The material to be discussed in the first part will be uploaded on blackboard. For the second part it is essential that all participants get their own copies of Diaz's texts.

32130 Frank Kelleter / Ulla Haselstein

Forschungskolloquium Kultur/Literatur

Mi 18-20 Uhr, Raum 201

Each summer semester, the Department of Culture and the Department of Literature organize a joint research colloquium with international speakers. This course is addressed chiefly to Ph.D. students, post-docs, visiting scholars, and faculty members, but it is open to B.A. and M.A. students and the general public as well. It cannot be taken for credit; it is not an "M.A.-Kolloquium." For details, please see poster and program (online).