

Current Courses Winter Semester 2024/25

Prof. Dr. Cecile Sandten

History of Literatures in English I: From the Renaissance to Romanticism

Wednesday, 11:30 – 13.00, 2/W020 (C25.020)

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 *after* the teaching period).

Set texts:

William Shakespeare: *King Lear* (Arden 3rd 978-1903436592)

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)

A Reader with seminal material will be available via the OPAL course.

Hamlet in Adaptation

Tuesday, 13:45 – 15:15, 2/W065 (C25.065)

Content:

“To be, or not to be, that is the question.” Another question is whether Hamlet is a self-righteous brooding type, a depressive melancholic, a mummy’s boy or a rebel and social revolutionary. Or is he, according to Laurence Olivier, even the “first real pacifist”? During the course of the seminar, students will not only read and discuss *Hamlet* but will also be introduced to the highly complex relationship between a literary text and its adaptations to film and theatre. To this end, we will watch and analyse Laurence Olivier’s 1947 *Hamlet* adaptation, Franco Zeffirelli’s (1991) stripped-down, two-hour version of Shakespeare’s play which stars Mel Gibson as a rather robust version of the ambivalent Danish prince, and Michael Almereyda’s 1999 postmodern adaptation which is set in New York in the year 2000. A surprise film will await eager students of *Hamlet* adaptations.

Objectives:

Besides analysing the play and a selection of its different cinematic adaptations, students will also engage with theoretical concepts pertaining to the field of drama theories, adaptation theories and theories of media change. They will evaluate the representations of *Hamlet* on the Internet and work with audio versions of the play. Thus, they will be encouraged to explore the aesthetic literary, filmic, cultural, and historical milieus of *Hamlet* in order to share their ideas with the other students in the class through discussions and/or group work.

Requirements for credits:

A close reading of the primary text, historical, theoretical, as well as secondary texts are part of the seminar work (credit point allocation). In addition, students will collaboratively plan a film series featuring the above-mentioned adaptations of *Hamlet*. This will include curating the films, organising the screening schedule, and leading pre- and post-viewing discussions. Moreover, a meeting with the dramaturge of the theatre will provide students with professional insights into the challenges and creative processes involved in staging *Hamlet*. If possible, an excursion to attend a live performance of *Hamlet* will be organised. This will be followed by a discussion session to compare the live performance with the film adaptations studied in class. Finally, we will invite a representative from a publishing house to give a guest lecture, providing students with an insider's perspective on the publishing industry, the process of translation and/or bringing Shakespearean texts to contemporary audiences, and the challenges involved in publishing canonical literature.

Set Text:

Shakespeare, William (1983 [1601]): *Hamlet*. Harold Jenkins (ed.) Walton-on-Thames, Surrey: Arden.

Suggested secondary reading

A reading list as well as a selection of secondary texts will be made available via OPAL.

Examenskolloquium / Research Colloquium

[MA_AA_3]

Tuesday, 9:15 – 10:45, 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 related to possible 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 and theses.

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) about their research.

Set Texts/Required Reading:

A reader with seminal material will be provided in the OPAL course.

Doctoral Colloquium

Teilnehmer: 10

4-tägiges Blockseminar jeweils, 9.00-16.30 Uhr

Meetings will be arranged in due course.

2/39/233 (C46.233)

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. Joel Timothy and Prof. Dr. Cecile Sandten

Postcolonial Indian Fiction in English

Friday, 11:30 – 13.00, online (Zoom)

Content:

India is a land where several cultures and traditions coalesce in a seemingly seamless unity. It is a palimpsest. What constitutes India today is the result of many historical processes and political transformations. The last of these major processes is the British Colonial rule. Since 1947 – the year of political independence – India has evolved into a modern democratic nation-state.

This course will attempt to capture the diverse social and political reality of post-independent India through postcolonial analytics. This course intends to provide a foundation to Postcolonial theories and methods. It will initiate critical debates on the complex ways Indian fiction in English (and in translation) describe the Postcolonial condition. Through a close reading of texts, students will be able to discuss the impact of intermeshing discourses such as globalization, cosmopolitanism and postcolonialism in Indian fiction. The course will also enable a critical engagement with the politics of nation and identity, marginality and diaspora, and religion and language. Fredric Jameson's logic of third world literature as 'national allegories' will be critiqued as the discussion on the texts would seek to foreground the evolving link between colonial ideology and modern-day inequalities.

Objectives:

At the end of the course you will be able to:

- Understand the complex Indian social fabric and its colonial legacy,
- Appreciate the cultural diversity and the difference from metropolitan cultures,
- Evaluate and critically assess overlapping discourses,
- connect historical events with contemporary reality,
- Examine some of the basic concepts in postcolonial theory and
- Critique the Indian fictional texts from a postcolonial framework.

Requirements for credits:

The requirements for credits include regular and active participation, as well as reading the set texts.

Set Texts:

Devi, Mahasweta. "Dhouli." *Outcast*, translated by Sarmistha Dutt Gupta. Seagull, 2002.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Shadow Lines*. Penguin, 2019.

Mistry, Rohinton. *Family Matters*. Faber and Faber, 2008.

Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. Random House, 1998.

Films

Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India. Directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, Aamir Khan Productions, 2001.

English Vinglish. Directed by Gauri Shinde, Hope Productions. 2012

Dr. Mandy Beck

Introduction to the Study of Literatures in English

Friday, 9:15 – 10:45, 2/W020 (C25.020)

Contents:

Conducting literary studies at university level, this lecture course will provide a comprehensive introduction to the fundamentals of literary analyses, including terms, concepts and methods. A number of texts of different genres (i.e. poetry, drama and narrative fiction with 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 emphasise close reading skills and the development of effective strategies for critical and analytical thinking.

Prerequisites:

None

Requirements for credits/Type of module exam:

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 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:

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

In addition, primary texts for reading and exercises will be available via OPAL.

Imagining Europe in British Literature

Thursday, 13:45 – 15:15, 2/W065 (C25.065)

Content:

In the recent history of the European project hardly any event shook the continent as much as the Brexit referendum, although its outcome appears much less surprising in hindsight than it was in 2016 due to Britain's long-standing Euroscepticism and general awkward relationship with the EU. The cultural divide between 'Britain and Europe' is so deep-seated in British thinking that the latter is commonly seen "as an undifferentiated abroad" or as the "European Other" (Spiering 2004, 2020) and this is also evident in literature throughout the twentieth century. The seminar therefore aims to trace Europe's complex influence in British writing after World War II as an episode of strong British reserve towards European integration and, furthermore, to scrutinise "Britain's non-European identity" (Reynolds 2019) after joining the EEC (later EU), since the membership led to more Eurosceptic fictions, which either depict the fear of a "European super-state" (Thatcher 1988) or portray an alliance with global partners, such as the United States. At the same time, it will be argued that the British concept of Europe stabilised British identities and nation building by paradoxically being both "a non-diverse monolith" and "an extremely diverse collection of nation states" (Spiering 2015). This has again become relevant in the last years, because literary responses to Brexit increasingly engage with European culture to re-evaluate a shared heritage, history and experience. Accordingly, the seminar will provide a comprehensive look at past and present developments.

Objectives:

Students will be made familiar with the idea of Europe in British writing, particularly in the context of the European project in the twentieth century. They will therefore engage with

different literary texts by writers such as David Lodge, Daphne du Maurier, Sean O'Brien, David Clarke, as well as with various critical texts by, for example, Menno Spiering, David Reynolds, Chris Rumford, Kristian Shaw and others, to learn about the historical, political, social and cultural origins and implications of Britain's complex and often oppositional thinking towards Europe.

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:

A reading list will be announced at the beginning of the seminar. Most readings will be made available via OPAL.

Dr. Indrani Karmakar

**The Indian Summer of Sherlock Holmes
Tuesday 13:45–15:15, 2/W035 (C25.035)**

Content:

Typically, colonial detective fiction revolved around the adventures of 'English Detectives' in 'native' lands. However, with the influence of postcolonialism and postmodernism, the genre of detective fiction has become a global literary and cultural phenomenon. This seminar is designed to introduce students to how detective fiction has been appropriated and reapplied to the Indian context. The seminar covers a selection of Indian *Sherlock Holmes*-rewrites including Jamyung Norbu's *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes* (1999), Vitha Rajan's *Holmes of the Raj* (2006), Partha Basu's *The Curious Case of 221B: Notebooks of John H Watson, MD* (2006).

Objectives:

Students will explore first detective fiction and, more precisely, Sherlock Holmes-stories, before embarking on the ways in which Sherlock Holmes-'rewrites' have hybridized the canon and challenged the metropolitan authority exerted by the archetypal figures of Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Dr Watson. In addition, students will examine the cultural and political implications of postcolonial crime fiction in the Indian context. In particular, we will explore how the 'comic' and the 'anti-detective' undertones of the postcolonial 'rewrites' dilute the cultural authority of canonical detective fictions.

Requirements for credits:

The format of this seminar will consist of oral presentations and discussions. Active participation in every session of the class is crucial and highly expected. A final oral exam (15 minutes) is required for credits.

Texts/Required Reading:

A reader with seminar material on detective fiction, postcolonialism and adaptation theories (e.g. interfigural; intertextuality) will be provided at the beginning of the teaching period.