

Einführungsveranstaltungen

Einführung in die englische Literaturwissenschaft

Prof. Dr. Ralph Pordzik, Mi 14-16 Uhr

Diese Vorlesung führt exemplarisch und anhand ausgewählter Textbeispiele der englischsprachigen Literatur in die Verfahrensweisen des systematischen und kritischen Lesens ein. Ein Reader mit ausgewählten Primär- und Sekundärtexten wird zu Beginn des Semesters zur Verfügung gestellt; darüber hinaus ist den Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmern die Anschaffung und Lektüre von William Shakespeares *The Tempest* ans Herz gelegt.

Introduction to British Cultural Studies

Anna Frieda Kuhn, Mi 16-18 Uhr

"Culture is the software that determines our lives" (Rainer Winter). Cultural studies seek to understand how this 'software' shapes us and our social environment. However, cultural studies are just as interested in how we – as cultural, social and political *agents* – shape the 'software'. The goal is to throw fresh light on ways of representing, feeling and acting that are usually taken for granted. In consequence, cultural studies are practical and theoretical at the same time. The lecture will provide an introduction to both the specific 'project' of British cultural studies *and* to the study of British history, society and culture more generally. On the one hand, we will clarify key concepts in cultural theory and discuss exemplary cultural phenomena. On the other hand, we will not fail to address the geographical and historical basics of life in Britain as well as the impact of British history on the entire Anglophone world.

Vorlesungsmodule

Avant-Garde and Counterculture

Dr. Miriam Wallraven, Di 14-16 Uhr

Who's afraid of witches, occultists, and magicians? Certainly not the numerous authors who use occult motifs in their literary texts. But why have so many authors in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries been fascinated with the supernatural? Why has "magic" reappeared in various (dis)guises in literature? For what reasons do numerous texts deal with the fantastic? As authors experiment with occult motifs for an innovation of art as avant-garde or explore a counterculture that rejects established social values and norms, they use these motifs as creative and versatile tools that still influence contemporary literature and art.

The occult is not only present in bestselling novels but constitutes a philosophical tradition that goes back to Hermeticism and Neoplatonism, including Renaissance magic and alchemy, and resurfaces in the occult revival in the twentieth century. Starting with late 19th century Spiritualism and Theosophy we move to the modernist poetry of W. B. Yeats and we trace occult literature through the century – from Sylvia Townsend Warner's humorous exploration of witchcraft to Dion Fortune's *The Sea Priestess* on ritual magic, from Lindsay Clarke's *The Chymical Wedding* dealing with alchemy via Starhawk's utopia focusing on Neopaganism to Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. We will explore how occult motifs and practices inspired and influenced literary production as expression of a counterculture.

Seminare für niedrige Semester

Fictional Universes, Possible Worlds: moderne Erzählanalyse

Prof. Dr. Ralph Pordzik, Di 10-12 Uhr

Dieses Seminar, das sich vor allem an die jüngeren Semester richtet, bietet eine umfassende Einführung in die Probleme der Romananalyse. Die Diskussionen konzentrieren sich auf die Entstehung narrativer Texte unter spezieller Berücksichtigung historischer und ästhetischer Kontexte sowie mit Blick auf erzähltheoretische Modelle der Fokalisierung (*point of view*) und der Stoffvermittlung durch Erzählinstanzen sowie differenzierte Formen der Sprach- und Bewusstseinspräsentation. Nach Vorübungen anhand kürzerer Erzählungen aus dem reichen Korpus der englischen Literatur werden Analysen von Ian MacEwans *On Chesil Beach* und George Orwells *Nineteen Eighty-Four* den weiteren Rahmen für den Kurs bilden. Voraussetzungen zum Erwerb von 5 ECTS: sorgfältige Lektüre der genannten Texte, aktive Teilnahme an den Diskussionen, Abschlussklausur.

Sympathy for the Devil: Satan in Anglophone Culture

Adrian Döring, Mi 14-16 Uhr

Imaginations of Satan and/or the Devil have been a recurring topic in European literary and cultural history. The Devil as an archetype in early morality plays such as *Everyman* gave way to a deeper and more ambiguous understanding of the figure, such as Lucifer as a rebellious angel in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* or as an agent of modernity in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. In the popular cultures of the 20th and 21st century, Satan hasn't lost any appeal. He impregnated Rosemary in Rosemary's baby, haunted the popular music cultures of the 1960s and 1970s as a protagonist on albums such as Coven's *Witchcraft to Destroy Minds and Reap Souls* or The Rolling Stones' *Sympathy for the Devil*. In the 1980s, the British band Venom and Switzerland's Celtic Frost gave the devil its own genre of music with the newly emerging first wave of Black Metal.

At the same time, various self-styled gurus and supposed scholars and 'magicians' from Alastair Crowley in the United Kingdom to Anton Szandor LaVey in the United States used different interpretations of magick and Satan for their own intellectual, religious, and philosophical assemblages. In the 1980s, the ongoing fascination with the figure of Satan led to a backlash known as the 'Satanic Panic', in which conservatives used Satanism as a proxy to attack youth cultures from rock music to Dungeons and Dragons.

The seminar "Sympathy for the Devil: Satan and Anglophone Culture" attempts to take closer look at one of the most divisive figures in anglophone culture. We will read early literature that had a strong influence on contemporary imaginations of the devil and trace the development and connotation of the figure from medieval times to 21st century reinterpretations of the Devil as a symbol of independence and rebellion.

In doing so, we will also learn to apply fundamental methods of literary and cultural studies, and learn about key concepts such as myth and morality.

Introduction to Poetry Analysis

Dr. Miriam Wallraven, Mo 14-16 Uhr

Every child loves rhyme and knows how funny, beautiful, and surprising verses can be. Adult readers often tend to forget this and avoid reading poetry. But then they miss the intensity and the fun that reading poetry provides, since this genre manages to articulate subjectivity, emotions, and experiences as no other literary genre – and it does so in condensed and fascinating forms. In this seminar, we want to rediscover this fun and the fascination by exploring the basic principles of poetry analysis that provide the key to access the world of poetry.

The seminar is thus designed for students in their first semesters who want to practise their tools for analysing poetry while reading intriguing and diverse texts. Regular and active participation in this seminar will provide you with the ability to pose profitable questions for understanding poems and get access to their different layers and the interplay of form, style, language, and contents as well as with an overview over different literary periods from the Early Modern Age to the 21st century.

Beginning Shakespeare

Prof. Dr. Kirsten Sandrock, Mi 10-12 Uhr

"He was not of an age, but for all time" - this is what Shakespeare's contemporary Ben Jonson wrote about William Shakespeare (1564-1616). Shakespeare's works continue to be among the most widely read and performed literary works in the Anglophone world until this day. This class is meant as an introduction to Shakespeare's dramas and sonnets while also offering insights into his larger literary oeuvre, his life, age, and reception history. We will study the historical and literary traditions that are useful to understand Shakespeare's works and also discuss basic strategies how to read early modern texts.

You do not have to be familiar with Shakespeare's works yet to take this class, but you should be willing to engage with his texts in their English versions and to read both primary and secondary sources in order to become (more) familiar with early modern literature.

Memory, Identity, Desire: Modern and Contemporary British Drama

Prof. Dr. Ralph Pordzik, Mo 10-12 Uhr

This seminar focuses on the development of English-language drama in the twentieth century with special respect to European traditions of modernisation and experimentation, urbanisation, and parody. Beginning with fin de siècle aestheticism and literary modernism, the theatrical logic of the development of new forms, themes, and modes of presentation on the stage will be explored and discussed on the basis of representative texts. Scheduled dramas include: Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days*, Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, Sarah Kane's *Blasted*, and Phoebe Waller-Bridge's *Fleabag*. All five texts are in print and should be bought and worked through during the semester. Prerequisites for acquiring 5 ECTS: careful reading of the texts, active participation in our discussions, final exam (ca. 90 min.).

Seminare für höhere Semester

Modernism: Poetry, Drama, and the Novel in Context

Prof. Dr. Ralph Pordzik, Do 10-12 Uhr

This seminar is dedicated to reading and discussing a number of literary works that have come to represent an urbane avant-garde emerging in the western cosmopolitan centres of London, Paris, and Berlin at the outset of the twentieth century. The startlingly unconventional poetry of T. S. Eliot, the short fiction of James Joyce, E. M. Forster, and Stevie Smith, the novels of Joseph Conrad, Aldous Huxley, Djuna Barnes, and Virginia Woolf, the drama of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter – these writings all share their status as unorthodox and formative specimen of art along with their articulation of a set of critical attitudes towards their late nineteenth-century predecessors and a new perspective on rhetoric and poetic detail. Starting with classical authors, the course will move on quickly to cover a broader area of neglected writings with the intention to re-open the discussion of what modernism was and how it was gradually transformed in the 1930s and 1940s. Seminar discussions will engage the issue of defining modernism as a ‘universal’ aesthetic, focusing on local treatments and ‘obscure’ or strategic uses of modernism and reading modernism as a heteroclit formation of techniques put to particular uses in particular works. The following texts need to be obtained before the start of the seminar: Paul Bowles’ *The Sheltering Sky* (Penguin) and Harold Pinter’s *The Birthday Party* (Faber & Faber). Further material, essays, poems, etc., will be provided via Wuecampus. Recommended introductory reading: Malcolm Bradbury & James McFarlane (eds.), *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature* (Penguin, 1991); Peter Childs, *Modernism* (Routledge, 2007).

British Poetry and the Sea

Dieter Hans Koch, Fr 10-12 Uhr

Since Homer, the blind bard of classical antiquity began his epic poem with the charge „Sing the poetry of the sea“ many have followed in his footsteps and celebrated „these vast expanses“ in their song. While expressions of poets and responses of audiences alike have permanently changed over the centuries (what was traditionally hailed as the birth-place of the foam born Goddess is now lamented as an emptied, acidified and plastic-filled refuse dump), Western civilization has always been and will always be fascinated by the sea, recurrently using it as a projection screen for its aspirations, horrors and metaphysical speculations.

The British, maybe not surprising for an island nation have always had a particularly close affinity to maritime musings. Therefore, in this seminar, we will read and discuss an extensive list of British poetry covering a time span of roughly 700 years. By closely studying this diverse array of texts, from terse medieval ballads recounting shipwreck to 21st century reflections on the ever-growing significance of the shorelines in times of global warming our overarching aim will be to reach a better understanding of what must surely be considered one of the most prolific motifs in Western art.

Notes from Underground: Zines as Subculture

Adrian Döring, Do 12-14 Uhr

Zines – short for ‘magazines’ – are commonly understood as small, non-commercial independent publications that revolve around a particular topic, often with only a small circle of readers and an even smaller number of editors. While blogs and social media have taken over most functions of the printed zine since the proliferation of the web 2.0, zines have been a major part of underground culture in the latter half of the 20th century.

The topics that are covered by zines are diverse: From art zines to music zines, political zines, perzines (short for personal zines), work zines and even erotic zines, there is hardly an aspect of life that was or is not covered by more or less competent amateur journalists, editors and artists. Furthermore, zines are an important part of cultural research. They are windows into the inner workings, symbols and discourses of past and present subcultures. Finally, zine-production and readership constitutes an entire subculture on its own; zines often invite contributions by readers, and their editors trade their products among each other.

The seminar “Notes from Underground: Zines as Subculture” aims to give an overview on the history of zines, from the political conditions that lead to an explosion of zines in the 1980s over media history up to important landmarks in zine production and its subsequent fall from the public eye through the internet. We will read in zines, about zines, and learn about the cultures that inspired them to get a better understanding of (everyday) culture, its production, and dissemination.

And finally, in true DIY-fashion, instead of doing presentations, we will workshop together on our own chaotic zine, with contributions by all of you!

Indie – a Myth? On Independent Culture and the Popular Imagination

Adrian Döring, Blockseminar August

Independence has historically been a highly contested term; culturally, it is usually linked to authenticity, but also to a particular image of poverty, to counterculture and protest. It has often been questioned, discussed, disputed, and been uncovered as a myth. In popular culture, 'indie' has become a shorthand for a particular aesthetic; the 1990s saw the rise of the flannel-shirt, of Grunge music, and ultimately of indie-rock, indie-pop, indie-movies, and indie-games.

The modern indie scene thrives under the looming shadow of large publishers, corporate culture, and a fundamental dependence on the capitalist system. The term 'indie' is as contested as ever; and today, more than ever, a style, a rhetoric, and a modern myth.

The seminar “Indie – A Myth? On Independent Culture and the Popular Imagination” tries to grapple with this difficult term. We will look at conditions under which contemporary indie-culture was created: This includes key players, labels, publishers, and distributors. Three spaces are of particular interest to us: First, the rise of the independent movie in the 20th century. Second, indie-music as a particular style of fashion, sound, and ideology. And third, indie-games as a niche- and then mass-market-phenomenon in the 21st century.

19th Century Social-Problem Novels

Dr. Miriam Wallraven, Do 14-16 Uhr

The 19th century in Great Britain was a period of great social, political, and economic change, which manifested itself in intellectual debates as well as uprisings and reforms. Changes in demographic patterns and work practices caused by the rapidly advancing industrialisation sparked philosophical discussions and led to questions that are still relevant today: What is the relationship between society and the individual? What is human "nature"? How would an ideal society look like? What does inequality mean for a society? How can progress be conceptualised? How do class and gender intersect? Together we will look at three prominent examples of the literary engagement in such social questions and explore the role and the purposes of fiction. While we will read and discuss the novels in the historical, political, and intellectual context of the time, we will also ask for parallels and differences to our situation in the rapidly changing society we live in today. This course is open to all students and also particularly helpful for those who want to prepare for the Staatsexamensklausur Narrative und expositorische Texte im 19. Jahrhundert.

Non-human Animals in Postcolonial Literatures

Camille Lavoix, Mi 16-18 Uhr

This seminar navigates the intersection of Critical Animal Studies and Postcolonial Literatures, with a specific emphasis on African literary works. It aims to provide an introduction to literary animal studies, drawing from foundational theoretical sources like *The Palgrave Handbook of Animals and Literature* (2021) alongside a curated selection of contemporary African writers' works where we will meet, between others, dogs, porcupines and lions. Our exploration involves a nuanced analysis of these texts, seeking insights into how they illuminate the nature of non-human animals, convey information through unique literary expressions, unveil aspects of human and non-human animal relationships, and offer perspectives on various political, social and ethical issues, particularly those pertaining to the climate crisis and to the ongoing extinction. Throughout the seminar, we will integrate references from other fields of research such as ecology and biology, connecting them to the literary creations under scrutiny. A central theme guiding our discussions is the concept of "decentering": challenging the anthropocentric focus in literary dialogues concerning climate change and disrupting the Western gaze in the representation of non-human animals. The full corpus will be announced later.

Seminare für Master und fortgeschrittenes Lehramt

Shakespeare in Performance

Prof. Dr. Kirsten Sandrock, Do 10-12 Uhr

William Shakespeare's works have a lively performance history that spans from their first productions in early modern England to global and cross-media performances in the twenty-first century. This class explores a wide range of material that helps us to understand Shakespeare in performance, starting with discussions of early modern performance histories to the period of 'Shakespeare canonization' in the 18th and 19th centuries to contemporary performances on stage and screen. We will read a number of plays and sonnets by Shakespeare and discuss secondary sources on performance history, intermedia adaptations, cross-cultural performances and the cultural industry linked to Shakespeare performances.

Virginia Woolf

Prof. Dr. Kirsten Sandrock, Do 12-14 Uhr

In this seminar, we will study key texts by Virginia Woolf and explore her works in the context of modernism and the early 20th century. After an introduction to Virginia Woolf and her literary circle, the Bloomsbury Group, we consider the relationship between Woolf and the larger modernist movement as well as Woolf's perspectives on earlier periods, especially the Victorian age. We will then explore some of Woolf's most influential works, including selected essays on literature and modernism, several short stories as well as the novels *Mrs Dalloway*; *To the Lighthouse*; and *Flush*. When discussing these texts, we will use both traditional and contemporary approaches to her works, such as gender and genre criticism, narratology, psychoanalysis, class issues, and ecocritical studies.