

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF LETTERS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Syllabus

Title of the Course: IED 485 (03) Contemporary British Novel (IV)

Instructor: Prof. Dr. Serpil OPPERMANN

Year and Term: 2016 Fall

Class Hours and Rooms: Tuesday 13:00-15:50 B2/2013

Aim and Content:

This course aims to explore the British novel and its formal and thematic developments from 1950s to the present day. Major technical innovations, writing modes and themes that have emerged in the novel, especially after the 1960s, will be introduced within the context of postmodern social formations, fictional and theoretical developments and cultural debates in Britain. The novels are grouped around the core generic and conceptual frameworks of 1950s low-key social realism, The Movement, 1960s search for experimental modes of writing, the mark of postmodernism and its stylistic novelties in the 1970 and 1980s, historiographic metafiction in the 1990s, and the emergent modes of environmentalist approaches as responses to climate change and various other ecological issues with apocalyptic imaginaries and ecological futurities. Through a focused study of contemporary fiction the course is designed to equip students with a critical understanding of the changing literary landscapes in Britain. The primary reading of the course consists of 6 prescribed novels. The students are expected to study the critical writings of certain postmodernist theorists and offer critical approaches informed by their ideas. The focus will be mainly on the concepts relating to postmodern novels, such as the use of self-reflexivity and self-consciousness, intertextuality, parody and pastiche, irony, play, process, textuality and fictionality. Postmodern approaches to representation and history, the paradoxes of fictive versus real, the use of ex-centric characters and narrators, the subversion of traditional modes of writing and the challenging of metanarratives will be studied in depth. We will also discuss climate change fiction and the Anthropocene narratives dealing with themes, such as global pollution, floods, storms, ocean acidification, disappearing species, rising levels of CO₂ in the air and extreme weather events brought on by climate change. The Anthropocene discourse will be introduced in these discussions. The discussions will center around the question of "how can fiction help raise environmental awareness and change our anthropocentric conceptions of the earth?" If time permits, I will also introduce Posthumanism.

Novels to be studied:

John Fowles- *Mantissa* (as metafiction) [and excerpts from Steven Hall's *The Raw Shark Texts*]

Jeanette Winterson- *Boating for Beginners* (postmodern parody, playfulness, intertextuality)

Peter Ackroyd- *Hawksmoor* (as historiographic metafiction) [and excerpts from Graham Swift's *Waterland*]

Jim Crace- *The Gift of Stones*

Peter Ackroyd- *Plato Papers*

Liz Jensen- *The Rapture* (in relation to the Anthropocene narratives)

Course Outline:

Week I - II: Introduction to the social and cultural background in the 1950s and 1960s: (The Movement and the Angry Young Men Novelists, and Low-Key Realism)

Week III: Introduction to Postmodernism in fiction, and the subversion of "Realist Conventions."

Reading Material:

John Barth: "The Literature of Exhaustion"

Tim Woods. "Introduction" (pp.1-17) and chapter 3 "Postmodernism and the Literary Arts" (pp.49-68) in Tim Woods. *Beginning Postmodernism*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999.

Roland Barthes. "The Death of the Author." *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Ed. David H. Richter. Boston: Bedford Books, 1994. (pp. 222-226).

Week IV-V: Metafiction in Britain, and John Fowles's *Mantissa* (metafictional games and strategies) and *The Raw*

Shark Texts

Reading Material:

Patricia Waugh. "What is Metafiction" and chapter 2 "Literary Self-consciousness" (pp.1-61) in Patricia Waugh. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. New York: Methuen, 1984.

Raymond Federman. Chapter 3 "Surfiction: A Postmodern Position" (pp. 35-47) in Raymond Federman. *Critifiction: Postmodern Essays*. Albany: State U. of New York P, 1993.

Useful Websites;

<https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/postmodernism/modules/hutcheonpostmodernity.html>

<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/elab/hfl0242.html>

<http://postmodernblog.tumblr.com/post/106532710/a-list-of-postmodern-characteristics>

Week VI-VII: Jeanette Winterson's *Boating for Beginners* (postmodern parody, irony, and intertextuality)

Week VII: Midterm I

Week VIII-IX-: Historiographic Metafiction,

Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor*

Peter Ackroyd- *Plato Papers* as a parodic challenge

Reading Material:

Hayden White: "The Fictions of Factual Representation;" and "The Historical Text as a Literary Artifact."

Linda Hutcheon .Chapter 7 "Historiographic Metafiction" (pp.105-123) in Linda Hutcheon. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. 1988. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Linda Hutcheon . Chapter 3 "Re-presenting the past" in Linda Hutcheon. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. 1989. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Raymond Federman: *Critifiction: Postmodern Essays*. New York: State U of New York P, 1993.

Susana Onega: "British Historiographic Metafiction in the 1980s;"

Linda Hutcheon: "The Pastime of Past Time: Fiction, History, Historiographic Metafiction;" and "Historiographic Metafiction: Parody and Intertextuality of History."

http://ieas.unideb.hu/admin/file_3553.pdf

Serpil Oppermann: "Historicist Inquiry in the New Historicism and British Historiographic Metafiction." *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 15. 1. 1998. 39-52.

Serpil Oppermann: "The Interplay Between Historicism and Textuality: Postmodern Histories." *PostModerne Diskurse zwischen Sprache und Macht*. Eds. Johannes Angermüller and Martin Nonhoff. Hamburg, Berlin: Argument Verlag, 1999. 154-163.

Week XII: Midterm II

Week XIII: Introducing Cli-Fi and the Anthropocene discourse

Liz Jensen's *The Rapture*

Reading Material:

Adam Trexler- *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2015.

Zalasiewicz, et al. "Are We Now Living in the Anthropocene." *GSA Today* 18.2 (2008).

Elizabeth Kolbert. "Enter the Anthropocene—Age of Man." *National Geographic Magazine*

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/print/2011/03/age-of-man/kolbert-text>

Andrew Revkin, "Confronting the Anthropocene," *The New York Times*. May 11, 2011

"Welcome to the Anthropocene: A planet Transformed by Humanity."

<http://www.anthropocene.info/en/anthropocene>

Editorial: "The Anthropocene," 27 February (2011). See: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/28/opinion/28mon4.html?_r=0

On the Climate Change Fiction:

<http://eco-fiction.com/climate-fiction/>

Blogs:

Stephen Siperstein: <http://blogs.uoregon.edu/eng104/>

Dan Bloom: <http://pcillu101.blogspot.com.tr>

<http://www.npr.org/2013/04/20/176713022/so-hot-right-now-has-climate-change-created-a-new-literary-genre>

<http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/scenes-from-a-melting-planet-on-the-climate-change-novel>

<http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2015/03/22/the-inhuman-anthropocene/>

Week XIV: Overview of the recent developments

Method of Instruction: Interactive: Lectures and student discussions on specific topics from the novels.

Course Requirements: Attendance is obligatory. More than 11 hours of absence will result in F1. Students are responsible for the assigned texts.

Assessment: There will be ONE Midterm exam (50%) and another One for those who request it, and a Final Exam (50%). For a bonus of 10%, students can submit position papers of maximum 3 pages using the MLA Style, and/or give presentations.

The passing grade in the Final is 50.

In grading the exam papers 25% of the total mark will be taken off for grammatical mistakes and writing errors.

Recommended Reading:

1. Alison Lee: *Realism and Power: Postmodern British Fiction*
2. Brenda K. Marshall: *Teaching the Postmodern: Fiction and Theory*
3. Bran Nicol: *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*
4. Brian McHale: *Postmodernist Fiction*
5. Mark Currie, ed.: *Metafiction*
6. Linda Hutcheon: *A Poetics of Postmodernism*
7. Linda Hutcheon: *The Politics of Postmodernism*
8. Theo D'haen and Hans Bertens, eds.: *British Postmodern Fiction*
9. Jean-Francois Lyotard: *The Postmodern Condition*
10. Adam Trexler- *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*