

Einführungsveranstaltungen (bitte zugehörige Übungen beachten!)

Einführung in die englische Literaturwissenschaft

Prof. Dr. Ralph Pordzik, Mi 14-16

*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

Prof. Dr. Zeno Ackermann, Mi 16-18

"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 both to 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

From the Second World War to the New Millennium (Survey British Literature and Culture 6)

Prof. Dr. Zeno Ackermann, Di 10-12

The lecture will offer an advanced introduction to the literatures and cultures of the British Isles (and some of Britain's former colonies) in the long period from the late 1930s and the Second World War to the second decade of the new millennium.

Seminare für niedrige Semester

The shorter they Get: Minute Stories, Flash and Shortest Fiction

Prof. Dr. Ralph Pordzik, Mo 10-12

Flash fiction, Sudden fiction, or Twiction: In a comparatively young genre that has received greater attention in recent years, authors demonstrate their delight in brevity, economy, and concision. They compress texts to their essential structure, experiment with language or form, play with associations and ambiguities. Our seminar is devoted to a representative selection of English-language texts from a tradition that is just beginning to unfold but whose origins go back to literary modernism, to the works of Franz Kafka, Stevie Smith, Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot. Studying the structures and themes of narrative short forms, the aim is to learn as much as possible about the details of the craft and the linguistic and narrative-theoretical foundations of this form. A reader with texts will be provided in advance. Course requirements: active discussion and written exam (90 min.).

Fictional Universes, Possible Worlds (Romananalyse)

Prof. Dr. Ralph Pordzik, Di 10-12

*Dieses Seminar, das sich vor allem an die jüngeren Semester richtet, bietet eine 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 einzelner Textpassagen und kurzer Erzählungen aus dem Korpus der erzählenden Literatur werden detaillierte Analysen von E. M. Forsters *A Passage to India* (1923) und George Orwells *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) den kritisch-diskursiven Rahmen für den Kurs bilden. Die oben genannten beiden Romane müssen erworben und während des Semesters durchgearbeitet werden. Voraussetzungen zum Erwerb von 5 ECTS: sorgfältige Lektüre der genannten Texte, aktive Teilnahme an den Gesprächen und Diskussionen, Abschlussklausur.*

English Short Stories

PD Dr. Miriam Wallraven, Mo 14-16

The English short story is one of the most versatile genres that can take up widely different topics, various motifs, and use a vast array of literary techniques in order to surprise the readers and create suspense. In comparison to novels, its brevity and restricted scope which creates an impression of special unity makes it readable in a short time. We will focus on short stories in the nineteenth and in the twentieth centuries: The seminar will, among other texts, deal with a Victorian Ghost story, take you on an excursion to a widely influential American short story, explore the formal experiments of British Modernism and lead you to one of the major contemporary Canadian authors. The seminar is designed for students in their first semesters who want to practise their tools for analysing prose fiction while reading intriguing and suspenseful texts. Together we will sharpen our tools by paying attention to narrative situation, voice and focalisation, plot and structure, characterisation, motifs, and genres. Regular and active participation in this seminar will thus provide you with the ability to pose profitable questions for unlocking prose texts in general and get access to their different layers, with a sound understanding of the genre of the short story as well as an insight into different literary periods.

Beginning Cultural Studies: Concepts | Texts | Practices

Prof. Dr. Zeno Ackermann, Do 10-12

Building on the introductory lecture in cultural studies (Einführungsvorlesung britische Landeskunde und Kulturwissenschaft), this seminar aims to further clarify the central theoretical concepts on which cultural studies draws. However, it is also high time to put these concepts to use by beginning a lively engagement with actual cultural phenomena.

Accordingly, we will combine the close reading of seminal theoretical texts (on entertainment, youth and media cultures; representation; ethnicity and gender; subjectivity and performance) with discussions on cultural practices and present fields of research. Issues range from human/animal interaction to the sounds, consumption patterns and social practices of popular music culture.

Margaret Atwood

Prof. Dr. Kirsten Sandrock, Di 14-16

*Margaret Atwood has become one of the most prominent authors writing in English these days. In this course, we will look at a variety of works by Atwood, including her poetry collection *Power Politics* (1971), her early novel *Surfacing* (1972), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and *Oryx and Crake* (2003). We will use different theoretical approaches to discuss these texts and also situate them in the larger context of Canadian literature, gender and feminist theories, dystopian writing and environmentalism.*

Life Writing

Nina Wintermeyer, M.A., Do 12-14

How does one write (about) a life and which formats are available for that? What is autobiography, what is life writing, and where are their limits? Where does fact end and fiction begin, and can we draw such a line? In this class on life writing we will take up these questions and many more. We will work on questions of genre and form, reader- and authorship, as well as gender and questions of perception and reception. The readings will range from theoretical groundwork, excerpts and short forms, to 2-3 full works.

Seminare für höhere Semester

The Long Eighteenth Century: Enlightenment, Satire, Literature

Prof. Dr. Ralph Pordzik, Do 10-12

*The 'Long Eighteenth Century' has been widely established as a critical term that covers the period from 1640-1830, aiming to expand the century beyond a calendric definition to include consequential events taking place within culture, history and society. Works of art and literature are approached from various methodological and trans- or interdisciplinary angles, exploring issues such as the origins of the British Empire and a national system of class distinctions, discourses of Enlightenment and sensibility, the Gothic and the Romantic, the question of female emancipation and the abolition of slavery. Writers to be discussed in this seminar include poets Alexander Pope, William Blake, John Keats and S. T. Coleridge and novelists Laurence Sterne (*A Sentimental Journey*), Daniel Defoe (*Robinson Crusoe*) and Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*); critical topics to be covered are science and philosophy, gender and sexuality, British intellectual history, landscape and travel and exploration. A reader with poems and secondary literature will be provided at the beginning of term.*

Robots, Cyborgs, Human Animals: Posthumanism in Literature and Film

Prof. Dr. Ralph Pordzik, Mi 10-12

*The concept of the posthuman has made its way into many domains of everyday life. Literature, film and social media, along with new sciences and practices developing along the interfaces between neurology and robotics, concern themselves with ideas challenging traditional humanism or setting forth new approaches to transhuman self-design. This seminar attempts to illuminate literature and media against the background of this awkward, sometimes euphoric notion of technical-rationalist modernity. Participants are asked to engage with demanding methodological texts and to master a broad corpus of fictional writings. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and William Gibson's cyberpunk classic *Neuromancer*, complemented by Mark Romanek's film adaptation of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2010), will be central to critical discussions of the topic. Secondary literature and excerpts from shorter primary works will be made available in the form of a digital reader. Recommended introductory text: Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (U of Minnesota P 2010).*

The Illustrated Song: A (Cultural) History of Music Videos

Adrian Döring, M.A., Do 12-14

Music videos are a surprisingly resilient part of the culture industry. More than half a century after the Beatles invited their listeners to “Penny Lane”, and more than forty years after “Video Killed the Radio Star”, megastars like Billie Eilish or Kendrick Lamar, K-Pop-bands like NewJeans or BTS, and legacy-acts like the Deftones or Metallica still draw hundreds of Millions of viewers on digital platforms like YouTube, thanks to lavishly produced music videos which sometimes appear to be just as important than the music itself.

Music videos have also early started to become part of the language of various musical subcultures. The Norwegian black metal-bands Satyricon and Immortal invited us to “Mother North” and “Blashyrkh”, British folk-singer Shirley Collins leads us through the British countryside in “Death and the Lady”, and Daniel Lopatin aka Oneohtrix Point Never recycles old Soviet cartoons into hauntological collages on post-modern alienation. Additionally, fans use existing material to cut their own music-videos, and new genres such as the lyric-video complicate the relationship between sound, image, and the written word.

The seminar “The Illustrated Song: A Cultural History of Music Videos” grapples with this expansive topic by employing a historical perspective. We will look at many different music videos from the mid 20th-century until today, and think about media, technology, space and fashion. We will explore a wide panorama of modern popular culture by looking at this key medium and ask ourselves what might come next... because nothing has killed the video (yet).

Green Men and Imagined Villages: On British Folklore

Adrian Döring, M.A., Mi 14-16

Our modern understanding of folklore is surprisingly young; only in the latter parts of the last millennium, often self-proclaimed folklorists used it as a term to describe (and salvage) what they perceived to be soon-lost knowledge from the rapidly advancing social and technological developments of the 19th and 20th century. Scholars like Francis James Child or Cecil Sharp collected tales, songs, dances and all sorts of rural practices. Organizations like the Folklore Society or the English Folk Dance and Song Society started to emerge.

Since then, folklore lost little of its magic. From two supposed “revivals” over modern interpretations of folk-song and -dance to elements of folklore in video-games, movies and genres like folk-horror, Britain’s many tales and magic figures seem to be as alive as ever. However, over the years, these stories were continuously retold and reinvented – folklore is just as alive as the people who shape it. Furthermore, the term itself came under growing scrutiny: scholars like David Harker and Georgina Boyes describe a problematic history of bowdlerization, invention and supremacy.

The seminar “Green Men and Imagined Villages: On British Folklore” traces the lines of folklore from its earliest emergence until today. We will read mystical stories, listen to music, watch dances and look at folk-cultures from the revivals until contemporary movements such as indie-folk, neo-folk and pagan-folk. We will also take a look at folklore beyond its immediate boundaries and think about elements of folklore in literature, games, and film. We will encounter many mystical creatures and maybe learn something, not only of the folk, but about ourselves.

British Poetry of The Interwar Years

Dieter Hans Koch, Fr 10-12

In this seminar we will read and discuss poetry written in Britain between the two World Wars. First we will concentrate our studies on poets who were, at that period of time, already in the autumn of their literary careers like Rudyard Kipling, Thomas Hardy and W.B. Yeats. Later, however, we will turn our focus towards writers who were considered as fresh young talents of the 20ies and 30ies such as W.H. Auden, Stevie Smith, J. Betjeman and Dylan Thomas. Furthermore it is an aim of this seminar to familiarize its participants with a number of aesthetic concepts and theories summarized by the term „Modernism“, which will make it also necessary to work with texts written by its most influential representatives such as W. Lewis and the two American expats T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound.

Women Writers in West Africa: Ecofeminist Readings

Camille Lavoix, M.A., Blockseminar

*This seminar explores the intersection of Ecofeminism and Postcolonial Literatures, focusing specifically on works by African women writers. It introduces students to ecofeminism by examining the interplay between feminism and environmentalism, alongside a curated selection of texts, such as Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*. A central question we will investigate is: How do African women writers portray the environment and its connections to women's lives?*

*We will engage with these primary texts through the lens of secondary literature, including excerpts from *The Women Writing Africa Project*, *Writing African Women: Gender, Popular Culture and Literature in West Africa* by Stephanie Newell, and *Ecofeminist Perspectives from African Women Creative Writers* by Enna Sukutai Gudhlanga, Musa Wenkosi Dube, and Limakatso E. Pepenene. Additionally, the course will incorporate insights from related fields such as ecology, biology, food studies, and animal studies, enriching our understanding of the literary works under examination.*

Authorship and AI

Prof. Dr. Kirsten Sandrock, Mi 10-12

*Artificial Intelligence is currently not only changing the ways that we write and read texts from everyday life but also the way literary texts are being written and read. In this seminar, we study how contemporary literature deals with AI, both on the level of representation and on the level of text production and reception. We will read two novels that have generated worldwide interest in their representation of AI - Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021) and Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* (2019) - while also doing research ourselves and studying AI-generated works that we will choose together as a group.*

To participate in this seminar, a general interest in AI and curiosity about testing its possibilities (and limits) is recommended

Seminare für Master und fortgeschrittenes Lehramt

Shakespeare and Popular Culture

Prof. Dr. Kirsten Sandrock, Do 10-12

Ever since the early modern period, William Shakespeare's works have become part of the global literary canon as well as of international popular cultures. The Lion King can be read as a popular adaptation of Hamlet; Shakespeare podcast are part of an international edutainment industry; the Shakespeare film industry continues to boom; and Romeo and Juliet as 'star-crossed lovers' have turned Verona into a particular kind of tourist destination that illustrates not only Shakespeare's popularity but also his marketability as an author and literary icon. In this class, we will discuss these and other ways in which Shakespeare has become an icon of popular culture not only in the UK but across the world. Apart from reading some of his plays and studying popular adaptations, we will also look at Shakespeare franchise, marketing, and tourism.

Politics, Postcolonialism and Magic: Reading Salman Rushdie

PD Dr. Miriam Wallraven, Di 14-16

With a voice that is at the same time funny but critical, playful and political, Salman Rushdie is certainly one of the most well-known authors of our time. He has received numerous literary prizes (e.g. the Booker Prize in 1981 and the Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels last year), but he is also known due to the great medial attention ever since he has been the subject of several assassination attempts and death threats. In this seminar, we will read and discuss a variety of texts to give you an overview over his writing styles, genres, and most important topics. We will read his most recent novel Victory City (2023) and one of his earliest novels Shame (1983) as well as a short story from East, West and an essay from his famous collection Imaginary Homelands. We will also look at short extracts from the autobiographical Knife: Mediations on an Attempted Murder (2024). What is the role of storytelling, writing, and reading in times of fundamentalist religious movements and totalitarianism? How can magical realism and fairy tale meet political satire? In which ways can literature thematise topical issues such as religion and politics, postcolonialism and feminism, while being entertaining, exuberant, and surprising?

Smartphone Cultures (Cultural Studies Colloquium) #WueOnline

Prof. Dr. Zeno Ackermann & Prof. Dr. MaryAnn Snyder Körber, Do 16-18

As a transnationally open installment of our Cultural Studies Colloquia series, this online research seminar brings the perspective of cultural studies to bear on the smartphone as a key node in the cultural circuitry of our contemporary moment.

We will investigate the virtual world/s created, the online practices facilitated, and the 'artificial intelligences' articulated by the phone and by the digital networks to which it links its users. However, our primary accent will be on the real uses made of the phone in on-site social, economic or political contexts – and on the direct or indirect effects of such uses. How, for example, do the phone and the technologies it mediates impact individual as well as collective lives, agencies, intelligences or imaginaries? How does the smartphone – in analogue life as well as through online operations – transform social, economic, and natural environments? How is the phone produced and marketed, and what are the material or immaterial consequences? Hardly least, how do the smartphone and its affordances impact the political – either as a conduit for misinformation or as a low-threshold tool and portal of democratic participation?

To explore these questions, the seminar will determinedly move beyond Western European and North American contexts, putting a particular emphasis also on Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union as well as on India and other regions of the so-called Global South. The objective is to consider both the local dimensions and the global intersections of smartphone culture/s.

Übungen

Introduction to British Cultural Studies - Reading and Discussion Course

(Begleitveranstaltung)

Prof. Dr. Zeno Ackermann, Mi 18-20

This reading and discussion course (Begleitveranstaltung) accompanies the lecture ['Introduction to British Cultural Studies'](#). It provides an opportunity of engaging with the texts, contents and concepts discussed in the lecture in a less formal and more dialogical setting. Attending the reading and discussion course is strongly recommended for all participants of the lecture.

Begleitveranstaltung zur Einführungsvorlesung ELW

Prof. Dr. Ralph Pordzik, Do 12-14

Diese begleitende Übung eignet sich für alle Teilnehmer der Vorlesung "Einführung in die englische Literaturwissenschaft" (Prof. Dr. Pordzik). Sie bietet Studenten die Möglichkeit, inhaltliche und methodische Fragen zur Vorlesung zu stellen, um die Vor- und Nachbereitung der Veranstaltung maßgeblich zu erleichtern, literaturwissenschaftliche und -ästhetische Probleme zu diskutieren und das Erörtere anhand einer Vielzahl von Textproben aus unterschiedlichen Gattungen weiter zu erkunden und zu vertiefen.

Current Topics in Anglophone Literature (Kolloquium)

Prof. Dr. Kirsten Sandrock, Di 12-14

The colloquium is aimed at doctoral students and habilitation candidates in English literary and cultural studies who are interested in presenting and discussing current work in the field of Anglophone literature and culture.

In the Footsteps of...: Shakespeare in London and Stratford upon Avon

(Vorbereitung Exkursion)

Nina Wintermeyer, M.A., 29.11.24 & 24.01.25

In the footsteps of Shakespeare will take us to two crucial places in Shakespeare's life and afterlife: London and Stratford upon Avon. The excursion to these two places will take place in March 2025 (exact dates t.b.a.) and is open to students of all levels. While the excursion to these two places and the plays we will be seeing there lie at the heart of the trip, we will prepare for it during two preparatory block meetings. In those meetings we will lay or refresh the groundwork for working with and on Shakespeare and his plays, as well as prepare for seeing 2-3 productions at the Royal Shakespeare Company (Stratford) and 1-2 at the Globe (London). The exact numbers and plays will be announced. In addition, these two sessions will serve as times to organize and plan the excursion together.