

Winter Semester 2024/2025

Vorlesung: Survey of Literature and Culture: New English Literatures

Prof. Dr. Claudia Lillge

Postcolonial Studies is an interdisciplinary field of research that combines and connects research questions from history, sociology, anthropology and ethnology, among others. While 'post-colonial' (with a hyphen) denotes a period that chronologically begins 'after' colonialism and thus implies that history unfolds in clearly distinguishable phases from pre- to post-colonial, the term 'postcolonial' (without a hyphen), as also used by today's Postcolonial Studies, sets a broader framework. Postcolonial Studies assumes the simultaneity of colonialism and postcolonialism; consequently, it focuses on the experiences of colonialism and its past and present effects. This is also the argument by Elizabeth Bronfen, Benjamin Marius and Therese Steffen: Postcolonialism is expanded into a comprehensive concept of culture as a "conflict [...] between representations of the world, the subject, history, etc." It is precisely this "conflict" that leads to a critique of models of contemporary thought, including, for example, models of identity, the nation or the concept of a global order. Binarisms, with which world orders are both described and constructed (such as self/other, identity/alterity, black/white, Occident/Orient, nature/culture, etc.) are criticized; in addition, new figures of thought are often developed, some of which are accompanied by their own terms – such as 'hybridity', 'third space' or 'diaspora'. In this lecture, we will read key texts of Postcolonial Studies (Edward Said: *Orientalism*; Homi Bhabha: *The Location of Culture*; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: *Can the Subaltern Speak*; Stuart Hall: *Familiar Stranger*) that have changed perspectives in Literary Studies; we will also look at selected texts from New English Literatures and theories of postcolonial writing. This lecture will continue the series of surveys in literary and cultural history. It is explicitly designed to prepare students for the state exam.

Oberseminar: Literatur- und Kulturtheorie

Prof. Dr. Claudia Lillge

Das Oberseminar richtet sich an fortgeschrittene Studierende in der Examensphase, Doktoranden und Postdoktoranden aus dem Bereich Anglistische Kultur- und Literaturwissenschaft. Es bietet allen Teilnehmenden ein Forum für die Präsentation, Diskussion und Weiterentwicklung von Qualifikations- und Forschungsprojekten. Darüber hinaus dient es der kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit aktuellen Forschungsthemen und -texten, die in die gemeinsame Vorbereitung des "Researcher in Residence"-Formats einmünden.

Hauptseminar: Salman Rushdie

Prof. Dr. Claudia Lillge

"I was born in the city of Bombay... once upon a time." Salman Rushdie begins his novel *Midnight's Children* (1981) with a fairytale-like tone. The temporal indeterminacy of the first sentence is immediately juxtaposed with a concrete and historically significant date that marks a double event: At midnight on August 15, 1947, a child and a nation were born. The child, the first-person narrator Saleem Sinai, came into the world and the former British Crown Colony of India gained its independence. From this point on, the two events are intertwined in the narrative: From Sinai's perspective, India's past and present unfolds, combining biographical and historical developments that span a period from the late colonial era to the 1980s, touching on pivotal events such as the Amritsar Massacre, Gandhi's non-violent resistance movement, and the excesses of the India-Pakistan conflict in the Kashmir Wars. The collective hopes and disappointments associated with the young nation's independence find an echo in a family chronicle; the narrator's imagination and memory, which are full of gaps but also a wealth of stories, successively create a revisionist (colonial) history of the Indian subcontinent. "India," as Jawaharlal Nehru once wrote, "is a myth and an idea, a dream and a vision, and yet very real and present and pervasive." This description of India can also be applied in many ways to Rushdie's novel, in which myth and reality, dream and vision overlap in the narrative mode of magical realism. In other words, narrative techniques are used that we also find in the works of Gabriel García Márquez, Ben Okri and Günter Grass, among others. In this seminar, we will explore Rushdie's nuanced, multifaceted text, which contains numerous references to Sanskrit epics, tales from the *Thousand and One Nights*, Jonathan Swift's satires, Jane Austen's "portraits of brilliant women," Charles Dickens' "great, rotting, Bombay-like city," as well as the metaliterary forms of international postmodernism. Rushdie is still considered one of the main representatives of postcolonial literature today. His Booker Prize-winning novel *Midnight's Children* offers numerous opportunities to deepen our knowledge of Postcolonial Studies and Anglo-Indian literature. We will also read short stories from *East, West* and a selection of essayistic texts (including *Imaginary Homelands* and *Knife*), in which Rushdie raises fundamental questions about postcolonial/global authorship.

Hauptseminar: Violence, Vengeance, and the Early Modern Theatre of Blood

Dr. Christian Krug

This seminar will look at the use of violence on the Early Modern stage – its stage conventions, socio-political contexts and ideological functions. We will consider three revenge tragedies in more detail – Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (first recorded performance in 1592), William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (first printed in 1602) and Thomas Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1606). We will also briefly discuss their reverberations in films such as *Get Carter* (Mike Hodges, 1971) and *The Revenger's Tragedy* (Alex Cox, 2003).

Masterseminar: Intensive Seminar (Literary and Cultural Studies)

Dr. Christian Krug

Two interconnected courses will provide you with a firm grounding in contemporary cultural and literary analysis – especially, if you did not take our BA in English and American Studies

here at FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg. In the first course, a study group, we will read and discuss central texts in modern Cultural and Literary Studies. This will take place from 13:00-13:45. After a short break, the second course (14:00-15:30) then focusses on the most important terms, methods and theories in Cultural and Literary Studies and tests their application. We will analyze, in detail, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) – please make sure that you obtain a good critical edition of this text. (M.A. English Studies only)

Proseminar: Contemporary British Drama: Genre, Themes, and Politics

Dr. Dennis Henneböhl

For many people visiting London, going to the theatre to watch famous actors perform one of the latest dramas live on stage ranks very highly on their to-do list. Indeed, Britain can not only look back on a long tradition of playwrighting but also offers a vibrant, popular, and highly renowned contemporary theatre scene. In this seminar, we will explore some of the most recent developments and tendencies in 21st-century British drama. A key focus lies on the dramatic genre as a whole as well as on specific subgenres like history plays, postcolonial plays, political plays or the dystopian turn that characterizes recent British drama. Moreover, we will discuss a variety of the most common themes that feature prominently in many contemporary plays as well as in current political and societal discourses in Britain. In fact, British drama is highly political and strongly engages with current political affairs as well as with broader topics like climate change, environmentalism, nationalism, authoritarianism, or various forms of discrimination. Works by key playwrights such as Caryl Churchill (*Far Away*), Mike Bartlett (*Earthquakes in London*), Jez Butterworth (*Jerusalem*), and Tanika Gupta (*The Empress*) serve as case studies for our analysis of the themes, politics, and genre of contemporary British drama.

Proseminar: Villains, Witches, Romans: *Richard III*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*

Alina Aulbur

Many of William Shakespeare's characters enjoy fame that lasts through the ages, a fame that has often shaped the reputation of their originals deeply and enduringly. Shakespeare's rendition of a treacherous King Richard III has, for example, coloured the perception of the historical king in an unsurprisingly negative way, while his imagination of the enigmatic Egyptian queen Cleopatra has had a lasting impact on her portrayal throughout the past centuries and on the way many of us think about this important historical figure even now – be that consciously or unconsciously. In this seminar, we will dive into three of the famous playwright's works to meet these and other figures. The selection of plays enables a broad-ranging discussion of Shakespeare's use of genre, sources, and literary methods, as all three are – to varying degrees – based on historical accounts. Simultaneously, they offer insight into the bard's scope, as their subjects take inspiration from vastly different periods and national backgrounds, from Egypt during the Ptolemaic dynasty to 15th-century England, which will allow us to analyze how Shakespeare's use of such a diverse range of material can be linked to historical and cultural contexts of the early modern period. What is more, an examination

of these three plays will give an impression of the multi-faceted nature of Shakespeare Studies, since we will approach them from such fascinating current perspectives like Gender and Disability Studies.

Proseminar: Victorian Short Fiction

Marlene Compton

'The Victorian era' refers to, among other things, a broad period of cultural production during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). While the label is not undisputed, those years were a time of exceptional economic development due to industrialization, scientific advancement and the expansion of the British empire, wherein the production and dissemination of literature was altered dramatically. The invention of the steam powered printing press made periodical sales soar; the emergence of circulating libraries provided access to works of literature to a new, primarily lower- and middle-class readership. Long novels, a characteristic of this literary era, were usually published in serialized form, delivered to their readers first in short pieces and only later as full-length works. In this seminar we will read and discuss short texts of fiction that highlight the concerns of the Victorian era such as mystery and sensation, science and naturalism as well as decadence and aestheticism. The Victorians hold a special place in the public imaginary, and we will get to know authors that shaped the literary scene of the time as well as our modern idea of the Victorians such as Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde and Elizabeth Gaskell. In addition to reflecting on the production conditions of these works, we will also be able to discuss the ideas we have of Victorian culture today by looking at modern adaptations.

Examensseminar: Britische Lyrik, Prosa und britisches Drama des 19. Jahrhunderts

Dr. Christian Krug

Wir werden in diesem Seminar exemplarisch Texte aus allen Gattungen des 19. Jahrhunderts analysieren. Außerdem werden wir uns mit Dichtungs- und Dramentraditionen, mit zentralen Erzählformen und mit kulturellen, soziopolitischen und ideengeschichtlichen Kontexten der Zeit beschäftigen. Dieses Seminar dient vor allem der Examensvorbereitung und übt dazu auch die Bearbeitung von Staatsexamensklausuren ein.

Kombiseminar: Textuality

Dr. Christian Krug/Dr. Mike Klotz

'Text' and 'textuality' are central concepts in Linguistics and in Literary and Cultural Studies. But what is a 'text'? This seminar aims to find out whether and why these disciplines (do not) share the same assumptions about what constitutes 'texts'. We will also consider the respective approaches, methods, and terminology the disciplines use to make sense of them. There are two seminars in this module – one in Linguistics, taught by Michael Klotz, the other in Literary and Cultural Studies, taught by Christian Krug.

Aufbauseminar: Literature

Dr. Dennis Henneböhl

Building on the knowledge acquired in *Grundseminar Literature*, this class serves as an introduction to literary theory. We will discuss several approaches and methods in depth and critically analyze their potential and limits by applying them to exemplary primary texts. In doing so, we will also reflect on how these different approaches and methods impact our understanding of literature.

Aufbauseminar: Culture

Alina Aulbur

The *Aufbauseminar Culture* extends the knowledge and skills acquired in the *Grundseminar Culture* and covers cultural theory, cultural history and cultural analysis. The course is structured around short, seminal texts in cultural theory and exemplary case studies to illustrate and test their applicability.

Grundseminar: Culture

Dr. Christian Krug, Dr. Dennis Henneböhl

This seminar provides a first insight into the field of contemporary Cultural Studies, with a special emphasis on definitions of culture and on the different approaches and methods of cultural analysis. The course also introduces students to special topics such as Media Studies, constructions of otherness, the role of myths in the production of social meaning, and Gender Studies.