



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Readings in Contemporary Literature - 19301

Last update 26-10-2015

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: general & compar. literature

Academic year: 0

Semester: Yearly

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Carola Hilfrich

Coordinator Email: carola.hilfrich@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday, 16.15-17.15

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Carola Hilfrich

Course/Module description:

In this seminar, we study contemporary literature in a theoretical and comparative perspective. we discuss theories of contemporaneity from the fields of philosophy, art history, and cultural studies, the question of literary innovation, and the possibility of literature to articulate the present, emergent moment in culture. we read chosen literary works to evaluate different ways in which they intervene to create changes in presence.

in the first semester, next to key theories of contemporaneity, we study the "post-hysterical" fictions of David Foster Wallace and Zadie Smith, as well as literatures of mobility and movement - of languages, people, species - by Yoko Tawada, Marie NDiaye, and Barbara Kingsolver. In the second semester, we study the interface of the literary and the digital, as well as of literature and architecture.

Course/Module aims:

to think in critical and comparative terms about the present moment in literary culture

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- * debate theoretical approaches to contemporaneity*
- * outline possibilities and limitations of a comparative approach to contemporary literature*
- * criticize chosen works of contemporary literature*

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: lectures, discussion, close reading, writer's class, student presentations

Course/Module Content:

First Semester:

1. Introduction

Post-Hysterics

2. David Foster Wallace, "Backbone" (2011)

http://www.newyorker.com/fiction/features/2011/03/07/110307fi_fiction_wallace?currentPage&eq=all

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3. Zadie Smith, *The Embassy of Cambodia*, 2013
 4. David Marcus, "Post-Hysterics: Zadie Smith and the Fiction of Austerity," in *Dissent*, A Quarterly of Politics and Culture Spring 2013 <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/post-hysterics-zadie-smith-and-the-fiction-of-austerity>

What is Contemporaneity?

5. Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling, in *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1977: 128-135
http://www.uib.no/sites/w3.uib.no/files/attachments/15_williams-structures_0.pdf
6. Giorgio Agamben, "What is the Contemporary?," in *What is an Apparatus?*, and Other Essays, transl. by David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2009: 39-54 <http://soundenvironments.files.wordpress.com/2011/1/1/agamben-what-is-and-apparatus.pdf>
7. Terry Smith, "Agamben and Nancy on Contemporaneity and Art" [2012]
<http://www.haa.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Smith-AgambenandNancyOnContemporaneityAndArt.pdf>
- Terry Smith, "Contemporary Art and Contemporaneity," in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Summer 2006): 681-707

Dislocations: Language, Bodies

8. Yoko Tawada, "Canned Foreign," "The Talisman," "Storytellers Without Souls," from *Where Europe Begins*, New York: New Directions 2007
 9. Yoko Tawada, "Tawada Yoko Does Not Exist," in Yoko Tawada. *Voices From Everywhere*, ed. by Doug Slaymaker; Lanham: Lexington Books 2007, 13-19
 - Marjorie Perloff, "Foreword," *ibid*, vii-ix; Doug Slaymaker, Introduction, *ibid*, 1-11
 10. Marie NDiaye, *Trois Femmes Puissantes* (in Hebrew)
 11. Continuation *Trois Femmes Puissantes*
 12. Deborah B.Gaensbauer, "Migration and Metamorphosis in Marie NDiaye's *Trois Femmes Puissantes*, *Studies in 20th and 21st Century Literature*, Vol. 38/1 (2014), Article 5, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4148/2334-4415/1004>
 - Anna Lena Toivanen, "Not at Home in the World: Abject Mobilities in Marie NDiaye's *Trois Femmes Puissantes* and NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*," *Postcolonial Text*, Vol. 10/1 (2015),
<http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/view/1916/1801>
 13. Guest Lecture
 14. Conclusion
- Second Semester:
Forthcoming

Required Reading:

see above

Additional Reading Material:

Giorgio Agamben, "On Contemporaneity (2007),"

<http://www.egs.edu/faculty/giorgio-agamben/videos/on-contemporaneity/>

Zdenka Badovinac, "Contemporaneity as Points of Connection," e-flux, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/contemporaneity-as-points-of-connection/>

Katharine Cockin, "Introduction: Contemporary Fiction," *Critical Survey*, 2008; 20 (1): 1-93

Paul Dawson, *The Return of Omniscience in Contemporary Fiction*, Narrative, Vol. 17, No. 2 (May 2009), 143-161

Pedro Erber, "Contemporaneity and Its Discontents," *diacritics*, Volume 41, Number 1, 2013, pp. 28-48

Mary Esteve, "Postword, Postconcept: Contemporary Fiction and Theory," *Contemporary Literature*, Volume 54, Number 1, Spring 2013, pp. 183-190

Seb Franklin, "'We Need Radical Gameplay, Not Just Radical Graphics': Towards a Contemporary Minor Practice in Computer Gaming," *Symplokē: A Journal for the Intermingling of Literary, Cultural and Theoretical Scholarship*, Volume 17, Numbers 1-2, 2009, pp. 163-18

Andrzej Gsiorek, David James, "Introduction: Fiction since 2000: Postmillennial Commitments," *Contemporary Literature*, Volume 53, Number 4, Winter 2012, pp. 609-62

Mitchum Huehls, "Referring to the Human in Contemporary Human Rights Literature," *Modern Fiction Studies*, Volume 58, Number 1, Spring 2012, pp. 1-21

Amy Hungerford, "On the Period Formerly Known as Contemporary," *American Literary History*, Volume 20, Number 1-2, Spring/Summer 2008, pp. 410-419

Lee Konstantinou, "Periodizing the Present," *Contemporary Literature*, Volume 54, Number 2, Summer 2013, pp. 411-423

Robert L. McLaughlin, "Anthologizing Contemporary Literature: Aesthetic, Cultural, Pedagogical, and Practical Considerations," *Symplokē: A Journal for the Intermingling of Literary, Cultural and Theoretical Scholarship* 8.1-2 (2000) 90-10
-----"Post-Postmodern Discontent: Contemporary Fiction and the Social World," *Symplokē: A Journal for the Intermingling of Literary, Cultural and Theoretical Scholarship*, 2004; 12 (1-2): 53-68

Paul Allen Miller, Steven Shankman (eds.), "Introduction," Special issue of *Comparative Literature Studies on Classics and Contemporary Literature/ Culture/ Theory*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, Volume 43, Number 3, 2006, pp. 221-22

Patrick D. Murphy, "The Procession of Identity and Ecology in Contemporary Literature," *SubStance*, Volume 41, Number 1, Issue 127, pp. 77-9

Jean-Luc Nancy, "ArtToday," *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol.9, no.1 (April 2010), pp. 91-99

Daniel Punday, "Donald Barthelme and the Emergence of the Dynamic Page,"

Mosaic: a journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature, Volume 46, Number 1, March 2013, pp. 113-133

Rita Raley, "'Living Letterforms': The Ecological Turn in Contemporary Digital Poetics," *Contemporary Literature*, Volume 52, Number 4, Winter 2011, pp. 883-91

Jeremy M. Rosen, "Minor Characters Have Their Day: The Imaginary and Actual Politics of a Contemporary Genre," *Contemporary Literature*, Volume 54, Number 1, Spring 2013, pp. 139-174

Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor, Nancy Condee (eds.), *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, and Contemporaneity*, Durham: Duke University Press 2008

William Watkin and Deborah Philips, "Introduction: Contemporary writing environments," *Textual Practice* 23(6), 2009, 905 – 911

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 50 %

Presentation 25 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 25 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information:

none