

Vorlesung: Survey of British Literature and Culture: The 19th Century

Dr. Christian Krug

This lecture course offers a wide-ranging exploration of 19th-century British literature and culture. We will revisit many of the canonical texts, genres and authors of the century and discuss their historical and cultural contexts, chart key academic debates in Romanticism and Victorian Studies and explore interdisciplinary links between cultural and literary theory. In each case, however, the perspective will be one of British Cultural Studies: We will consider how texts (and their authors) are embedded in larger social and political contexts and the cultural and ideological work that they do. Above all, we will look at cultural practices, not just texts. Rather than study play texts in isolation, for example, the first lecture will consider what it meant to go to the theatre in the early 19th century, and how audiences engaged actively with plays. The other lectures deal with popular exhibitions, including those of paintings; the production and consumption of Romantic poetry; the social politics of Romantic and Victorian novels and novelists (including Austen, Dickens, and Gaskell); different concepts of history and their ideological use (e.g. in Burke and Carlyle); a history of Victorian poetry focusing on gender; urbanization and representations of the City and the Victorian crowd; the politics of realism in detective fiction; Imperial Romances and fictions of domestic anarchy; and Britain's Fin de Siècle. Two lectures will deal more specifically with cultural icons (Queen Victoria) and cultural myths (vampires).

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.

Hauptseminar: Shakespeare

Dr. Christian Krug

This seminar will look at the affective and emotional impact of Shakespeare's plays on early-modern and on contemporary audiences. The plays have affected audiences in a bodily sense (from laughter to tears), evoked feelings and enlisted emotions, and we will consider such affects, feelings and emotions in their respective cultural contexts. Our focus will then be on the political and ideological purposes they may serve. In the process, we will consider both early-modern stagings of plays, including *Richard II*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *1 Henry VI* and *The Winter's Tale*, and contemporary film adaptations.

Hauptseminar: Iconic and Religious Animals: Wolves, Tigers and More

Prof. Dr. Claudia Lillge

Animals are central to our lives. They are domesticated and used for clothing and food; incorporated into families as pets; hunted for subsistence and sport, deified in religions, and put on display in zoos and museums. As the interdisciplinary field of Cultural Animal Studies grows, scholars have opened a space for considering its foundational questions revolving around sympathy, compassion, care, violence, and kinship. This seminar will introduce you to some of the key scholars writing about human-animal encounters (e.g. John Berger, Bruno Latour, Jacques Derrida, Donna Haraway), and to a number of ways in which animals are represented in fiction, photography, and film. This seminar focuses on iconic animals, i.e., animals that have great symbolic load and embody certain ideas or concepts. It is designed as a tandem seminar with the Department of Religious Studies and consists of three parts. First phase: joint introduction; second phase: guided work on your own research project; third phase: student conference with presentation of your own paper. Reading and listening comprehension in German is a prerequisite. The course material is provided via StudOn.

Masterseminar: Britons: Forging and Sentimentalizing the Nation

Dr. Christian Krug

Taking our cue from Linda Colley's classic study *Britons* (1992), we will explore how Wales, Scotland and England joined together and forged a new 'British' identity which now coexists uneasily with more localized identities, but specifically with 'Englishness'. This imagined community of 'Britons' involves, in the late 18th century, revised constructions of 'national identity' and what is considered the 'national character' of the people. According to Harold Perkin, "[b]etween 1780 and 1850 the English ceased to be one of the most aggressive, brutal, rowdy, outspoken, riotous, cruel and bloodthirsty nations in the world and became one of the most inhibited, polite, orderly, tender-minded, prudish and hypocritical" (*The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880*). This shift still informs current stereotypes (such as 'stiff upper lip', 'gentlemanly behaviour', but perhaps also football hooliganism). We will explore representations of such identity positions in texts ranging from Shakespeare's *Henry V* to James Bond films. We will also consider perceived challenges to dominant 'national characteristics', such as a sentimentalization of British public life (e.g., in reaction to the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales in September 1997 and at the 20th anniversary of her death in 2017) – but also the sentimental strain that runs through British life. It can be traced in 'Victorian Sentimentalities' (e.g. in Dickens), sentimental representations of Queen Victoria, sentimental men in novels of the late 19th century and the sentimentalism of Bollywood in Britain. It also informs forms of social organization in Britain – including concepts of class (if there is time, we will look at British New Wave films and the gritty social realism of the 1960s and '70s) and of 'family' (ranging from representations of working-class families to the one that resides in Windsor).

Examensseminar: New English Literatures

Prof. Dr. Claudia Lillge

Die Formation der Postcolonial Studies stellen ein interdisziplinäres Forschungsfeld dar, in dem sich u.a. Forschungsfragen der Geschichtswissenschaft, der Soziologie, der Anthropologie und Ethnologie treffen und miteinander verschalten. Während 'post-colonial' (mit einem Bindestrich) eine Periode bezeichnet, die chronologisch 'nach' dem Kolonialismus beginnt und dadurch impliziert, dass sich die Geschichte in klar unterscheidbare Phasen von prä- bis post-kolonial entfaltet, wird mit dem Begriff 'postcolonial' (ohne Bindestrich), wie ihn auch die heutigen Postcolonial Studies verwenden, ein weiterer Rahmen gesetzt. Denn die Postcolonial Studies gehen von einer Gleichzeitigkeit des Kolonialismus und Postkolonialismus aus; ihr Interesse richtet sich folglich auf die Erfahrungen des Kolonialismus sowie auf seine vergangenen 'und' gegenwärtigen Auswirkungen. Dementsprechend

argumentieren auch Elizabeth Bronfen, Benjamin Marius und Therese Steffen: Postkolonialismus wird zu einem umfassenden Konzept von Kultur als "Widerstreit [...] zwischen Repräsentationen von Welt, Subjekt, Geschichte usw. ausgeweitet." Eben dieser "Widerstreit" zielt auf eine Kritik an Modellen des heutigen Denkens, darunter fallen zum Beispiel Modelle der Identität, der Nation oder der globalen Ordnung. Binarismen, mit denen Weltordnungen zugleich beschrieben und konstruiert werden (wie Eigenes/Fremdes, Identität/Alterität, Schwarz/Weiß, Okzident/Orient, Natur/Kultur usw.) werden kritisiert; darüber hinaus werden vielfach neue Denkfiguren entworfen, die zum Teil mit eigenen Begriffen – wie 'hybridität', 'third space' oder 'diaspora' – einhergehen. Im Rahmen dieses Seminars lesen wir Schlüsseltexte der Postcolonial Studies (Edward Said: *Orientalism*; Homi Bhabha: *The Location of Culture*; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: *Can the Subaltern Speak*; Stuart Hall: *Familiar Stranger*), die in den Literaturwissenschaften Perspektiven und Blickwinkel auf Texte verändert haben; ferner widmen wir uns ausgewählten Texten der neuen englischsprachigen Literaturen sowie Theorien des postkolonialen Schreibens. Dieses Seminar dient zur Vorbereitung auf das Staatsexamen, daher werden die genannten Inhalte gezielt auf mögliche Klausurinhalte hin abgestimmt und eingeübt.

Kombiseminar: Historicity

Dr. Christian Krug/ Dr. Michael Klotz

This module will focus on the language as well as the literature and culture of Renaissance England. Focusing on the state of the English language in Shakespeare's day, the linguistic part of the module (a course taught by Dr. Klotz) will explore the development of the English language from its beginnings in the early Middle Ages to the present day. How did English sound around the year 1600, how did it differ grammatically and lexically from present day English? The emergence of standard English will be a recurrent theme throughout the course. The literary and cultural part (taught by Dr. Krug) will focus on Shakespearean plays and poems, including their production and consumption.

Textanalyse: British Literature

Dr. Dennis Hennebühl

This course is meant to deepen and practice (text)analytical skills and categories acquired in the course of your previous studies. We will study various, mainly canonical, texts from different centuries covering the three major genres. In this context, we will also consider the development of these genres in British literature as well as examples of subgenres. Studying texts intensively in preparation for each session is a basic prerequisite for this course and expected of all participants. This course not only entails a relatively heavy reading load but some of the texts are quite challenging. So please begin reading the longer texts over the semester break!

Mittelseminar: Dimensions of Power in William Shakespeare's Plays

Marlene Compton

"Unsex me here" is undoubtedly one of the most famous quotes from Shakespeare's oeuvre. In it, Lady Macbeth articulates her wish for evil spirits to rid her of her womanhood for the pursuit of regicide, thereby enabling her family's rise to power. Murder, after all, is a man's office. Established power dynamics based on gender (and class) are comically disrupted in *Twelfth Night* through disguises and mistaken identities. This makes the play especially relevant to today's audiences as evidenced, for example, the by all-trans production hosted by

Ian McKellen in July 2025. The exploration of different kinds of power in history plays such as *Henry V*, might at first glance seem less current. Yet depictions of military and political prowess as well as their ties to the construction of national identity offer rich grounds for discussion both regarding the piece's historical context and contemporary performances. In this seminar we will read and discuss *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night* and *Henry V* with a particular focus on the dimensions of power at play. In order to approach this topic, we will consider the influence of genre, Elizabethan performance practice and conceptions of gender, queer theory and political ideology. We will apply these both in our close readings of the texts and to selected modern adaptations.

Aufbauseminar: Literature

Lou Pfeiffer

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.

Grundseminar: Culture

Dr. Christian Krug

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.

Aufbauseminar: Culture

Lou Pfeiffer

The *Aufbauseminar Culture* extends the knowledge and skills acquired in the *Grundseminar Culture* and is structured along the lines of cultural theory, cultural history, and cultural analysis. The course also comprises case studies of texts in various media to illustrate respective approaches. These examples will primarily focus on Great Britain.

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Grundseminar: Literature

Dr. Dennis Hennebühl

"It is literature which for me opened the mysterious and decisive doors of imagination and understanding. To see the way others see. To think the way others think. And above all, to feel" (Salman Rushdie). This introductory seminar to English and American Literary Studies focuses primarily on the critical analysis of the three main genres poetry, drama, and prose. Providing you with the necessary basis for your entire course of studies, we will learn how to analyse texts from these genres and familiarise ourselves with aesthetic key concepts, basic methods (e.g. close reading, formal analysis), and appropriate terminology. We will practice their application as well as develop analytic reading skills by discussing exemplary texts (selected poems from various periods, William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, and Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*). Our engagement with these case studies will demonstrate what literary criticism entails and further provides the opportunity to address questions concerning the use of categories of literary history as well as the formation of a literary 'canon'. At the end of the semester, students will be able to explain what literature is and what it means to interpret it.

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