M. Phil. in American Literature 2017-2018

Michaelmas Term Foundation Course

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This course of twice-weekly seminars is the starting point for all students taking the M. Phil in American Literature. Core Texts, bullet pointed and in bold, are required reading for each session. Further reading is suggested rather than required, unless otherwise specified. ‘Moodle’ refers to texts that will be made available on the Faculty intranet.
1. **SLAVERY**

Seminar 1a)

*Dr Sarah Meer*  
*Monday 9 October  2.00-3.30  GR03*

**Core Texts**

- **Frederick Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom** (1855)
  
  Recommended editions, Yale University Press (ed. David Blight); Penguin Classics (ed. Ira Dworkin); University of Illinois Press (ed. William L. Andrews)

- **Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin** (1851-2)
  

**Related Texts**

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)

**Further Reading**


Seminar 1b)

Dr Sarah Meer       Wednesday 11 October       2.00-3.30       GR03

Core Texts

- **Dion Boucicault, The Octoroon (1859)**
  Good edition is ed. Peter Thomson, *Plays by Dion Boucicault* (Moodle)
- **Branden Jacobs Jenkins, An Octoroon (2014)**

Related Text

Reed, Ishmael, *Flight to Canada* (1976)

Further Reading

DOBAMA Theater Teaser-Trailer
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nSvUa8n8Cw
FEED – Interview with Writer and Director, An Octoroon
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psqmqqvlCS8
Sollors, Werner, *Neither Black Nor White, But Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
2. TRANSATLANTIC IMAGININGS

Seminar 2a)

Dr Sarah Meer  Monday 16 October 2.00-3.30  GR03

Core Texts

- John Brougham, *Po-Ca-Hon-Tas: or, The Gentle Savage* (1855)
- Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (1889)
  Suggested editions: Oxford World’s Classics or Norton Critical Edition

Related Text


Further Reading


(For Brougham)


(For Twain)


McKeithan, D. M., ‘More about Mark Twain’s War with English Critics of America’, *Modern Language Notes* 63.4 (1948): 221-228
Rogers, Franklin R., *Mark Twain’s Burlesque Patterns* (Dallas TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1960)
Seminar 2b)  
Dr Sarah Meer     Wednesday 18 October  2.00-3.30     GR03

Core Texts

- Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun* (1860)  
  *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1863; reprinted in *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, Oxford University Press, ed. Jeffrey C. Stewart (Moodle)
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning, ‘Hiram Powers’s The Greek Slave’ (1850)  
  (Moodle)

Related Texts

Washington Irving, *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-20)
Charles Dickens, *American Notes* (1842); *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-4)
Henry James, *William Wetmore Story and His Friends* (1903)

Further Reading

Crane, Sylvia E., *White Silence: Greenough, Powers and Crawford; American Sculptors in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1972)
3. MODERN AMERICAN IDENTITIES
Seminar 3a)
Dr Tamara Follini  Monday 23 October  2.00-3.30  GR03

Core Texts

• Walt Whitman, ‘Crossing Brooklyn Ferry’ (1856, 1860, 1881)
• Henry James, *The American Scene* (1907): Chapter 2: New York Revisited; Chapter 4: New York: Social Notes; Chapter 8: Concord and Salem.
• Henry James, ‘The Jolly Corner’ (*New York Edition*, 1907-9); ‘A Round of Visits’ (1910)
• Alvin L. Coburn, *New York*, with an essay on New York by H.G. Wells (1911): www.photogravure.com/collection (Search under photographer’s name and ‘New York’ for the images that appeared in this collection; Coburn was the photographer who supplied the images for James’s *New York Edition*).

Related Texts


Henry, James, *A Small Boy and Others* (1913) [for childhood reminiscences of New York; see especially Chapters 6, 8, 9, 12, 19]

Nathaniel Hawthorne, ‘The Old Manse’ (1846)

Further Reading

McWhirter, David, ed., *Henry James in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) [see especially sections ‘Cosmopolitanism’ and ‘Urbanity’ and supplementary reading lists therein]
Seminar 3 b)
Dr Tamara Follini Wednesday 25 October 2.00-3.30 GR03

Core Texts
- **Teju Cole, Open City (2011)**
  See also Teju Cole’s ‘page for and about the novel Open City’ [http://op-cit.tumblr.com/page/3](http://op-cit.tumblr.com/page/3)
- **Joseph Mitchell, ‘Mr Hunter’s Grave’ (1956)**

Related Texts
Teju Cole, *Every Day is for the Thief* (2007); *Known and Strange Things* [critical writings] (2016); *Blind Spot* [Cole’s photography with commentary] (2017)
See the website: [www.tejucole.com](http://www.tejucole.com) for reviews and interviews (under the subheading ‘Links and Contacts’); selections from Cole’s column, ‘On Photography’ for *The New York Times Magazine*, and additional critical reading.

Further Reading
Hallemeier, Katherine, ‘Literary Cosmopolitanism in Teju Cole’s *Every Day is for the Thief* and *Open City*’, *Ariel* 44.2-3 (2013): 239–50
Vermeulen, Pieter, ‘Flights of Memory: Teju Cole’s *Open City* and the Limits of Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism’, *Journal of Modern Literature* 37.1 (Fall, 2013): 40-57

Further Reading for Seminars 3a and 3b
4. MODERNISMS AND MAGAZINES
Seminar 4a
Dr Fiona Green  Monday 30 October  2.00-3.30  GR03

Core Text

Related Texts
Browse further in the Modernist Journals Project, searching poets that feature in the 1916 issue of *Others* (Williams, Pound, Moore, Stevens, Loy, Lowell) as they appear in different magazines and anthologies. Some examples:

Mina Loy, ‘There is no Life or Death’, *Camera Work* 46 (April 1914)
Ezra Pound, ed., *Des Imagistes* (1914)
Marianne Moore, ‘Two Poems’, *The Egoist* 3.5 (May 1916); ‘Reinforcements’, *The Egoist* 5.6 (June-July 1918); ‘The Fish’, *The Egoist* 5.7 (August 1918)
Wallace Stevens ‘Pecksniffiana’, *Poetry* 15.1 (October 1919)
Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa, ‘The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry’, *The Little Review* 6.5-8 (1919)
William Carlos Williams, ‘Fish’, *Broom* 2.1 (April 1922) <http://bluemountain.princeton.edu>

Further Reading
Davis, Alex, and Lee M. Jenkins, eds., *A History a Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), chs. 1, 6, 15
Seminar 4b)  
Dr Fiona Green  
Wednesday 1 November  
2.00-3.30  
GR03

Core Texts

• Jean Toomer, *Cane* (1923)
• ———, ‘The Song of the Son’, *The Crisis* 23.6 (April 1922), http://dl.lib.brown.edu/mjp/

Related Texts


*Survey Graphic* 6.6 (1925) Harlem Number guest edited by Alain Locke, the precursor to Locke’s *New Negro* anthology


*Fire!! Devoted to Younger Negro Artists* (November 1926)

https://issuu.com/poczineproject/docs/poczp_fire_1926_readview

Further Reading


Fabre, Geneviève, and Michel Feith, eds., *Jean Toomer and the Harlem Renaissance* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001)


5. DOCUMENTING EXTINCTION
Seminar 5a)  
Dr Fiona Green  Monday 6 November  2.00-3.30  GR03

Core Texts

- E. B. White, ‘Sootfall and Fallout’, The New Yorker, 3 Nov. 1956 (Moodle)

Related Texts

Herman Melville, Moby-Dick; or, The Whale (1851), ch. 104, ‘The Fossil Whale’; ch. 105, ‘Does the Whale’s Magnitude Diminish?—Will He Perish? 

Henry David Thoreau, Walden; or, Life in the Woods (1854), ‘Sounds’; ‘Spring’


Aldo Leopold, ‘Wisconsin: Odyssey’, in A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There (1949)

Secondary Texts


Killingsworth, M. Jimmie, and Jacqueline S. Palmer, ‘Rhetoric and the Critique of Science in Carson’s Silent Spring’, in EcoSpeak: Rhetoric and Environmental Politics in America (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992)


Murphy, Priscilla Coit, What a Book Can Do: the publication and reception of Silent Spring (Amherst: Massachusetts University Press, 2005)


Waddell, Craig, ed., And No Birds Sing: Rhetorical Analyses of Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000)

Williams, Raymond, ‘Nature’ in Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, revised edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)

Seminar 5b)  
Dr Fiona Green  
Wednesday 8 November  
2.00-3.30  
GR03

Core Texts

- Lorine Niedecker, ‘Lake Superior’ (1968)  
  (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004)  
- Lake Superior: Lorine Niedecker’s poem and journal along with other sources, documents and readings (Seattle and New York: Wave Books, 2013)  
  NB: we will use this edition in class. Inexpensive used copies are readily available

Related Texts

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, The Song of Hiawatha (1855), Introduction; XIV Picture-Writing:  

  https://archive.org/details/passengerpigeon00mers


Aldo Leopold, ‘Wisconsin’, in A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There (1949)  
  [Leopold’s ‘On a Monument to the Pigeon’ is reprinted in the Wave Books edition of ‘Lake Superior’]

Further Reading

Carr, Helen, Inventing the American Primitive: Politics, Gender and the Representation of Native American Literary Traditions, 1789-1936 (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), chs. 3-5


Peters, Margot, Lorine Niedecker: a poet’s life (Madison, Wis: Terrace, 2011)


Willis, Elizabeth, ed., Radical Vernacular: Lorine Niedecker and the Poetics of Place (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2008)
6. ‘WAR ON TERROR’ LITERATURE

Seminar 6a)  
Dr Alex Houen  
Monday 13 November  
2.00-3.30  
GR03

Core Texts: Poetry

- Juliana Spahr, *this connection of everyone with lungs* (2005)

Related Texts

Samantha Giles, *deadfalls and snares* (2014)

Further Reading

Croft, Stuart, *Culture, Crisis, and America’s War on Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
Michael, John, *Identity and the Failure of America: from Thomas Jefferson to the War on Terror* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008)
Seminar 6b)  
Dr Alex Houen  
Wednesday 15 November  
2.00-3.30  
GR03

Core Texts: Fiction

- Kevin Powers, Yellow Birds (2012)
- Siobhan Fallon, ‘You Know When the Men Are Gone’, in You Know When the Men Are Gone (2011) [Moodle]

Related Texts

Lorraine Adams, The Room and The Chair (2010)  
Helen Benedict, Sand Queen (2011)  
David Abrams, Fobbit (2012)  
Cara Hoffman, Be Safe I Love You (2014)

Further Reading

Houen, Alex, ed., States of War since 9/11: Terrorism, Sovereignty, and the War on Terror (London: Routledge, 2014)  
Ingram, Alan and Klaus Dodds, eds., Spaces of Security and Insecurity: Geographies of the War on Terror (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009)  
US Army, ‘Ready Army’ website ['Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness’ training]  
http://www.acsim.army.mil/readyarmy/ra_about.htm  