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. **PURITANS**

**Seminar 1a)**  
*Dr Amy Morris*  
*Monday 8 October*  
*2.00-3.30*  
*GR03*

**Core Texts**

- Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682)
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, ‘Young Goodman Brown’ (1835)


**Related Texts**

John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding* (1666)
Anne Bradstreet, ‘To My Dear Children’ in *Works* ed. Hensley
John Williams, *The Redeemed Captive* (1709)
Jonathan Edwards, ‘Personal Narrative’ (1765)

**Further Reading**

Seminar 1b)

Dr Amy Morris
Wednesday 10 October
2.00-3.30
GR03

This seminar will have a workshop format. Please select two poems by different authors to compare and comment on in class, as we consider the question of American Puritan poetics.

Core Texts:

- Michael Wigglesworth, Meat Out of the Eater (1689) [selection on Moodle].

Related Texts
Roger Williams, A Key into the Language of America (1643)

Further Reading
Colacurcio, Michael J., Godly Letters: the Literature of the American Puritans (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), Ch. 11 ‘Gods Altar’: The Fall to Poetry
---------, The American Puritan Elegy: A Literary and Cultural Study (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
2. SLAVERY

Seminar 2a)

Dr Sarah Meer Monday 15 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 2b)

Dr Sarah Meer  Wednesday 17 October  2.00-3.30  GR03

Core Texts

• Dion Boucicault, *The Octoroon* (1859)
  Good edition is ed. Peter Thomson, *Plays by Dion Boucicault* (Moodle)


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=psqmqqvIvCS8
Sollors, Werner, *Neither Black Nor White, But Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
3. TRANSATLANTIC IMAGININGS

Seminar 3a)
Dr Sarah Meer  Monday 22 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

Cockrell, Dale, Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)


Miller, Tice L., Entertaining the Nation: American Drama in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (Carbondale IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006)


Rourke, Constance, American Humor: A Study of the National Character (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931)

(For Brougham)


(For Twain)


Howells, W. D., My Mark Twain: Reminiscences and Criticisms (New York: Harper, 1910)


Gillman, Susan, Dark Twins: Imposture and Identity in Mark Twain’s America (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1989)

Levine, Lawrence W., Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988)
Knoper, Randall, Acting Naturally: Mark Twain in the Culture of Performance (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995)
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)
Smith, Henry Nash, Mark Twain’s Fable of Progress: Political and Economic Ideas in "A Connecticut Yankee" (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1964)
Welland, Dennis, Mark Twain in England (London: Chatto, 1978)
Seminar 3b)

Dr Sarah Meer       Wednesday 24 October   2.00-3.30   GR03

Core Texts


• Harriet Beecher Stowe, ‘The Libyan Sibyl’ (1863) 
  *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


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)


4. MODERN AMERICAN IDENTITIES

Seminar 4a)
Dr Tamara Follini Monday 29 October 2.00-3.30 GR03

Core Texts
- Walt Whitman, ‘Crossing Brooklyn Ferry’ (1856, 1860, 1881)
- Henry James, The American Scene (1907): Preface; Chapter 2: New York Revisited; Chapter 4: New York: Social Notes; Chapter 8: Concord and Salem.
- 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
Bell, Millicent, Meaning in Henry James (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991)
Beulens, Gert, Henry James and the “Aliens”: In Possession of the American Scene (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002)
Page, Max, The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2001)
Seminar 4 b)

Dr Tamara Follini Wednesday 31 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)


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* 44.23 (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 4a and 4b


5. FICTION AND CRITICISM AT MIDCENTURY
The Liberal Imagination and After

Seminar 5a)
Dr Rachel Malkin        Monday 5 November 2.00-3.30  GR03

Core Texts

• Lionel Trilling *The Middle of the Journey* (1947)  

• Lionel Trilling *The Liberal Imagination* (1950). We will be discussing selected essays 
  Idea’

• ‘America and the Intellectuals: A Symposium’ Partisan Review, 1953, editorial: ‘Our 
  Country and Our Culture’ [this is short and will be provided on Moodle]

• Amanda Anderson ‘Character and Ideology: The Case of Cold War Liberalism’ *New 
  Literary History* 42.2 (Spring 2011): 209-229 [on Moodle]

Further Reading

On Trilling, the New York intellectuals, public criticism

Thomas Bender ‘Lionel Trilling and American Culture’ *American Quarterly* 42.2 (June 1990): 324-347

Morris Dickstein ‘Fiction and Political Fact’, Bookforum June/July/Aug 2008  
  [http://www.bookforum.com/inprint/015_02/2458](http://www.bookforum.com/inprint/015_02/2458)

Anthony Hutchison *Writing the Republic: Liberalism and Morality in American Political Fiction* (Columbia UP, 2007) 
  (chapter 3 on Trilling)


Michael Kimmage *The Conservative Turn: Lionel Trilling, Whittaker Chambers, and the Lessons of Anticommunism* 
  Harvard UP, 2009

Adam Kirsch *Why Trilling Matters* (Yale UP, 2011)

John Rodden ed. *Lionel Trilling and the Critics: Opposing Selves* U of Nebraska P, 1999


Paul Woolridge ‘Lionel Trilling and the Periodical Imagination’ *American Periodicals: A Journal of History and 
  Criticism* 23.1 (2013)

On the Cold War (and beyond) in US literature and culture:

Greg Barnhisel *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* Columbia UP, 2015

Steven Belletto and Daniel Grausam eds, *American Literature and Culture in an Age of Cold War: A Critical 
  Reassessment* (U of Iowa P, 2012)

Steven Belletto ‘Inventing Other Realities: What the Cold War Means for Literary Studies’ in *Uncertain Empire: 

Thomas Hill Schaub *American Fiction in the Cold War* (U of Wisconsin P, 1991)


Adam Piette *The Literary Cold War, 1945 to Vietnam* (U of Edinburgh P, 2009)

Seminar 5b)

Dr Rachel Malkin               Wednesday 7 November               2.00-3.30               GR03

Core Texts


Related Texts


Further Reading (on Baldwin)

For the changing trends in Baldwin criticism, it will be good to look through the articles in *The James Baldwin Review*. A number of essays trace the evolution of Baldwin’s reception.


Laura R. Fisher ‘Possible Futures and Grammatical Politics in James Baldwin’s *Another Country*’, *Journal of Modern Literature* 41.1 (Fall 2017)


Ed Pavlić *Who Can Afford to Improvise?: James Baldwin and Black Music, the Lyric and the Listeners* (Fordham UP, 2016)


Wider Reading


Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (1963) numerous editions


Fred Moten *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (UP of Minnesota, 2003)


Mary Washington *The Other Black List: The African American Literary and Cultural Left of the 1950s* (Columbia UP, 2014)
6. Experiments in the Novel and Autofiction/Autotheory

Seminar 6a)
Dr Rachel Malkin            Monday 12 November       2.00-3.30       GR03

Core Texts
- Chris Kraus *I Love Dick* (1997), Profile Books edn. 2015

Related Texts
- Gertrude Stein *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933)
- Elizabeth Hardwick *Sleepless Nights* (1979)
- Audre Lorde *Zami A New Spelling of My Name: A Biomythography* (1982)
- Kathy Acker *Portrait of an Eye* (1992)
- Lydia Davis *The End of the Story* (1995)
- Dodie Bellamy *Pink Steam* (2004)
- Nell Zink *The Wallcreeper* (2014)

See also Chris Kraus’ ‘Native Agents’ imprint at Semiotext(e)
https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/series/semiotexte-native-agents

Further Reading
- John Barth “The Literature of Exhaustion” in *The Friday Book: Essays and Other Non-Fiction* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1984)
- Kenneth Goldsmith *Uncreative Writing* (Columbia UP, 2011)
- Elizabeth Gumport *Female trouble* N+1, Issue 13 (Winter 2012) (largely on Kraus)
  https://nplusonemag.com/issue-13/reviews/female-trouble/
- Rebecca van Laer ‘Just Admit It, You Wrote a Memoir’ Electric Literature
  https://electricliterature.com/just-admit-it-you-wrote-a-memoir-98c800dd94e7
- Judith Ryan *The Novel After Theory* (Columbia UP, 2011)
- Patricia Waugh *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (Methuen, 1984)
Seminar 6b  
Dr Rachel Malkin  
Wednesday 14 November  
2.00-3.30 GR03

Core Texts
- Eileen Myles Afterglow (A Dog Memoir) (2017)
- Ben Lerner 10.04 (2014)
- Walt Whitman ‘Crossing Brooklyn Ferry’ [on Moodle]

Related Texts
The poetry and prose of Lerner and Myles beyond these texts will provide useful context.
Sylvia Plath The Bell Jar (1963)
Robert Creeley The Island (1964)
Lyn Hejinian My Life (1980)
Tao Lin Taipei (2013)
Claudia Rankine Citizen: An American Lyric (2014)

Further reading
Michel De Certeau ‘Walking in the City’ in The Practice of Everyday Life (1984) numerous new editions
Ben Highmore Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction (Routledge, 2002)
Stephen Johnstone The Everyday (MIT Press, 2008)
Maggie Nelson, Women, the New York School, and Other True Abstractions (U of Iowa P, 2011)
Maggie Nelson ‘All That is the Case: Some Thoughts on Fact in Nonfiction and Documentary Poetry’ in Lit from Within: Contemporary Masters on the Art and Craft of Writing eds. Haworth and Moore, (Ohio UP, 2011)
Bryony Randall Modernism, Daily Time, and Everyday Life (Cambridge UP, 2009)
Gayle Rogers ‘An Interview with Ben Lerner’ Contemporary Literature 54.2 (2013)
Brandon Stosuy et al. eds. Up is Up but So is Down: New York’s Downtown Literary Scene (NYU Press, 2006)