M.Phil. in Criticism and Culture  
Naturalism in Literature and Cinema

Convenor: Professor David Trotter, wdt21@cam.ac.uk

Description: These classes are intended to encourage various kinds of work towards a theory and a history of the 'modern'. At issue are, or could be: the politics of style, in literature and film; genre, in literature and film; the relation between word and image; the gendering of stories of decline and disintegration; cultural 'nation-building'; interpretation and/as aesthetic pleasure. There would be no objection to a focus on an individual writer or film-maker – though a case would have to be made for the interest they took or take in the issues discussed in class.

No prior knowledge of Naturalist fiction is required. The first class will take the form of a lecture on Naturalism’s history and founding principles. It will attempt to define a Naturalist aesthetic. The remaining classes will devolve into discussion and debate. There will be screenings of all films listed under ‘Prescribed viewing’.


PDFs of starred (*) items are available via CamTools.

1. What Was Naturalism?

1.1. Prescribed viewing

None.

1.2. Prescribed reading


1.3. Criticism


2. Towards a National Cinema: French Poetic Realism

2.1. Prescribed viewing

Jean Renoir, *La Bête humaine* (1939)

2.2. Prescribed reading


2.3. Criticism

*Katherine Golsan, “Vous allez vous user les yeux”: Renoir’s Framing of *La Bête humaine*’, *French Review*, 73.1, 1999, 110-20
3. Film Noir: A Naturalist Genre?

3.1. Prescribed viewing

Howard Hawks, *The Big Sleep* (1946)

3.2. Prescribed reading

Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep* (1939)

3.3. Criticism


4. British Social Realism

4.1. Prescribed viewing

Karel Reisz, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960)

4.2. Prescribed reading

Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958)

4.3. Criticism

5. TV Naturalism?

5.1. Prescribed viewing

Two episodes from Series 2 will be screened before the class.

5.2. Prescribed reading

None.

5.3. Criticism


6.1. Prescribed viewing


Also recommended: Andrea Arnold, *Fish Tank* (2009)

6.2. Prescribed reading

Lynne Ramsay, *Ratcatcher* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999) (film script)

6.3. Criticism
