

# MASTER Research Seminar

**“Recent Developments in American Literary and Cultural Studies: Intersectionality in Texts about Race, Class, Gender, and Age”**

**Room and time:** Seminar Room 34.D2, Wed, 3:15 – 4:45 p.m. · **Course number:** 512.343

**Lecturer:** Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stefan Brandt

**Description:** This Master-Research Seminar provides students with the opportunity to present and discuss their Master's, Diploma, and PhD theses. It also serves as an introduction to recent developments in (American) Literary and Cultural Studies, with a focus on intersectionality in texts about race, class, gender, and age. Students will learn the basic techniques of academic writing (including organization, research, structure, time management, methodology) and have the opportunity to apply cutting-edge literary and cultural theories to their academic papers. In addition, participants will be prepared for the oral exam, including the opportunity of taking a mock exam.

**Teaching and Learning Method:** This is an interactive course. Participation in group discussions will be part of the final grade.

**Materials:** Handouts and relevant texts will be made available as printouts and/or on **Moodle**.

## Assessment:

**A.) Regular attendance (no more than 2 absences!) and active participation (1/3);**

**B.) Presentation (incl. uploading of material onto Moodle course site) (1/3);**

**C.) 2-page research proposal plus 8-page thesis in a nutshell** (including title page, table of contents, and bibliography). Please use templates on Moodle! **(1/3).**

*Note: You need to pass each section to pass the whole course!*

### A. REGULAR ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

**Regular attendance** and **active participation** in the discussion sessions are crucial to the success of the course.

You are expected to be present in our (digital) meeting not only having read the assigned material, but also prepared to fully engage with the material, ask questions about it, offer perceptive interpretations, and even argue for your way of reading the text at hand.

Although the primary responsibility for each session will rest with the instructor, all students share the responsibility for contributing to the discussion.

**Absences** from class must be explained in writing, preferably prior to class. No more than two absences are allowed.

### B. PRESENTATION

Prepare a 20- to 30-minute presentation of your thesis (PowerPoint or Prezi). Make sure you upload additional materials on your topic on Moodle. (This could include scholarly articles, clips, and other useful documents, etc.). These materials can be uploaded *before* the session to give students the chance to

prepare for your topic (please announce this in advance whether one or two shorter texts should be read by all participants) or *after* the session. You also need to upload your presentation in the respective section on Moodle in a *revised, adapted, and extended form*.

### C. RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND FINAL PAPER

A **research proposal** (2 pages) is due around mid-term, on **Wednesday, May 31, 2023**, in digital form (Moodle upload section). The form for the research proposal is available on Moodle. Follow the instructions in the document.

The **final paper** (ca. 8 pages, including title page, table of contents, and bibliography, 2,500 – 3,000 words) should be typed (1.5-spaced, using one side of the sheet only, pages numbered). The paper should show your name, your student email address, the course title, the instructor's name, the date of submission, and the number of words. Primary and secondary sources need to be cited according to the Uni Graz guidelines for style and format.

The **deadline** for submission of the final paper is **Monday, July 17, 2023**.

There is **no extension** of this deadline. Keep in mind: A good paper is a finished paper.

(Upload your paper as Word document and add a link to an editable version on Google Docs or SharePoint!)

## Schedule

### Week 1 (March 15): Introduction to the Seminar

#### **Session Tasks:**

- overview of the seminar and its objectives
- discussion of the basic techniques of academic writing
- introduction to participants and their academic papers

### Week 2 (March 22): Recent Developments in Literary and Cultural Studies

#### **Session Tasks:**

- introduction to intersectionality in texts about race, class, gender, and age
- discussion of recent developments in (American) Literary and Cultural Studies
- application of literary and cultural theories to academic papers

### Week 3 (March 29): Time Management and Writing Techniques

#### **Session Tasks:**

- how to find the right topic
- time management techniques for academic writing
- no-gos of academic writing

### Week 4 (April 19): Application of Literary and Cultural Theories

#### **Session Tasks:**

- application of literary and cultural theories to academic papers
- discussion of intersections of race, class, gender, and age in academic papers
- peer review and feedback on academic papers

**Week 5 (April 26): Presentations and Feedback (Part 1)**

**Session Tasks:**

- presentation of academic papers by participants
- feedback and discussion of papers by the group

**Week 6 (May 3): Presentations and Feedback (Part 2)**

**Session Tasks:**

- presentation of academic papers by participants
- feedback and discussion of papers by the group

**Week 7 (May 10): Research and Methodology**

**Session Tasks:**

- introduction to research methods in literary and cultural studies (use of databases and online tools)
- application of research to academic papers
- discussion of methodology (distant reading / close reading)
- reference citation

**Week 8 (May 17): Academic Writing Skills**

**Session Objectives:**

- overview of the key tenets of academic writing
- to discuss research methodology (how to design a research question, and develop a thesis).
- to prepare for the final paper (overview of the requirements, including the topic, word count, and deadline, with tips on how to develop a research plan, gather data, and organize ideas).

**Important! Bring your research proposal to this session!**

Have the following three sections of your research proposal prepared:

Working title / Research Questions / Main Thesis

**Week 9 (May 24): Independent Study Unit**

**Tasks and Learning Objectives:**

- visit the library to conduct research (individually)
- do online research at home
- outline clear research questions, a well-defined methodology, and their main objectives phrased in a key thesis.
- create a research proposal (due May 31)

**Week 10 (May 31): Presentations and Feedback (Part 3)**

**Session Objectives:**

- presentation of academic papers
- feedback and discussion of papers

**Week 11 (June 7): Presentations and Feedback (Part 4)**

**Session Objectives:**

- presentation of academic papers

DUE DATE  
RESEARCH  
PROPOSAL

- feedback and discussion of papers

**Week 12 (June 14): Oral Exam Preparation**

**Session Objectives:**

- introduction to the oral exam
- mock oral exam for participants
- discussion of strategies for success in the oral exam

**Week 13 (June 21): Finalization and Submission**

**Session Objectives:**

- discussion of finalization and proofreading techniques
- no-gos of academic writing
- grading with models of paper assessment
- peer review and feedback on final academic papers

**Week 14 (June) 28: Final Paper Workshop**

**Session Objectives:**

- to workshop final papers in small groups (students will receive constructive feedback on their work and identify areas that need improvement).
- to discuss paper structure and content (key elements of a good academic paper will be highlighted, e.g., a clear introduction, well-structured body paragraphs, a concise conclusion).
- to provide feedback from peers and instructor (in order to identify areas that need improvement and revise final papers).

**DEADLINE FINAL PAPER:**

**MONDAY, 17 JULY 2023**

BRING TWO  
BOOKS FOR  
YOUR  
FINAL  
PAPER