The Old Man and the Gun
Masculinity and Violence in Ernest Hemingway’s Writings

Lecturer: PD Dr. Stefan L. Brandt, Guest professor
Basic information: Proseminar, 2 SWS, ECTS-Studium, ECTS-Credits: 7; application at KOS.
Room and time: AR-K 1-122/123, Thursdays, 10:00-12:00.
First session: October 18, 2007.
Modules: LCMS-BA-M2.1 (Textstrukturen) ab 2; AmL-2 (Theorie, Geschichte und autorenspezifische Ausprägungen literarischer Gattungen) ab 2; ENG-GYM-2.2 (Text im Kontext) ab 2; ENG-BK-M1.3 (Text im Kontext) ab 2; SekI & II-B4 (Amerikanische Literatur) ab 2.

Short description: During his life, Ernest Hemingway was associated with both an exaggerated masculinity and an affinity to violence – an impression fostered by the writer himself in numerous self-depictions as a fearless hunter and war hero. Despite these obvious markers of tough-guy masculinity and audacity in times of war, there have always been ambivalent signifiers in the Hemingway persona. These signifiers pointed to both his self-declared ‘grace under pressure’ and the suppressed sides of his personality (gender ambiguity, tormenting doubts regarding his strength of mind, detestation of speech as a vehicle of communication). This seminar will examine the many-faceted and sometimes contradictory designs of Hemingway’s writings, focusing on a wide range of novels (A Farewell to Arms, 1929, and Across the River and into the Trees, 1950), short stories (»A Soldier’s Home«, 1925, »The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber«, 1936, »The Butterfly and the Tank«, 1938), personal letters, and war reports (from World Wars I and II, the Greco-Turkish War, and the Spanish Civil War). In addition to Hemingway’s own works, we will analyze two celebrated film versions of his novels (For Whom the Bell Tolls, 1943, and The Old Man and the Sea, 1958) and watch parts from the awarded four-part television series on Hemingway.

Credit requirements:
For 5 or 7 credit points: regular attendance, lively participation in class discussions, and at least 10 entries in the discussion forum before the session (1/3), an oral presentation as part of an expert group (1/3), and a final paper (8-10 pgs. / 13-15 pgs.) (1/3). For 2 credit points: attendance, participation in class discussions, and 9 entries in the discussion forum before the session (50%), oral presentation as part of an expert group (50%).

Deadline for Final Papers: Friday, February 29, 2008. Note: There is no (!) extension of this deadline.
Syllabus:

18. Oct. Introduction
25. Oct. The Birth of the Masculine ›Code Hero‹
01. Nov. No class (Allerheiligen)
   Relax and enjoy!
08. Nov. Hemingway and Gender (1st theory session)
   Peter Messent, »Gender Role and Sexuality«, from: Ernest Hemingway (1992), pp. 83-123.
15. Nov. Violence and Survival: Hemingway’s Philosophy of ›Grace under Pressure‹
22. Nov. Machismo and Bull-Fighting
   »The Undefeated« (1927), pp. 183-205.
29. Nov. Trauma and Recovery
   Excerpts from A Farewell to Arms (1929), ch. 1-6; 16-20; 25-26; 30; 39-40.
06. Dec. Death and Masculinity
   »The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber« (1936), pp. 5-28.
   The Snows of Kilimanjaro (film, dir. Henry King, 1952) *
20. Dec. The Spanish Civil War
   War reports and political statements (1937), »A New Kind of War«, »The Chauffeurs of Madrid«, »Dying, Well or Badly«, »A Program for U.S. Realism«, pp. 281-98.
   Christmas break!
10. Jan. The Hemingway Code(s) (2nd theory session)
17. Jan. Morality and Manliness
   Excerpts from For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940); »Guerilla Warfare«; »El Sordo’s Last Stand«, pp. 176-200.
   For Whom the Bell Tolls (film, Sam Wood, 1943), based on Hemingway’s novel *
   Excerpts from Across the River and into the Trees (1950), »The Taking of Paris«; »The Valhalla Express«; »The Pistol-Slappers«; »The Chain of Command«, »The Ivy Leaf«, »The Dead«, pp. 215-38.
   The Old Man and the Sea (film, dir. John Sturges, 1958) *

* These films are available on DVD. They can be checked out from our Sekretariat. Room AR-H 213.
   Please note: Make sure you return the movie by 10 in the morning the next weekday!