Introduction to Literary Studies II

Course number: 512.205  ·  First session: March 13, 2015
Room and time: Seminar Room (Attemsgasse 25, Top Floor), Friday, 4:30-6:00 p.m.
Lecturer: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stefan Brandt
Office Hours: Friday, 4:30-6 p.m. (Room DG-0036) · Email: stefan.brandt@uni-graz.at

Description: This course is designed as a broad introduction to the study of narrative fiction and drama, with a special focus on American literature. It will encompass theoretical aspects (literary theory, terminology, analysis, etc.) as well as practical components (e.g., hints on how to write an academic paper). We will read and discuss numerous short stories, a novel, and a play. It is the main target of the course to show how a literary text can be analyzed with regard to a.) its composition (the text’s structural elements, narrative strategies, etc.), b.) its socio-cultural background (namely, the way the text is embedded into a literary, historical, and social context), and c.) its aesthetics (that is, the effect upon readers, its reception by literary critics, etc.). This course prepares you for future courses in literary studies and aspires to spark interest in the value and fascination of literary works.

Teaching and Learning Method: Presentations, class discussions, constructive feedback, e-learning, in-depth analyses of literary texts, practical application of theoretical approaches.

Course Materials: All participants need to purchase a course reader (to be picked up at the secretary’s office at Attemsgasse 25/2nd floor). In addition, please purchase copies of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby (1925) and Arthur Miller’s play Death of a Salesman (1949). Relevant additional texts will be made available on Moodle.

Assessment:

A. Regular attendance (no more than two absences); active in-class participation. (25% of final grade)
B. Taking minutes of one session (’Protokoll’); to be emailed to me - stefan.brandt@uni-graz.at - by the following Monday (three days later); revised minutes to be uploaded onto Moodle by yourself before the next session, in which you are also giving a 10-minute presentation. (25% of final grade)
C. 2-page research proposal (due April 24); ½-page abstract (due June 12); final paper of 8-10 pages (due July 10). (25% of final grade)
D. Final Exam (Terminology, Guided Interpretation). (25% of final grade)

Important note: You need to have at least a ‘D-’ (‘4-’) in all four sections in order to pass this class.

Deadline for Final Papers: Tuesday, July 10, 2015 in digital and printed form (together with declaration of honesty). Please send digital versions to Manuela Neuwirth at manuela.neuwirth@uni-graz.at. Printed versions should be sent to the Dept. of American Studies, KFU, Attemsgasse 25/II, A-8010 Graz (or thrown in our post box at the entrance of Attemsgasse 25).

Syllabus

13 March  INTRODUCTION: Literary Studies – A User-Friendly Guide
   Basic Texts (highly recommended):
   Ansgar & V. Nünning, An Introduction to the Study of English and American Literature, Glossary (see Course Reader).
   Lois Tyson, overview of literary theories, from: Critical Theory Today (to be distributed in class).

20 March  NARRATIVE PROSE – Introduction, Narrative Composition
   Main text (required):
   Ansgar & Vera Nünning, An Introduction to the Study of English and American Literature, ch. 5 (see Course Reader).
   Additional text (recommended):
   Michael Meyer, “Narrative,” from: English and American Literatures, ch. 3 (see Moodle).

27 March  INDEPENDENT STUDY UNIT – Research Proposal
   Stay at home and create a 2-page research proposal for a potential final paper (see document on Moodle) to be handed in on April 24.
24 April  THE SHORT STORY – “The Yellow Wallpaper”
Main texts (required):
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892) (see Course Reader).
Peter Barry, “Feminist Criticism,” from: Beginning Theory (see Course Reader).
Additional texts (recommended):
Ch. 5 from Nünning text (see Course Reader, session on March 20).
Lois Tyson, “Using Concepts from Feminist Theory to Understand Literature” (see Course Reader).
→ DUE DATE Research Proposal!

8 May  LITERARY THEORIES – MARXISM
Main texts (required):
Herman Melville, “Bartleby [the Scrivener]” (1853) (see Course Reader).
Lois Tyson, “Using Concepts from Marxist Theory to Understand Literature” (see Course Reader).
Additional text (recommended):
Peter Barry, “Marxist Criticism,” from: Beginning Theory (see Course Reader).

15 May  THE NOVEL I – A Brief Introduction
Main texts (required):
Nünning text, ch. 5 (passages on the NOVEL; see Course Reader, session on March 20).

22 May  THE NOVEL II – CONTINUED
Main text (required):
Additional texts (recommended):
Lois Tyson, “Marxist Criticism”/“Psychoanalytic Criticism”/“Lesbian, Gay, and Queer Criticism” (see Moodle).

29 May  DRAMA I – Historical Development, Types and Conventions, Key Elements
Main texts (required):
Ansgar & Vera Nünning, An Introduction to the Study of English and American Literature, ch. 4 (see Course Reader).

12 June  DRAMA II and CLOSING DISCUSSION
→ DUE DATE PAPER ABSTRACT (½-page)
Nünning book, ch. 4 (see Course Reader).

19 June  FINAL EXAM – Terminology and Guided Interpretation

26 June  ACADEMIC WRITING AND RESEARCH I
Guidelines, Discussions, In-Class Work.

3 July  ACADEMIC WRITING AND RESEARCH II and DISCUSSION of FINAL EXAM

10 July  DUE DATE of FINAL PAPER (with Declaration of Honesty) via email and in printed form (see remarks above)
No late submissions will be accepted!