

MASTER Research Seminar

The Beloved Ones – America between High Art and Popular Culture

Room and time: Seminar room (Attems-gasse 25, top floor), Wednesday, 11:45 a.m. – 13:15 p.m.

First session: 11 October 2017

Course number: 512. 531

Lecturer: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stefan Brandt **Office hours:** Thursdays, 4-6 p.m. (Room DG-0036)

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Description:

This Master Research Seminar offers a forum for candidates writing their Master's theses and preparing for their final exams. The course will convey the basic techniques of writing a thesis (organization, research, structure, time management). In addition, participants will be prepared for the oral exam, including the opportunity of taking a mock exam. B.A. students are also welcome to participate in the course. A specific focus will be on the oscillation of American culture and literature between 'high art' and 'popular culture.' This

may include a discussion of canonized works

(that is, highly-acclaimed books, films, short stories, etc.) as well as products of mainstream culture (blockbusters, TV-shows, commercials, etc.). Can acclaimed works of art not also be popular? And can popular texts, vice versa, not also criteria of 'high quality'?

encapsulate

Students are invited to present their academic projects (even those still in their baby shoes) over a wide range of possible topics, including literature, politics, cinema, television, and the visual arts.

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.

Aims:

Familiarizing students with the main tenets of writing a Master's/Diploma Thesis and preparing for an oral exam; conveying central knowledge, giving detailed feedback on current Projects.

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 and 5-page thesis in a nutshell (1/3). Please use templates on Moodle! You need to pass each section to pass the whole course.

Deadline for Thesis in a Nutshell: Thu, 15 February 2018 (hand in at the Dept. or send via post!)



Syllabus

11 October | Introduction

18 October | Planning and Organization of a Final Thesis – General Remarks

Finding a Topic, Time Management, etc.

25 October | Academic Research (Steps of Research, Consulting Libraries & Online Databases)

8 November | Structure of a Final Paper (The Golden Rules of Academic Writing)

Presentation of Student Project

15 November | The Cardinal Sins of Paper Writing (What You Should Absolutely Avoid)

Presentation of Student Project

22 November | How to Write a Research Proposal (General Structure, Questions, Thesis, etc.)

Presentation of Student Project

29 November | Independent Study Unit

NO class! Write a 2-page research proposal (see Moodle) to be handed in on 6 December!

DUE
DATE

6 December | Close Readings (Research Proposal Due Today!)

Presentation of Student Project

13 December | Theory (Literary and Cultural Theories)

Presentation of Student Project

10 January | Reference Citation (MLA, Chicago, Graz), Plagiarism

Presentation of Student Project

17 January | Grading (Models for grading criteria)

Presentation of Student Project

BRING
TWO
BOOKS

24 January | Oral Exam (Methods, Procedure, Preparation)

Presentation of Student Project

31 January | Oral Exam (Mock Exam)

Presentation of Student Project

DEADLINE FINAL PAPER: THURSDAY, 15 FEB. 2018