

ELECTIVE COURSES – AUTUMN SEMESTER 2016

Exchange students and students doing second or third level English are invited to choose one of the courses described below, but please also provide a second and a third choice, since we cannot guarantee that everyone will get their first or second choice. Please note that exchange students may take two elective courses in exceptional cases.

Number of credits: 5

Method of teaching: Seminars

Examination: See each course description.

Please complete the elective course form, which you will either get at the 12 September information meeting or find in the pigeonhole marked “*Fabian Beijer -- till studenter*” to the left of the departmental office. Put it in the pigeonhole marked “*Fabian Beijer -- från studenter*” no later than **Monday 26 September at noon**.

ENGG01 students who did not get their first choice last time normally get their first choice now.

PLACES, PEOPLE AND POLITICS IN ENGLISH ‘ROMANTIC’ WRITING

Cian Duffy (cian.duffy@englund.lu.se)

This course will introduce you to a brief but representative selection of writing from the English ‘romantic’ period (c.1776-1832). This was a time of profound artistic, social, scientific and epistemic change which witnessed the birth of ‘modern’ Europe and inaugurated many of the debates that still preoccupy our societies today. Literature played an important role in both shaping and reflecting these changes and on this course we will relocate the texts which we study in that wider historical and cultural context. We will also consider the scope of various historical and theoretical methodologies for approaching the literature of the past.

Reading List

After a first week introducing you to key historical and theoretical debates concerning ‘romanticism’ (material supplied in class), we will study the following in the following order:

- William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794)
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796)
- William Wordsworth, ‘The Ruined Cottage’ (1797)
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ‘This lime tree bower my prison’ (1797), ‘Frost at Midnight’ (1798), ‘Fears in Solitude’ (1798), ‘Dejection: an Ode’ (1802)
- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818; do make sure you read the text of 1818)
- Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Rosalind and Helen* (1819)

You can find excellent essays introducing you to key themes, events, and personalities, in the 'romantic' period in Iain McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), which is available in hardcopy and online at the university library. For an important (if somewhat demanding) introduction to critical debates surrounding the study of the 'romantic' period, see Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), also available in the university library.

Assessment

The final grade will be based on: 1) class attendance and active participation in discussions; 2) a final written exam; and 3) an (optional, if distinction is aspired to) essay of 1200-1500 words.

THE CONTEMPORARY IRISH NOVEL

Sara Håkansson (sara.hakansson@englund.lu.se)

Ireland in the 21st century is a nation that truly exhibits a vibrant and dynamic cultural atmosphere and its artistic climate seems particularly favourable to fostering notable achievement in the field of literature. Contemporary Irish writers' responses to the changes in the world around them carry resonances of the recent and ancient past and are cast in expressive language which echoes throughout the English-speaking world.

This course aims to explore the contemporary Irish novel by reading, analysing and discussing a selection of texts intended to be representative in terms of style, culture, geography and religion. The course aspires to introduce and contribute to the reader's engagement with the Irish novel generally and with the debates, issues and conflicts that the specific texts raise in particular. Our discussions will, among other things, revolve around how the social, cultural and political changes going on in Ireland since the early 1900s are represented in the texts and how these texts situate themselves in relation to Ireland in the recent and ancient past.

Although written by contemporary authors, the texts do not all limit themselves to representations of modern Ireland. Several texts move between history and modernity, some relate a chronological movement towards modernity and some reside completely within contemporary Ireland. These various approaches to past and present Ireland will give us cause to discuss diverse representations of history and as some of the texts have been adapted into motion pictures we will have opportunity to compare and contrast subject matter and themes within these different types of narrative expression.

Reading list 2016

Joseph O'Connor, *Star of the Sea*

Jennifer Johnston, *The Old Jest*

Patrick McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*

Colm Toibín, *The Blackwater Lightship*

Anne Enright, *The Gathering*

Claire Kilroy, *The Devil I Know*

Assessment

The final grade will be based on the following: 1) class attendance and active participation in discussions; 2) a final written exam; and 3) an (optional) essay of 1200-1500 words.

FIXING THE LANGUAGE: A JOURNEY INTO THE CAVES OF PRESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR

Mats Johansson (mats.johansson@englund.lu.se)

This course traces the history of language prescriptivism, as it is expressed in e.g. in usage guides, dictionaries and pedagogical grammars. We start by looking at the development of a standard language in Early Modern English, and move on to look at the first attempts at fixing (in both senses) the language in the 18th century. A major part of the course consists in reviewing some of the many prescriptive rules championed by English language mavens¹ over the past 300 years.

Assessment:

- A group presentation of one of the case studies in Curzan (2014)
- An individual paper on an issue or a set of related issues in English usage

Readings:

Crystal, David. (2006). *The Fight for English: How Language Pundits Ate, Shot, and Left*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pinker, Stephen. (2014). *The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century*. New York: Penguin. (especially chapters 4 & 6)

Curzan, Anne. (2014). *Fixing English: Prescriptivism and Language History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (one of chapters 3-6)

¹ 'An expert, a connoisseur; a knowledgeable enthusiast, an aficionado' (OED)

Recommended readings:

Battistella, Edwin L. (2005). *Bad Language: Are Some Words Better than Others?* Oxford; New York : Oxford University Press. (extracts) Available on-line:

<http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195172485.001.0001/acprof-9780195172485?rskey=QAht6c&result=21>

English Today (2010). Special issue on prescriptivism, available on-line:

<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayIssue?jid=ENG&volumeId=26&seriesId=0&issueId=02#>

Language Log: <http://languagelog ldc.upenn.edu/nll/>, especially posts labelled:

- errors
- Prescriptivist poppycock
- Peeving

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage. 1994. ISBN-13: 978-0877791324 or ISBN-10: 0877791325

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN ENGLISH LITERATURE: FROM DRAMA TO DETECTIVE FICTION

Kiki Lindell (kiki.lindell@englund.lu.se)

The struggle between good and evil is a timeless feature in the arts, and English writers have explored it in an immense variety of ways for as long as there has been English literature. We will study a small selection of works from the Renaissance onwards, and discuss villainous people and actions in those works. In the course of our readings, we will see how people belonging to different historical periods regarded evildoers and their deeds, which will give us a better grasp of the ways in which our predecessors thought and felt about the big issues in life. In some ways, their views and values seem far removed from our own time – but I believe we will come to conclude that some perceptions of evil are still unchanged today.

Most of our time will be spent discussing the texts with a focus on manifestations of evil in them, allowing ourselves plenty of scope for our personal responses. But we will also look at various ways in which writers create those responses in the reader, loading the dice against their 'baddies', for instance by means of symbolic imagery, allusions to the Bible and Classical mythology, and rhetoric. As the chosen texts represent the major genres of English literature, you will pick up some general ideas about different techniques employed by dramatists, poets and novelists, and acquire greater familiarity with some of the greatest English authors – Shakespeare, Milton, Coleridge, Dickens. Since evil is (as it were) in its natural habitat in detective fiction, about half of the reading-list consists of works from this genre.

Some of the evildoers we will spend time with have a measure of insidious charm, while others are simply odious and/or repulsive. But all come with a case, and we will look at it, and at the reasons why their creators could - or would - not allow them to win in the end.

At the end of the course, there will be a written exam, which will be graded as either G or U; no VG will be given. This is to make sure that the emphasis of the course is on reading, understanding and discussing these literary works and making them yours; the exam is simply a straightforward checking-up that all the material has in fact been read and understood. If you want to go the extra mile and try for a VG, you must – in addition to the exam – write a short paper (approximately 1,500 words) on a subject dealing with one or several of the works we have read in the course (the subject should be discussed with and approved by me before you start writing).

Reading List

1. William Shakespeare, *Richard III*
2. John Milton, extracts from *Paradise Lost* (approximately 20 pages, supplied on a handout)
3. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Christabel" (poem; supplied on a handout)
4. Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*
5. Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Final Problem" and "Charles Augustus Milverton" (short stories; supplied on a handout)
6. Dorothy L Sayers, *Whose Body?*
7. Agatha Christie, *Appointment with Death*

