

## Modernist Fiction

“On or around December 1910, human character changed,” the novelist Virginia Woolf stated, referring to the arrival (which can of course not be pinned down to exactly one particular month) of both modernity and of modernism as a new movement across the arts, which was meant to shake up previously established certainties. The resulting early-twentieth-century fiction, with which we will work in this class, demolishes literary conventions and sets up new ones instead, playing with narrative voices and the treatment of narrative time in particular. This fiction also engages with political and social issues such as the repercussions of the First World War, the British Empire, gender roles and sexuality. In this project work, you can choose the texts with which you want to work from a range of canonical works of modernist fiction, all of which provide different perspectives on the issues named above, and explore narrative conventions in different ways in the process.

If you decide to do your project work with me, then please note the following:

- The results of your individual project work have to be documented in a term paper (in English; ten pages of text, followed by an appendix).
- **deadline: 01.12.2021, 4pm**
- Your project work will be graded. It counts for 5 credit points, provided that you pass.
- You are required to register with me via email. It is not possible to sign up for the seminar on Studiport without contacting me first.
- In order to sign you up, I need the following information from you:
  - your name and matriculation number
  - your grades from modules 1 and 3
  - information on your (completed or planned) term paper in module 5 (title of the paper; literature or linguistics?)
  - are you planning to write your BA thesis at the English department?

Before our first meeting, you must have read five works, which have to include the two following:

**James Joyce, *Dubliners* (1914)**

**Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography* (1928)**

In addition to these two, you are required to choose three works from the following list. These, too, have to be read over the summer, before our first meeting.

**E. M. Forster, *Howards End* (1910)**

**E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924)**

**James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)**

**Katherine Mansfield, *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (1922)**

**Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925)**

**D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928)**

**Christopher Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939)**

### **Further Information**

For your project work, you will have to read at least five of the works listed above: *Dubliners* and *Orlando* as well as three works of your choice from the longer list above. Your term paper will, however, be a comparative analysis of only **two** out of the five novels or collections of short stories you have read. You will be expected to develop your own topic, but you are also required to closely consult me about it while you do so. All the works on my list can in principle be combined with each other, depending on the focus you choose for your comparison.

For the other three books you have read, which are not the subject your term paper, you are required to write brief **personal responses**, which will make up the appendix of your paper. These personal responses should provide a reflection on any additional perspectives on the seminar topic which these other works open up, on their relevance, and on key passages which you have identified in them. Your personal response to each book should be about a page in length, which amounts to an appendix of three pages. It is strongly recommended that you keep a reading journal while you first read the novels and collections of short stories. In your reading journal, you should note down important passages as well as your ideas and reflections on each novel. This will then make it easier for you to transform your thoughts into a coherent text for the appendix.

Early in the semester you will be provided with a style sheet with detailed instructions on the structure and formatting of your term paper. Please make sure that you follow these instructions.

You are required to sign up via email between **14.06.2021 (2pm)** and **24.06.2021**. Any registration emails sent prior to this will not be taken into consideration. I will sign you up for the project work on Studiport. You will not be able to register there on your own.

At the beginning of the fall term, we will have a number of seminar meetings (please check the department course catalogue for times and places). In these meetings we will cover academic writing in general, and there will be a workshop on developing a topic for your project work. After these meetings of the whole class and before the deadline in November, I will offer a number of individual consultation sessions.

**Please note: the assigned reading over the summer holidays is absolutely non-negotiable. In order to be able to read all five novels in time for our first meeting, you need to start choosing, buying and reading the novels as early as possible.**

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

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