
THE WORLD, THE TEXT, AND THE CRITIC II in Spring 2021 (CL1050)

Course Code	CL1050	Professor(s)	Geoffrey Gilbert, Russell Williams, Amanda Dennis
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	D G116; G&W G108
Class Schedule	M: 10:35-11:55 in G-207 R: 15:20-16:40 in G-207	Office Hours	by appointment
Credits	4	Email	ggilbert@aup.edu, rwilliams@aup.edu, adennis@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2021	Office Tel. Ext.	-

Course Description

The World, The Text, and The Critic II is a team-taught course that opens up a historical panorama of literature stretching from the 18th to the 21st century. You will emerge with an understanding of key terms and concepts for the study of modern literature, and for an understanding of the history of modern literature. Those concepts will be put into motion, dynamically, through the study of significant moments and locations when literary genres mutated or new genres emerged. The idea is to open some doors onto the rich complexity of comparative literary history, showcasing different kinds of writing and different methods for analyzing them. In this year's version of the course, taught in three sections by Russell Williams, Amanda Dennis, and Geoff Gilbert, the attention will be on the novel's attempts to respond to radical social change, on fractured and hybrid modern forms, and on the trials of lyric poetry.

Section 1: Russell Williams - The Contemporary Novel

The course will open with a consideration of the contemporary novel. In particular, we will be reading three distinct voices who have all articulated apparently personal experience but have done so against a backdrop of the changing media, technological and historical contexts at the birth of the 21st Century. We will be discussing how Don DeLillo (USA), Annie Ernaux (France) and Alain Mabanckou (Congo-Brazzaville) have presented and interrogated their realities through fiction. Alongside the work of these three writers, we will consider three significant theoretical concepts that their work calls into question: postmodernism, writing as sociology and postcolonialism.

Section 2: Amanda Dennis – Mid-Century Cataclysms (body, form, and fragment)

The middle part of the course investigates modernist ideas about the novel as a “technology of consciousness.” How might fiction and drama reflect shifts in our understanding of body, mind, and their interrelation in perception and cultural memory? Focusing on modernist and post-war works of literature (and one experimental film), we’ll ask how scientific advances illuminating the inner workings of the body, theories about the nature of consciousness and memory, the rapidity of communication and travel, and the socio-political upheaval of two world wars leave their mark on literary and aesthetic form; narrative continuity loops, frays, and fragments, giving rise to different modes of making of literature. In 1924, Virginia Woolf famously declared that “on or about December 1910, human character changed.” We’ll ask how this idea manifests itself in Woolf’s own essays and fiction, in fragments by Walter Benjamin, in short stories by Franz Kafka, and, finally, in a play and film by Samuel Beckett. Terminologically, we’ll cover literary form, fragmentation, modernism/late modernism as well as character, voice, and embodiment.

Section 3 Geoff Gilbert – Poetry, Subjectivity, Agency

The final section of the course covers the history and function of lyric poetry, from emerging modernity to our own age, from romanticism and realism and modernism and post-modernism to contemporary attempts to define a mode of writing that would be adequate to our moment. We study transformations in the form of the lyric as an index to shifts in the shape of experience and modes of agency. We’ll develop an outline of the history of the modern lyric form, from romantic poetry, through modernist and post-modernist poetics: we’ll pay particular attention to how lyric subjectivity and political agency are related, with a side-glance to ecology and the place of humans in nature, and we will be reading fast through bits of Wordsworth, Blake, Baudelaire, Césaire, Celan, O’Hara, Hejinian, Riley, Rankine, Nealon, and Spahr. From their poetry and from modern poetics (writing about poetry), we will aim to consider the resources that poetry can offer us in relation to our linguistic, ethical, political, and ecological predicaments. This section of the course will clarify notions of romanticism, modernism, and lyric/narrative relations; and teach and test the skills of close reading, basic prosodic analysis, and contextual readings.

Course Learning Outcomes

To write detailed analysis of literary works through close reading and attention to the relation between original and translated works.

To construct relations between the details of literary works and their social and historical contexts

Understand the social, political, economic, and subjective stakes of the transformation of literary genres

To enrich one's literary critical vocabulary, becoming familiar with a variety of stylistic figures, tropes, genres and narrative structures

To establish a set of historical and geographical landmarks that will allow a personal writing of comparative literary histories to begin

General Education

Course Outline

There may be changes to this outline as we get a feel for the semester. In general, you should have completed the reading to be discussed in each session well before the class meets.

Date	Session Topic	Assignments	Reading/Viewing
Mon 18 Jan	Introduction to CL1050		Handout in class
Thu 21	Shifts in epoch, shifts in "character." Literary form in an unravelling century.		Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" & "The Leanin Tower"
Mon 25	We are made of others' language and dirt. Poetics, ecology, politics, and representation.		texts to be circulated
Russell Williams: The Contemporary Novel			
Thu 28	"The most photographed barn in America"		Delillo
Mon 1 Feb	"The Airborne Toxic Event"		Delillo
Thu 4	Writing postmodernity		Delillo, extracts from Jameson, <i>Postmodern</i>
	Mini-break 1 – Monday 8 Feb-Wednesday 10 Feb		
Thu 11	Writing "autofiction"	Short paper due for Williams	Ernaux
Mon 15	Writing France		Ernaux, Bourdieu (TB
Thurs 18	Writing the Congo		Mabanckou
Mon 22	Writing "World Literature"		Mabanckou, 'Toward a

			Literature” in French’
	Mini-break 2 – Wednesday 24 Feb-Friday 26 Feb		
Amanda Dennis: Mid-century Cataclysms (body, form, and fragment)			
Mon 1 March	Crisis and perspective: innovations in form.		Woolf, <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
Thu 4	The body and memory; sensing the city.		Woolf, <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
Mon 8	The body as signifier.		Kafka, “In the Penal C and “The Hunger Artis
Thu 11	Voice and mediation.		Beckett, <i>Krapp’s Last</i>
Mon 15	The past in the present.	Short paper due	Beckett, <i>Krapp’s Last</i>
Thu 18	The mouth and the eye; the body in pieces.		Beckett, “Not I” and <i>Fi</i>
Mon 22	Perceiving in fragments: writing the city.	Creative exercise due	Benjamin, <i>One Way S</i> “Hashish in Marseille”
Thu 25	Intermission: visiting speaker TBC		
Geoff Gilbert – Poetry, Subjectivity, Agency			
Mon 29	Reading Romantic lyric – rhythm, memory, environment, politics	Short video reaction due before each session	Wordsworth, Blake, Keats (Romantic theory)
Thu 1 April	Reading modernist lyric – rhythm, nature, city		Hopkins, Baudelaire, Eliot
	Mini-break 3 – 5-7 April		
Thu 8	Language, form, openness		Hejinian
Mon 12	Lyric, trauma, freedom		Celan, O’Hara; Adorno
Thu 15	Saying I and saying We	Creative exercise due	Riley, Nealon
Mon 19	My body in my Nation		Rankine
Thu 22	Lyric poetry today	Short paper due	Spahr, Skinner
Mon 26 April	Shared Revision and synthesis – bring your notes!		
Final Exam 6 May 2021, 18:30-21:00 – NB the date and time of the final examination is fixed, so be that you do not make travel plans for this day			

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
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Mrs. Dalloway	Virginia Woolf	Penguin	9780241261798	Yes
White Noise	Don DeLillo	Picador	9780330524841	Yes
Krapp's Last Tape & Other Shorter Plays	Samuel Beckett	Faber	9780571244560	Yes
One Way Street	Walter Benjamin	Belknap - Not Available at the Bookstore	9780674052291	Yes
Broken Glass	Alain Mabanckou	Serpent's Tale	9781846688157	Yes
The Years	Annie Ernaux	Fitzcarraldo	9781910695784	Yes

Attendance Policy

Attendance at all classes is required; the fundamental work of the course includes contributing to shared discussion of texts, and demonstrating through class participation that reading has been thoroughly absorbed. Therefore, students who miss more than four classes will receive an F for their participation grade: the maximum grade they will be able to attain for the class as a whole – if they achieve perfect grades for all written work – would thus be a B. Students who miss more than 7 classes will be deemed not to have completed the work of the class, and will receive an F for the class as a whole, however strong their work is, and however good their reasons for absence are.

Students who cannot attend classes for agreed reasons must demonstrate participation by reading the materials, viewing any video recording of discussion, and completing any required responses.

Deadlines are fixed. Work will not be accepted late without incurring a penalty.

You must come to class with the required physical (or electronic) editions of the texts, and you should come prepared to discuss your ideas and questions about the text, and be equipped to take notes.

Given the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we will be starting the semester online and courses will

be delivered via the Teams platform. We return onsite to in-class teaching from February 11th. While we recognize that you will have the option of attending classes remotely (see below), your professors feel that the discussion-based nature of this course lends itself most fully to physical presence in class and we would wholeheartedly encourage you to be on campus.

The professors will be pleased to discuss any questions about these rules during the first weeks of the semester; the professors will be keen to discuss any accommodations that might be made for learning differences – again, these conversations must happen during the first two weeks of the semester. Any private agreement modifying any of the above requirements must be obtained *in writing*.

Covid-19 temporary amendments:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are STILL EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL scheduled classes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending classes remotely when special circumstances apply. For example when students are placed under quarantine by the French authorities or by their doctor, or when students present symptoms of Covid-19 and are directed, by their doctor or the AUP Health Office, to remain home. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that their professor might have set in the course syllabus. In particular, Students attending remotely from distant Time Zones should check with their professors about the specific attendance policy for remote learners.

The university policy is given below

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED

WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Prof Williams's assignments	20%	(two response papers)
Prof Dennis's assignments	20%	(take-home essay and creative response)
Prof Gilbert's assignments	20%	(take-home essay and creative response)
Participation and Presence	20%	
Final Exam	20%	

Other
