

‘Interculturality’ and ‘Transculturality’ in Recent & Contemporary Anglo- American Literature & Culture

Seminar: Aufbaumodul / Ergänzungsmodul

Professur für Anglistische & Amerikanistische
Kulturwissenschaft

Dr. Robert Craig

Wintersemester 2023-24

Key seminar details

- **Seminar name on the VC:**

PS Interculturality and Transculturality in Recent & Contemporary Anglo-American Literature and Culture

- **Access code:**

Hybridity

Course aims & objectives

- To learn about and/or familiarize yourself with the history & historical contexts of contemporary British (and, secondarily, US-American) multiculturalism.
- To develop a working familiarity with recent and contemporary theories of multiculturalism, interculturality, and transculturality.
- To examine and interrogate the ways in which a selection of essays and literary texts reflect, embody, and critique some of these ideas.
- To consider the question: what do 'transcultural' literary texts have to tell us about the ways in which *all of us* negotiate and construct our identities?

Organizational information

- **VC password: Kureishi**
- Please consult the 'Modulhandbuch' on the Website for *Anglistik und Amerikanistik* (relevant section: 'Aufbaumodul Britische und amerikanische Kulturwissenschaften').
- Your final grade will depend on the quality of your 'Seminararbeit', combined with the quality of your seminar presentation (**for the Aufbaumodul & for Erasmus students**). It is based on the quality of your oral examination (**for the Ergänzungsmodul**).
- If you are absent for a particular session (due to illness or an unforeseen family emergency), I would be very grateful if you could let me know.

Reading & contributing

- It is very important that you manage your time carefully this semester, making sure that you read *The Buddha of Suburbia* by 20 November at the latest. Our discussion of the novels begins with *Buddha* on 4 December; and I would strongly recommend that you have at least **started** on *The Namesake* (which we will begin to discuss in the session before Christmas) by then. Aim to read *Girl – Woman – Other* over the two-week Christmas break.
- Read each essay, story, or novel with the discussion questions in minds: either making notes or labelling/highlighting relevant passages. Using the **Ethernet pad** for each week, I want **each of you** – using a pseudonym (if you wish) and in colour coding – to note down 2-5 particularly interesting questions that **you** have and/or would like to discuss about each of our texts/topics. You can also record your own thoughts and respond (constructively and helpfully) to others' questions and thoughts.

Participation expectations

- Provided you contact me in good time, you can expect me to offer guidance on both your presentation and your term paper. You can also expect me to respond promptly to your emails (within reason!). We are a small seminar group, which means that each of you will benefit from more individual attention than would be the case in a larger class.
- But this also comes with responsibilities on *your* part. I expect everyone to do the required reading, and I expect everyone to present in this seminar. When you sign up for a presentation, you **commit to giving that presentation**. While plans can change in the course of the semester, this means that you will need to give me **at least two weeks' notice** before your presentation 'due date' if you have decided to drop the course. Within the two week period, you can of course still drop the course; but you will still have to give the presentation.

Presentations (i)

- **Please read & make notes on the set texts in advance of each session.**
- This is a course for both cultural and literary studies: we shall be looking at literary texts, but using them to analyze themes in contemporary and recent culture. Please keep that in mind as you prepare your presentations.
- Consult the 'Powerpoint' guides on the VC) **before** preparing your presentation.

Presentations (ii)

- **Please aim to present for around 20 minutes.**
Suggested structure:
 - i. **Brief introduction** to the author and the text (and its context).
 - ii. An **interpretation** of the text. Try to make close reference to the questions of cultural and transcultural identity; and make **close reference** to specific passages.
 - iii. If presenting on a theoretical text, please be sure to summarize the overall argument first!
 - iv. Questions for class discussion: **we will discuss these in our group meetings prior to the session.**

Presentations (iii)

- My student appointments take place on Mondays between 16:00 and 18:00, either in person or on Teams.
- Please arrange an appointment with me around a week before your presentation in order to discuss the contents of the presentation and the questions you hope to address.
- Make sure you have already done plenty of preparatory reading before the appointment so that we can have a meaningful discussion.
- Please send your presentation (either a final version or a draft) to me by **6pm on the Saturday before the seminar session in question.**

Term papers

- Word-limit: **3,000-4,000 words**, in English, including footnotes, but without contents page and bibliography. You should not write either significantly **less** or **more** than this word-range.
- Please choose your topic and a draft title (and email it to me with a plan of action) by **2 February 2024 at the very latest.**
- Final deadline for term paper hand-in: **18:00 on 29 March 2024.**

General guidelines (I)

- **Your topic and title should be something you can cover satisfactorily within the word-limit.** It should not be too broad: in other words, don't go for something like: 'British or Pakistani? Living across two cultures'; or 'Literary representations of Diaspora identities'.
- Your title needs a clear focus and a clear 'Problemstellung' or 'Fragestellung': you should focus on a theme relating to colonialism, postcolonialism, and their cultural and literary legacies.
- You may also approach one of our set texts from a different thematic angle to that of 'transculturality' and 'transcultural identities'.

General guidelines (II)

- Your essay should focus on one novel, 2-3 novels or films in comparison or a cultural (or cultural-historical) theme viewed through the lens of cultural theory.
- Whether you are doing this course for either literary and cultural studies, I will be expecting you to combine literary with cultural-theoretical analysis.
- I would very strongly advise you to stick to the texts and themes we discuss; but if you can make a very good case for it, you may also focus on texts from outside the course.
- **N.B. Literary writing is of its nature ambiguous: it *disturbs*, *disrupts*, and radically *questions* categories rather than simply reinforcing them.**

General guidelines (III)

- You **must** engage in close reading: i.e., don't simply provide summaries of plot or character or pile up 'textual evidence'.
- You **must** engage with relevant theoretical and secondary literature in order to **develop your own argument**.
- You should select **specific passages** which shine interesting new light on your topic and analyze them in detail in your essay.

General Guidelines (IV)

- **Structure:** your introduction should clearly 'set up' and justify your topic; your conclusion should tie everything together and perhaps pose further questions.
- Your essay needs a clear structure: see the following slide for more guidelines.

Term paper structure

- A term paper should have the following basic structure:
- Title page
- Outline/table of contents
- Introduction: This contains the problem, objective and research question; furthermore, the research methods, i.e. the approach, as well as the structure of the paper are presented here.
- Body: This is where you address your topic, i.e. answer your research question.
- Conclusion: In this section, you revisit your thesis; summarize the results of the paper and briefly refer to whether your thesis – your main argument – could broadly be substantiated or not (with justification!).
- Bibliography
- Appendix, if applicable (not necessary for all papers)

Avoiding plagiarism

1. Plagiarism rules apply to both Seminararbeiten and Referate: you must strenuously avoid it in both.
2. Plagiarism apply not merely to the unacknowledged use of other people's work but **also to any use of AI such as ChatGPT** to write either your presentations or your Seminararbeiten.
3. Keep very careful and accurate notes, ensuring that you differentiate very clearly between your ideas and quotations from other authors, **in order to avoid plagiarism.**
4. Pay attention to detail! You should make sure that you follows the footnoting guidelines on the VC precisely.
5. Be consistent! Once you've selected a particular system or convention (ideally following the 'Äußere Form' document), **make sure you stick to it!**

NB. I use the (very effective 'Turnitin' plagiarism software to check all Seminararbeiten for traces of plagiarism: **so don't be tempted.**

Plagiarism & AI statement (I)

“I hereby declare according to § 10 para. 4 APO that this paper is the result of my own independent scholarly work and that in all cases, material taken from the work of others is acknowledged. Quotations and paraphrases are clearly indicated, and no materials or tools other than listed have been used. This written work has not been submitted at any university before. I understand that the use of sources whose authenticity cannot be verified is a serious violation of the principles of good academic practice (cf. <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/studium/im-studium/studienorganisation/quellen/> and <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/forschung/profil/gute-wissenschaftliche-praxis/>; only available in German).

Plagiarism & AI statement (II)

“Furthermore, I declare that I have used text- or otherwise content-generating artificial intelligence (AI) software (e.g. ChatGPT) only after consultation and with the permission of my instructor/examiner and that I have noted this under “Tools”. I am prepared to provide detailed documentation of my use of AI software (e.g. chat transcripts) if clarification is required.

I hereby also declare that I have handed in an identical electronic version of my paper as required.

I am aware that this digital version can be subjected to a software-supported, anonymized check for plagiarism.”

Sample titles (past semesters)

‘The Vampire as a metaphor for social desires, anxieties and problems at the fin-de-siècle and the 21st Century: Comparing Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* and Alan Ball’s *True Blood*’.

‘Modernity in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*: Functions of Technology’

‘Chivalry in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* as a way of identifying the boundaries of fin-de-siècle gender roles’

‘A Freudian look at the Uncanny in Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*’

Ergänzungsmodul oral exam

- If you are taking this module as part of the ‘Ergänzungsmodul’ please let me know **as soon as possible**, so that we can arrange a meeting about the oral exam over the course of the semester.
- Full information about the Ergänzungsmodul in Kulturwissenschaft can be found here:

<https://www.uni-bamberg.de/anglak/ergaenzungsmodul/ergaenzungsmodul-ba/>

- Full information about the *Literaturwissenschaft* Ergänzungsmodul requirements can be found here:

https://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/uni/fakultaeten/split_lehrstuehle/englische_literatur/Pruefungen/Info_u_Anmeldeformular_Ergaenzungsmodul_Mdl_EngLit_AmLit.pdf

Programme

- **23.10.2023**

Organizational introduction

- **30.10.2023**

Historical & contextual introduction (I)

- **06.11.2023**

Historical & contextual introduction (II)

Programme

- **13.11.2023**

Multiculturalism, Interculturalism, Transculturality:
Wolfgang Welsch & Afef Benessaïeh

- **20.11.2023**

Culture, diaspora, and identity:
Stuart Hall & Salman Rushdie

- **27.11.2023**

Hanif Kureishi
British-Pakistani identities

Programme

- **04.12.2023**

Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990)

Part I: Humour, Stereotype, and Ethics

- **11.12.2023**

Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990)

Part II: Hybridity & performativity

- **18.12.2023**

Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake* (2003)

Part I: Narrative form & cultural characterization

Programme

- **08.01.2024**

Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake* (2003)

Part II: Origins & originality

- **15.01.2024**

Term paper writing: hints & tips

- **22.01.2024**

Bernardine Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019)

Part I: Deconstructing stereotype & prejudice

Programme

- **29.01.2024**

Bernardine Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019)
Part II: Identity, fluidity, and performativity

- **05.02.2024**

Concluding discussions

Bradford: a city 'between' cultures?



Source: <https://www.englishuknorth.com/location/bradford/>

Bradford: a city 'between' cultures?



Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/thebluehouse2/4339193038>

Round of introductions

Where are you 'from' (you may interpret that question however you like)?

What motivated you to take this seminar?