

Twenty-First Century Literature

Second Year Undergraduate

Module devised and taught by Hannah Boast, Zara Dinnen, Matt Hayler, Asha Rogers

Below is a week-by-week list of compulsory reading and the topics for discussion. Students are expected to come to seminars having read all of the compulsory set material, and of course are also encouraged to read more widely.

Students may also be asked to undertake group presentations; this will depend on the seminar tutor.

Lectures will aim to provide some historical or formal context for the set reading, but may also engage with a broader field of material in an effort to challenge or extend the ideas encountered in set reading.

1. Introduction: Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize for Literature: So what?

Compulsory Reading:

Joshua Clover, "Nobel Notes: Dylan as Literature" *LARB*, 17.10.16

<http://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/essays/nobel-notes-dylan-literature/>

[Handout with extracts from Brouillette and Doody, "The Literary as a Cultural Industry", and Mark McGurl, "Fiction in the Age of Amazon".](#)

Companion Reading:

Sarah Brouillette, *Literature and the Creative Economy*. Stanford University Press, 2014.

Neoliberalism:

Will Davies, 'The Difficulty of Neoliberalism', *Political Economy Research Center Blog*, percblog.org.uk, January 01, 2016 http://www.perc.org.uk/project_posts/the-difficulty-of-neoliberalism/

Will Davies, 'Neoliberalism: A Bibliographic Review', *Theory Culture Society Online*, March 2014 <http://www.theoryculturesociety.org/william-davies-a-bibliographic-review-of-neoliberalism/>

Wendy Brown in conversation with Timothy Shenk, "Booked #3: What Exactly Is Neoliberalism?" *Dissent* (2015) <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/booked-3-what-exactly-is-neoliberalism-wendy-brown-undoing-the-demos>

Jeremy Gilbert, 'What Kind Of Thing Is Neoliberalism?' *New Formations*, 80 and 81 (Winter 2013).

Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos*. MIT Press 2015.

2. *The Good Immigrant* (2016)

Compulsory Reading:

Paul Gilroy, 'My Britain is fuck all' zombie multiculturalism and the race politics of citizenship, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 19:4 (2012), 380-397

[Handout with extracts from Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Paul Williams, Jeremy Gilbert.](#)

Companion Reading:

Stuart Hall, '[New Ethnicities](#)', in D. Morley and K. Chen (eds) *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Stuart Hall, '[Minimal Selves](#)', in *Identity: The Real Me*, ICA Documents 6 (1987)

Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?*, (London: Routledge, 2004).

Paul Williams, *Paul Gilroy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

3. Claudia Rankine *Citizen* (2016)

Compulsory Reading:

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic* June 2014,
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

[Handout with extracts from Rankine, Love, Berlant](#)

Companion Texts:

Lauren Berlant Interviews Claudia Rankine, <http://bombmagazine.org/article/10096/claudia-rankine>

bell hooks *Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Heather Love, "Small Change: Realism, Immanence, and the Politics of the Micro," *Modern Language Quarterly* 2016 Volume 77, Number 3: 419-445.

Jesmyn Ward (ed). *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race* (2016).

Extra Material:

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17361995> - a short documentary about a divided city that further illustrates some of what Coates describes.
- <https://www.wired.com/2013/08/how-segregated-is-your-city-this-eye-opening-map-shows-you/> - a series of maps of American racial segregation based on self-reported census data.

4. Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (2006)

Compulsory Reading:

Gillian Whitlock, 'Introduction: Word Made Flesh', in *Soft Weapons: Autobiography in Transit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 1-24. Available via library [online catalogue](#).

[Handout, with extracts from Amireh and Suheir Majaj, Whitlock, Sontag](#)

Companion Texts:

On autobiography/memoir:

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading autobiography: A guide for interpreting life narratives* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). Ebook available via [findit@bham](#).

Philippe Lejeune, "[The Autobiographical Pact](#)," *On Autobiography*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

On comics as memoir:

Michael A. Chaney, Ed. *Graphic Subjects: Critical Essays on Autobiography and Graphic Novels* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2011).

Hilary Chute, *Graphic Women: Life Narratives and Contemporary Comics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

Lisa Hoashi, "Fluency in Form: A Survey of the Graphic Memoir" *The Missouri Review* 30.4 (2007): 159-174 <https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/article/229991/pdf>

Nina Mickwitz, *Documentary Comics: Graphic Truth-Telling in a Skeptical Age* (Palgrave 2016).

On *Persepolis*

Joseph Darda, "Graphic Ethics: Theorizing the Face in Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*." *College Literature*, vol. 40 no. 2, 2013, pp. 31-51. *Project MUSE*, [doi:10.1353/lit.2013.0022](https://doi.org/10.1353/lit.2013.0022)

On reading comics:

Scott McCloud *Understanding Comics* (1994)

Jeet Heer, Kent Wocester eds. *A Comic Studies Reader* (University of Mississippi Press, 2009)

5. Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2006)

LECTURE TRANSCRIPT [no panopto this week]

Compulsory Reading:

Berlant & Warner "Sex in Public", *Critical Inquiry* 24.2 (1998): 547-566

[Handout with extracts from Cvetkovich and McBean](#)

Companion Texts:

On Queer Theory/Queer Culture:

Judith Butler, Chapter 8: "Critically Queer", in *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (Routledge, 1993), pp. 223-42, footnotes: pp. 281-4.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Queer and Now", in *Tendencies* (Routledge, 1994), pp. 1-20.

Teresa de Lauretis, "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities: An Introduction", *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 3.2 (1991): iii-xviii.

On *Fun Home*:

Sam McBean, "Seeing in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*," *Camera Obscura* 2013 Volume 28, Number 3 84: 103-123

Ann Cvetkovich, "Drawing the Archive in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, Volume 36, Numbers 1 & 2, Spring/Summer 2008: 111-128

Heike Bauer "Vital Lines Drawn From Books: Difficult Feelings in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* and *Are You My Mother?*," *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, Volume 18, 2014, Issue 3: Transnational Lesbian Cultures: 266-281

Hilary Chute Interviews Alison Bechdel

http://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/hillary_chute_interviews_alison_bechdel/

Watson, Julia. 2008. "Autographic Disclosures and Genealogies of Desire in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*." *Biography* 31.1: 27-58.

6. Reading Week

7. Jesmyn Ward *Salvage the Bones* (2014); *Trouble the Water*, Dir. Lessin & Deal (2009)

Compulsory Reading:

Henry A. Giroux "Reading Hurricane Katrina: Race, Class, and the Biopolitics of Disposability". *College Literature*, 33.3, Summer 2006, pp. 171-196

[Handout with extracts from Edwards, Giroux, Moynihan and Ward](#)

Companion Texts:

On race and human rights:

Paul Gilroy, "Race and the Right to be Human", Inaugural lecture delivered on December 3, 2009 on the occasion of accepting the Treaty of Utrecht Chair at Utrecht University, pdf <https://www.uu.nl/file/25347/download?token=5wgZe-IV>

On Biopower and Biopolitics:

Introduction to Michel Foucault's Political thought at *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (scholarly resource): <https://www.iep.utm.edu/fouc-pol/>

Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose, "Thoughts on the Concept of Biopower Today," paper given at LSE (2003). <http://www.lse.ac.uk/sociology/pdf/RabinowandRose-BiopowerToday03.pdf>

On Precarity:

"Precarity Talk: A Virtual Roundtable with Lauren Berlant, Judith Butler, Bojana Cvejić, Isabell Lorey, Jasbir Puar, and Ana Vujanović," *TDR*, Winter 2012, Vol. 56, No. 4 (T216), Pages 163-177. (pdf online).

Judith Butler (interview video + transcript), "Demonstrating Precarity: Vulnerability, Embodiment, and Resistance", *Los Angeles Review of Books*, March 23, 2015 <https://lareviewofbooks.org/av/demonstrating-precariety-vulnerability-embodiment-resistance/>

Judith Butler, *[Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence](#)* (London: Verso, 2004).

Harlan Weaver, "Pit Bull Promises: Inhuman Intimacies and Queer Kinships in an Animal Shelter," *GLQ A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 21:2-3 (2015): 343-363

On Salvage the Bones:

Erica R Edwards, "Sex after the Black Normal" *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 26.1 (2015) pp. 141-167

Anna Hartnell, "When Cars Become Churches (interview with Ward)", *Journal of American Studies* 50.1 (2016): 205-218.

Sinéad Moynihan, "From Disposability to Recycling: William Faulkner and the New Politics of Rewriting in Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the Bones*." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 47 no. 4, (2015)

8. Alice Oswald *Dart* (2002) and Rita Wong *Undercurrent* (2015) [SELECT POEMS HERE \(PDF\)](#)

Compulsory Reading:

Intro to Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* Harvard UP, 2011. https://www4.uwm.edu/c21/pdfs/events/nixon_slowviolence_intro.pdf

Explore the Environmental Justice Atlas online <https://ejatlas.org/> and think about how this relates to weeks 7 and 8 reading.

[Handout with extracts from Swyngedouw, Yaeger, Nixon](#)

Companion Texts:

Thinking With Water, eds. Chen, MacLeod, Neimas (Montreal: McGill UP, 2013)

Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2004)

Peter Howarth, "'Water's Soliloquy': Soundscape and Environment in Alice Oswald's *Dart*", in Neal Alexander and David Cooper (eds), *Poetry and Geography: Space and Place in Post-war Poetry* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 190-203.

Ilan Kelman, ['Natural Disasters Do Not Exist \(Natural Hazards Do Not Exist Either\)'](#), Version 3, 9 July 2010 (Version 1: 26 July 2007).

Jamie Linton, *What is Water? The History of a Modern Abstraction* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2010)

Rob Nixon, 'Neoliberalism, Genre, and the "Tragedy of the Commons"', *PMLA* 127:3 (2012), pp. 594-599.

Patricia Yaeger, 'Editor's Column: Sea Trash, Dark Pools, and the Tragedy of the Commons', *PMLA* 125:3 (2010), pp. 523-544.

Extra Material:

- [Documentary on water contamination in Flint, Michigan](#)

9. Margaret Atwood *Oryx & Crake* (2009)

Compulsory Reading:

Francesca Ferrando, "Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms: Differences and Relations," *Existenz* 8/2 (2013), 26-32 [pdf here](#)

[HANDOUT](#)

[Extra Lecture Notes](#)

Companion Texts:

On Anthropocentrism/Anthropocene:

A useful starting guide is here at *Oxford*

Bibliographies: <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199830060/obo-9780199830060-0073.xml>

and here John A. Matthews, "Anthropocene", *Encyclopedia of Environmental Change* (Sage, 2014)

On Transhumanism/Posthumanism:

Cary Wolfe, "Introduction", *What is Posthumanism?* (Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

Oryx and Crake:

Melissa Roddis, "Someone Else's Utopia," *Writing Technologies* 5 (2013): 19-35
https://www4.ntu.ac.uk/writing_technologies/current_journal/156917.pdf

Sam McBean, "What Stories Make Worlds, What Worlds Make Stories: Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*", *The SAGE Handbook of Feminist Theory*

Gerry Canavan, "Hope, But Not for Us: Ecological Science Fiction and the End of the World in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*," *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory* (April 2012): 138-159

10. Series 3 of *Black Mirror*

Compulsory Reading:

Derek Attridge, "Against Allegory: *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Michael K*, and the Question of Literary Reading." *J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*, ed. Jane Poyner. 2006. p. 63-82. [pdf here](#)

Companion Texts:

[Handout on affective labour/neoliberalism](#)

[Handout with questions for when watching *Black Mirror*](#)

<http://www.transhumanisme.nl/oud/Is%20Transhumanism%20the%20Worlds%20Most%20Dangerous%20Idea.pdf>

Guides to New Media and Digital Culture:

Critical Digital Studies 2nd Edition. Eds. Arthur Kroker and Marielouise Kroker. University of Toronto Press, 2013.

The New Media Reader. Eds. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort. MIT Press, 2003.

New Media Old Media: A History and Theory Reader. Eds. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Kennan. Routledge, 2006.

[For writing on writing on TV see additional canvas pages](#)

11. Revision Week

Lecture Slides

Sample Essay on Neoliberalism

Sample Essay on Autographics

