



**UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**53880 ENGLISH STUDIES**

**318**

**COURSE PROSPECTUS  
2020**

**COURSE COORDINATOR:**

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# THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

## VISION

In our teaching and research, we ask how – and *why* – modes of reading, representation and textuality mean differently, in different times and locales, to different constituencies.

## MISSION

We envisage the discipline as a series of transformative encounters between worlds and texts, a process of reading, thinking, debate and writing which is well-placed to contribute not only to our students' critical and creative knowledge of 'English' as a discipline, but also to the possibilities for change in Stellenbosch, a site still marked by racial and economic disparity. If novels by Chimamanda Adichie and Abdulrazak Gurnah, poetry from the Caribbean, and articles by Njabulo S. Ndebele can prompt revised recognitions of racial, cultural and gendered identities, so too can fiction by Olive Schreiner or poetry by Walt Whitman open us to challenging points of view about the relation between identity and inherited ideas, postcolonial theory and the politics of the local. Our research areas (among them queer theory, critical nature studies, diaspora studies, life writing, visual activism, the Neo-Victorian and contemporary poetry) contribute to our diverse ability to position 'English' as a space of literatures, languages and cultural studies which engages a deliberately wide range of thought, expression and agency. We aim to equip our graduates with conceptual and expressive proficiencies which are central to careers in media, education, NGOs, law, and the public service. Simultaneously, we recognize that capacities of coherent thought and articulation can play an important role in democracy and transformation.

In the English Department, we encourage a collegial, inclusive research community in which all participants (staff, postgraduates and undergrads, fellows, professors extraordinaire and emeriti) are prompted to produce original and innovative scholarship. To this end, there is a programme of regular events in the department, among them research seminars featuring regional and international speakers; workshops on research methods, proposal writing, and creative writing, and active reading and writing groups. Such platforms complement the department's SLiPnet online journalism initiative (<http://slipnet.co.za/>) and build on the legacy of the InSync poetry project, enabling us to create a teaching and learning environment in which the pleasures and challenges of 'English' as 'englishes' can be publicly performed and debated, in Stellenbosch and beyond.

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# ENGLISH STUDIES 318

## 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

The English 318 lectures introduce students to English literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Detailed descriptions of the 90-minute elective seminars from which students must choose are available on pages 7-10 in this prospectus. **Early registration for the seminar of your choice is crucial to secure a place.**

English Studies in the third year is **semesterised**: you may take both English 318 (in the first semester) and English 348 (in the second semester), or you may choose to take either 318 or 348. English 318 is not a prerequisite for taking English 348. Note that the courses are not repeated: 318 is only offered in the first semester and 348 only in the second semester. Students majoring in English normally take 318 and 348. Students intending to proceed to English Honours *must* complete both 318 and 348.

Studying the Humanities requires students to challenge their knowledge parameters. During the course of lectures or electives, you may experience potentially contentious material, the function of which is not to shock but to encourage you to think critically. When you register for English Studies, the Department assumes that you are aware you may encounter such material and that you will engage with it in a thoughtful and adult manner. It goes without saying that students are expected to read all the networks for the course. Essays and tests must demonstrate your thorough grasp of and engagement with the texts and the relevant course content. Study guides such as *SparkNotes* will not equip you to meet the course requirements. Finally, we suggest that you begin reading for each term during the holidays.

### 1.1. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students may enrol for one or more 318 seminars as long as the student remains within the credit limitation for his/her semester registration. Please see course descriptions on pages 7-10 in this prospectus. All the seminars are worth 8 South African / 4 ECTS / 2 USA credits. **Please note** that all the courses listed below form part of the full English 318 semester course which is worth 24 South African credits.

If you **register for an elective seminar only**, your course credit value remains 8 South African credits and you do not attend the 318 lectures, read the prescribed texts for the lecture courses or write the tests based on the lectures at the end of each term. Students are required to **sign up for the seminar** of their choice by sending an **email** to Mrs Johanita Passerini at [johanitap@sun.ac.za](mailto:johanitap@sun.ac.za) **before 12h00 on 6 February 2020**. It is crucial to ensure that the elective course is listed on your final course registration form which is to be handed in to the Postgraduate and International Office on the stipulated date.

Only students who have applied for the **24-credit English 318 course** by the *mainstream application deadline* and who have obtained pre-approval confirmation may register for the full semester course. No late applications for mainstream course requests will be considered. Students who register for the full 24-credit English 318 course should **attend all four weekly lectures, write the four set test questions** based on the lecture content and choose **one seminar**. When handing in your final course registration form to the Postgraduate and International Office on the stipulated date, do not list the elective you have chosen for the full semester course on your course registration form. Students enrolled for the full semester course are also required to **sign up for the seminar** of their choice by sending an email to Mrs Passerini at [johanitap@sun.ac.za](mailto:johanitap@sun.ac.za) **by the stipulated deadline**.

Please contact your coordinator at the Postgraduate and International Office if you have any questions about the information above. Should you have questions about English 318 or 348 course content, please contact the course coordinator Dr Dawid de Villiers at [dawiddv@sun.ac.za](mailto:dawiddv@sun.ac.za).

## **2. COURSE STRUCTURE & CONTENT**

You have **six** periods per week, **four fifty-minute lectures** and **one double-period elective seminar** class in a small group, usually of about 18 students.

### **2.1 LECTURES**

See page 5 for a detailed schedule of lectures for each term. Students are expected to attend all lectures, to read all the prescribed texts and any other material the lecturer makes available. If, because of clashes with lectures from other courses, you cannot attend some lectures you must consult with the course co-ordinator before enrolling in the course. Lecturers are not obliged to upload PowerPoint slides or similar lecture notes to SUNLearn – so it is in your best interests to attend lectures, in order to master the specific approach to the material.

### **LECTURE TIMES & VENUES**

#### **Semester 1: 318**

Monday	15h00 – 15h50	Old Main Building 1023
Tuesday	9h00 – 9h50	Wilcocks 1012
Wednesday	11h00 – 11h50	Wilcocks 1012
Friday	12h00 – 12h50	Wilcocks 1012

### **LECTURE SERIES**

The following materials are prescribed for the course. Purchase the books and read them well in advance.

#### **TERM 1: ROMANTICS & REALISTS**

This component begins by examining Romantic poetry's fundamental reconsideration of the relation between subject and world, and proceeds to focus on the nineteenth-century realist novel's related exploration of self in/and society in its experimentation with narrative point of view and form.

The Romantic Poets (readings provided)

Austen, J. *Mansfield Park*, Norton, 2007

Brontë, C. *Jane Eyre*, Norton, 2000.

#### **TERM 2: MODERNIST CONDITIONS**

This component introduces students to twentieth-century literature. It shows how discontinuity and displacement at the level of culture and subject resulted in formal experimentation across the vectors of race, class and gender.

Conrad, J. *Heart of Darkness*, Penguin, 1994.

Black Modernisms (readings provided)

Woolf, V. *To the Lighthouse*, Penguin, 2019.

Eliot, T.S. *The Waste Land* (readings provided)

Theories of the Real (readings provided)

**Attend all FOUR weekly lectures**

## 2.2. LECTURE SCHEDULE: 2020

### SEMESTER 1: ENGLISH STUDIES 318

**Students must attend all FOUR weekly lectures**

TERM 1: 3 February – 20 March			
Mon 15:00	Tue 09:00	Wed 11:00	Fri 12:00
<b>3 February</b> Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	<b>4 February</b> Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	<b>5 February</b> Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	<b>7 February</b> Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)
<b>10 February</b> Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	<b>10 February</b> Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	<b>12 February</b> Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	<b>14 February</b> Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)
<b>17 February</b> <i>Mansfield Park</i> (J Ellis)	<b>18 February</b> <i>Mansfield Park</i> (J Ellis)	<b>19 February</b> <i>Mansfield Park</i> (J Ellis)	<b>21 February</b> <i>Mansfield Park</i> (J Ellis)
<b>24 February</b> <i>Mansfield Park</i> (J Ellis)	<b>25 February</b> <i>Mansfield Park</i> (J Ellis)	<b>26 February</b> <i>Mansfield Park</i> (J Ellis)	<b>28 February</b> <i>Mansfield Park</i> (J Ellis)
<b>2 March</b> <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	<b>3 March</b> <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	<b>4 March</b> <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	<b>6 March</b> <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)
<b>9 March</b> <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis s)	<b>10 March</b> <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	<b>11 March</b> <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	<b>13 March</b> <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)
<b>16 March</b> <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	<b>17 March</b> <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	<b>18 March</b> <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	<b>20 March</b> <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)
RECESS: 21-29 March			
TERM 2: 30 March – 15 May			
Mon 15:00	Tue 09:00	Wed 11:00	Fri 12:00
<b>30 March</b> <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	<b>31 March</b> <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	<b>1 April</b> Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	<b>3 April</b> Black Modernisms (W Mbao)
<b>6 April</b> Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	<b>7 April</b> Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	<b>8 April</b> Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	<b>10 April</b> <b>Public Holiday</b>
<b>13 April</b> <b>Public Holiday</b>	<b>14 April</b> Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	<b>15 April</b> <i>The Waste Land</i> (D de Villiers)	<b>17 April</b> <i>The Waste Land</i> (D de Villiers)
<b>20 April</b> <i>The Waste Land</i> (D de Villiers)	<b>21 April</b> <i>The Waste Land</i> (D de Villiers)	<b>22 April</b> <i>The Waste Land</i> (D de Villiers)	<b>24 April</b> <i>To the Lighthouse</i> (M Jones)
<b>27 April</b> <b>Public Holiday</b>	<b>28 April (Mon. timetable)</b> <i>To the Lighthouse</i> (M Jones)	<b>29 April</b> <i>To the Lighthouse</i> (M Jones)	<b>1 May</b> <b>Public Holiday</b>
<b>4 May</b> <i>To the Lighthouse</i> (M Jones)	<b>5 May</b> <i>To the Lighthouse</i> (M Jones)	<b>6 May</b> Theories of the Real (L Green)	<b>8 May</b> Theories of the Real (L Green)
<b>11 May</b> Theories of the Real (L Green)	<b>12 May</b> Theories of the Real (L Green)	<b>13 May</b> Theories of the Real (L Green)	<b>15 May</b> Theories of the Real (L Green)

## 2.3 ELECTIVE SEMINARS

Third-year elective seminars offer students a wide range of options from which to choose (see the course descriptions on pages 7-10 in this prospectus.) You are required to attend **one double-period seminar every week**. Seminar classes form part of the process of flexible assessment; **seminar attendance is compulsory** as is submission of written work. If you fail to register for and attend a seminar, it is impossible to assign you a final mark for E318. Electives are based on class discussion and interaction, so you need to have done the preparatory reading. Class participation contributes to your seminar mark.

### SEMINAR ENROLMENT

The 318 timetable will be posted on **SUNLearn**, where you should enrol for the timetable slot of your choice. Please consult the elective seminar timetable below and carefully read the elective descriptions before making your choice. The number of students per elective seminar is usually limited to 18. If the class is already full, you will have to choose another elective, so it will be in your interest to sign up early to secure a place in the seminar of your choice. **Students who are repeating English 318 will not be allowed to enrol for a seminar they attended in a previous semester/year.** Should fewer than 10 students enrol for an elective, that elective may have to be cancelled. Class lists will be posted on the third-year notice board on the second floor of the Arts and Social Sciences Building.

**Enrolment for the first-semester elective seminars OPENS on SUNLearn on 28 January 2020 and CLOSES on 6 February 2020. Seminars commence in the third week of the first term.**

**Please note:** You are not allowed to change your seminar group without permission. If a genuine timetable clash should occur, contact the department's administrative officer ([johanitap@sun.ac.za](mailto:johanitap@sun.ac.za)) or the course co-ordinator immediately, so that you might be assigned an alternative group.

### 2.4 FIRST-SEMESTER (318) ELECTIVE TIMETABLE

318	Lecturer	Elective Seminar	Time
1	Louise Green	Keeping it Real: Interrogating the Promise of Objectivity	Mon 10:00 & 11:00
2	Tilla Slabbert	Auto/biographical Fiction: Damon Galgut	Mon 11:00 & 12:00
3	Nadia Sanger	Enslavement Then, Now and in the Future	Tues 10:00 & 11:00
4	Megan Jones	Complicating the “I”: Autobiography and Self-Construction	Tues 10:00 & 11:00
5	Lauren van der Rede	The Quotidian During Times of Terror in Ethiopia	Tues 11:00 & 12:00
6	Tina Steiner	From Kabul to Tel Aviv, via Lahore: Contemporary Narratives of Conflict	Tues 14:00 & 15:00
7	Wamuwi Mbao	Rhizome and Radicant: Reading Cities in Flux	Wed 09:00 & 10:00
8	Dawid de Villiers	Visions of the Real: Four American Modernist Poets	Wed 09:00 & 10:00
9	Daniel Roux	On the Subject of Chaucer	Wed 14:00 & 15:00
10	Nwabisa Bangeni	Literary Responses: Implicating the Self	Thurs 14:00 & 15:00
11	Riaan Oppelt	Theatre of the Absurd	Thurs 14:00 & 15:00
12	Jeanne Ellis	Deep Reading for Writing/About/Poetry	Thurs 14:00 & 15:00

## 2.5 ENGLISH 318 ELECTIVE SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

### KEEPING IT REAL: INTERROGATING THE PROMISE OF OBJECTIVITY

**Louise Green**

“There can be no evidence, photographic or otherwise, of an event until the event itself has been named and characterized” (Susan Sontag, *On Photography*).

How is it possible to represent the real – the complex social, political and material world – accurately? What makes a story, a film or a newspaper report seem realistic?

Since the nineteenth century this has been an increasingly central question for both written and visual forms of representation. This course will look at selected essays which address the question of representing the real by theorists and writers from both the nineteenth and twentieth century. It will explore the critical role played by the invention of photography on ways of thinking about realist representation. Drawing on examples from a selection of genres, fiction, short stories, newspaper reports and reality television, it will discuss the different claims to objectivity and realism made in different contexts. Focusing on a close analysis of texts making these claims, it will look at the strategies they employ to create a ‘reality effect’, a plausible, convincing story which we are happy to accept as the truth.

Readings will be supplied.

### AUTO/BIOGRAPHICAL FICTION: DAMON GALGUT

**Tilla Slabbert**

In this elective we explore questions of genre, form, authorship and the representation of outsider identities in two of Damon Galgut’s narratives. *In A Strange Room: Three Journeys* is a work of autobiographical fiction consisting of three essays in epistolary form and *Arctic Summer* is biographical fiction focused on a period in English author E.M. Forster’s life, titled after Forster’s unfinished novel. Since *Arctic Summer* largely concerns the eleven years of Forster’s life that saw the making of his novel *A Passage to India*, we conduct a contrapuntal reading of these two narratives to consider how both authors employ the motif of the journey to address issues of private and public conflict, creativity, gender and sexuality, and the politics of friendship.

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

Galgut, Damon. *In A Strange Room: Three Journeys*, 2010.

Galgut, Damon. *Arctic Summer*, 2015.

### ENSLAVEMENT THEN, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE: SLAVERY IN THE SPECULATIVE FICTION OF NNEDI OKORAFOR AND OCTAVIA BUTLER

**Nadia Sanger**

Nnedi Okorafor’s work is enriched by the legacy of political speculative fiction written by Octavia E. Butler, one of the first African-American women known to author science fiction. Zambian writer, Milumbe Haimbe and Nigerian author, Temitayo Olofinlua follow in this trajectory, asking the reader to consider what slavery might look like in the future.

All these authors work with ideas of time and place to engage issues of power and enslavement. This course looks at their texts in order to think about questions of enslavement: what is a slave? Why is slavery possible? What forms can enslavement take? What does slavery look like in our contemporary space and time?

This course is exploratory, and conversations and writing exercises should be understood as opportunities for students to think about how they locate themselves within the various current spaces they inhabit, where enslavement continues to exist in multiple forms.

Butler, Octavia E. *Kindred*, Beacon Press, 1979.

Haimbe, Milumbe. *The Revolutionist*, online at <http://www.milumbehaimbe.com/therevolutionist.htm>

Okorafor, Nnedi. *Who Fears Death?*, DAW Books, 2010.

Olofinlua, Temitayo. “Metal Feet.” *Lagos 2060*, ed. Ayodele Arigbabu, DADA Books, 2013, 395-412.

[Note: Olofinlua’s short story will be provided]

## **COMPLICATING THE ‘I’: AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND SELF-CONSTRUCTION**

**Megan Jones**

In this elective we will explore writing the ‘Self’ and its relation to theories of modernism, feminism and poststructuralism. We will work through some of the central tensions inhering in the genre of autobiography; its positioning in the liberal humanist canon, its status as ‘fiction’ and its contemporary diversification. Drawing on the ideas of thinkers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau, Virginia Woolf and Jacques Derrida, we will ask how texts speak to their particular socio-historical moments in their attempts to construct or deconstruct the ‘Self’. How does autobiography interrogate vectors of gender, sexuality, race, class and nation? How might these literatures prompt us, as readers and scholars, to rethink the parameters of our own subjectivities?

Joyce, J. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Penguin, 2000.

Angelou, M. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Ballantine, 2009.

Coetzee, J.M. *Summertime*, Penguin, 2010.

## **THE QUOTIDIAN DURING TIMES OF TERROR IN ETHIOPIA**

**Lauren van der Rede**

Terror has occupied the popular imagination and demanded our attention globally at various points in time. Although there is no universally accepted definition, terror should be understood as the condition of being held hostage through fear. Following the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974, the military junta known as the Derg seized power in Ethiopia, and began a campaign of repression that would rupture into what is called the Ethiopian Red Terror. During this time Ethiopians lived in fear of being labelled “anti-revolutionary” and consequently being made direct victims of the Derg’s many techniques of terror. However, as the literary-cultural texts we will read make clear, even during times of terror there is never *only* fear. Our discussions of Maaza Mengiste’s *Beneath the Lion’s Gaze* will consider how in spite of terror and the threat of extreme violence people continue to live, love and create, and why it is important to mark this resilience. We will also consider how a selection of Hama Tuma’s poetry and his short story “Ten on the Terror Scale” stages the Ethiopian Red Terror as being in and out of time and place, as both specific to Ethiopia and yet not unique to it, by having it brush up against other regional contexts and conflicts.

Mengiste, M. *Beneath the Lion’s Gaze*, reprint edition, Norton, 2011.

Tuma, H. “Ten on the Terror Scale.” *The Case of the Socialist Witch Doctor and Other Stories*, Heinemann, 1993.

Tuma, H. Selected poems, available online at: <https://www.lyrikline.org/en/poems/what-it-8076>.

## **FROM KABUL TO TEL AVIV, VIA LAHORE: CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES OF CONFLICT**

**Tina Steiner**

In this seminar we will read three novels from a growing field of contemporary literature written in English which has in recent years become more visible. Reacting against popular media portrayals of the Middle East (and Pakistan), these talented writers create narratives that engage with particular conflicts, past and present, within regional and national geographies but also with an acute awareness of global connections in a post 9/11 world. We will be asking ourselves how these writings inflect and comment on debates about political, ethnic and religious affiliations and what they say about trans/international trajectories. We will ‘travel’ from Afghanistan (Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*), to Pakistan (Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*) and to Israel (Khadra’s *The Attack*). Students who take this elective will also be expected to watch *In This World* (2003, dir. Michael Winterbottom) and *Paradise Now* (dir. Abu-Hassad).

Hosseini, K. *The Kite Runner*, Bloomsbury, 2004.

Hamid, M. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Penguin, 2007.

Khadra, Y. *The Attack*, Vintage, 2007.

## **RHIZOME AND RADICANT: READING CITIES IN FLUX**

**Wamuwi Mbao**

Taking as its starting point the notion that writing is “a question of freeing life wherever it is imprisoned, or of tempting it into an uncertain combat” (Deleuze & Guattari 171), this elective engages with ways of seeing and reading the urban world that challenge the solidity of objects and their fixing in the global

cultural economies that populate our lives. How can we usefully extend our understanding of a culture in perpetual motion? We will read two novels that play around with form and structure in their attempt to make sense of how we experience the city.

Whitehead, Colson. *The Colossus of New York*. Fleet, 2018.

Gevisser, Mark. *Lost and Found in Johannesburg*, Jonathan Ball, 2014.

#### **VISIONS OF THE REAL: FOUR AMERICAN MODERNIST POETS**

**Dawid de Villiers**

In the period between the two world wars—a period marked by a significant shift in the way the Western world viewed itself and its destiny, as well as its relation to tradition—a number of remarkable and influential poets emerged in America. This course aims to provide an introduction to the work of four highly original poets, namely Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore and Williams Carlos Williams, and to consider how they viewed their relation to the American canon as well as the Western literary tradition. More specifically, our discussion and analysis of their poems will take account of the ways in which they rethink, explore and express the relationship between individual creative imagination and (historical) reality in an attempt to work out some sense of the human's place in a universe that in the eyes of many had begun to seem devoid of all reason and purpose.

The reading material for this course will be made available in the form of poetry hand-outs.

#### **ON THE SUBJECT OF CHAUCER**

**Daniel Roux**

Ideas about what it means, exactly, to be a “self” are transmitted from person to person, so they literally move across geographic space and through time, flowing and changing like water. Somewhere in the 13th century, a great many of these rivers, flowing from all corners of the globe, started to converge around the Mediterranean basin and Europe, forming a great new turbulent reservoir. We look at this phenomenon now and call it “the emergence of the humanist subject,” a convenient and somewhat inadequate name to label this confluence of tributaries that swelled in size until it had engrossed most of Europe by the 16th century, and from there almost the whole world. We will use Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* to see how this constellation of ideas around human autonomy and agency emerged in England and modulated the way people understood and experienced what it means to be a “self.” This course is therefore not so much an “introduction to Chaucer” as it is a kind of boat trip through time to a vantage point where we can appreciate the aetiology and scope of a very powerful cultural concept – the humanist subject – that has radically transformed the globe.

Chaucer, G. *The Canterbury Tales*, Norton Critical Edition, 2005.

#### **LITERARY RESPONSES: IMPLICATING THE SELF**

**Nwabisa Bangeni**

This elective draws on reader response and critical reading theories, and explores some of the following concerns:

- the extent to which knowledge is objective or subjective; the question of whether the world as we experience it is culturally constructed; how the gap, historically, culturally and semiotically between the reader and the writer is bridged, and the extent to which it is bridged,
- the question of the extent to which interpretation is a public act, conditioned by the particular material and cultural circumstances of the reader vs. the extent to which reading is a private act governed by a response to the relatively independent codes of the text,
- using stylistic, linguistic and narratological methods, we will explore the manner in which texts govern reader responses and, focusing on the affective responses to texts, we will explore how the reader makes meaning of the text.

Orringer, Julie. *The Invisible Bridge*. Penguin, 2010.

Leila Aboulela. *Lyrics Alley*. Grove Press, 2010.

Taiye Selasi. *Ghana Must Go*. Viking, 2013.

## **THEATRE OF THE ABSURD: AN EXISTENTIAL BRIDGE BETWEEN MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM**

### **Riaan Oppelt**

This course looks at various plays written and performed in the 1950s which formed what theatre critic Martin Esslin called “The Theatre of the Absurd”. Writers like Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter, Eugene Ionesco and Edward Albee emerged in this period with challenging and eccentric works like *Waiting for Godot*, *The Bald Soprano*, *The Maids*, *The Birthday Party* and *The Zoo Story*. These plays broke away from conventional dramatic narrative and presented audiences with out-of-the-ordinary situations, presentations and an exigent sense of style and deliverance. After the 1950s, many of the “Absurdist” gained continued acclaim with other works that, although reflective of certain changes in style and mood, were still generally regarded as stemming from the earlier pieces of the 1950s. Students will read plays primarily from the 1940s and 1950s, as well as Esslin’s renowned survey *The Theatre of the Absurd*, and engage in critical discussions that focus on the similarities between these writers and their works as well as wider speculation on the merits of these works as either modernist or postmodernist texts. Selected critical essays will be made available.

Albee, Edward. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, Pocket Books, 1964.

Beckett, S. *Waiting for Godot*, MacMillan, 1987.

Pinter, H. *Pinter Plays: One*, Methuen, 1978.

#### Recommended reading:

Albee, E. *The Zoo Story and The Sandbox*.

Genet, J. *The Maids*.

Ionesco, E. *The Bald Soprano & Other Plays*.

Ionesco, E. *The Killer and Other Plays*.

## **DEEP READING FOR WRITING /ABOUT/ POETRY**

### **Jeanne Ellis**

In this course, the American poet and essayist Jane Hirshfield’s *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry* (1997) and *Ten Windows: How Great Poems Transform the World* (2015) will guide our study of a selection of poems, ranging from those she discusses to others prompted by her readings. For Hirshfield, “[p]oetry’s work is the clarification and magnification of being”, and, “[e]ach time we enter its word-woven and musical invocations, we give ourselves over to a different mode of knowing: to poetry’s knowing, and to the increase of existence it brings, unlike any other” (*Nine Gates*, vii). Reading and writing /about/ poetry asks of us a particular attentiveness or concentration, “a state of awareness” that is “penetrating, unified, and focussed, yet also permeable and open” (*Nine Gates*, 3). Our aim here will be to practise the attentive or deep reading Hirshfield’s essays demonstrate, and to learn from them ways of writing /about/ poetry. Assessment will be based on two short tasks – the first, a close reading of a poem (20%) and the second, either a comparative close reading of poems or a portfolio of a stipulated number of poems written in response to poetry discussed in the seminars (30%) – and a long essay (50%). Students enrolling in this course must be willing to go on short excursions, for example to the free lunch-time concerts at the Conserve and to the Botanical Garden, during the lunch hour preceding the seminar from time to time.

Hirshfield, Jane. *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry*. Harper Perennial, 1998. (ISBN-13: 978-0060929480)

Hirshfield, Jane. *Ten Windows: How Great Poems Transform the World*. Knopf, 2017. (ISBN-13: 978-0345806840]

Additional poems will be provided.

### **3. ASSESSMENT**

#### **3.1 FLEXIBLE ASSESSMENT**

This Department has adopted the system of flexible assessment (“*buigsame assesserung*”). What does this mean for you?

**All your assessment tasks (formal tests, essays, seminar presentations, etc.) count towards a single final mark** which represents your performance for the course. There are no big, formal examinations: the end-of-semester examination is replaced by a test counting no more than any other test of equal length. It follows that there is no opportunity to cancel out a weak class performance by a better performance in an examination.

The system of flexible assessment encourages your preparation for and active participation in all aspects of the course. As a basic requirement for completing the course you have to ensure that you

- write all the official tests set in the course of the year and
- participate satisfactorily in seminars by doing the reading, attending the classes and submitting all the written tasks by the set deadline.

**Students who fail to meet these requirements will be regarded as not having completed the course and will be registered as “incomplete.”**

Your seminar presenter keeps a record of attendance and you will be excused from class only if you provide a *valid reason* for your absence, with the relevant corroborating documentation. A *valid reason* would be medical incapacity or one of the other compassionate grounds specified by the University regulations (e.g., a death in the close family), as well as any formally arranged absence related to university business (in which case arrangements have to be made in advance).

It is your responsibility to **send an email** explaining your absence to the seminar presenter before the following class, also submitting any relevant supporting documentation, for example the original medical certificate if you have been ill. Repeatedly missing classes without a valid excuse means that you will NOT have fulfilled the course requirements and will be considered “incomplete.”

#### **3.2 CALCULATION OF FINAL SEMESTER MARK**

Your final mark will be calculated according to a basic formula which takes into account work required for your elective seminar as well as test answers. The proportions are as follows:

TESTS: Lecture material tested at official **test** times (based on a mid-semester test and an end-of-semester test). **Note that the final test mark** at the end of each semester is calculated as the **average of all four test questions**. 50%

ELECTIVE SEMINARS: Seminar work amounts to approximately 6000 words. Half of the mark for this seminar component (that is, 25% of the overall module mark) is for a research essay of at least 2000 words. The remainder is for shorter written pieces or other contributions. Your general contribution to elective group discussions may also be factored into this mark. 50%

Final marks will appear on the English 318/348 notice board on the second floor. Please do not telephone or ask the Departmental Officer for them.

**CRUCIAL NOTE: To pass the course, students must pass both the lecture component and the elective seminar component. That is, students must average at least 50% in the two semester tests, and must also average at least 50% for the essay and elective mark, when these marks are combined.** It is therefore vital that students attend all lectures and electives, and read the prescribed texts for each component. If you are not attending lectures AND electives AND reading the set works you will most likely fail the course.

## **4. TESTS**

Notices with dates, times and venues will be available on the notice board and on SUNLearn two weeks prior to tests. You are not allowed to choose between the two test sessions in a module. **The first test session in a module is compulsory for all students. (See 4.2 for exceptions.)**

The Department may set **open-book questions** in tests, which students will be unable to answer unless they have a copy of the relevant text with them. No sharing will be allowed.

### **4.1 TEST DATES**

#### **MARCH/APRIL**

<b>Test</b>	<b>Supplementary</b>
4 April at 14:00	15 April at 17:30

#### **MAY/JUNE**

<b>Test</b>	<b>Supplementary</b>
30 May at 14:00	10 June at 9:00

With the exception of a Dean's Concession Examination for final-year students who qualify for such a test, no further examinations will follow the second test sessions.

### **4.2 MISSED TESTS**

**It is your responsibility to check test times** (see “Test Dates” below) **and venues before a scheduled test.**

The University regulations for test opportunities are not the same as those for examinations. The English Department uses the system of flexible assessment (“*buigsame assessering*”) for all its undergraduate courses, and thus **students must write a test at the first opportunity**. Only in the case of illness (for which the original doctor’s certificate—not a photocopy—must be produced), or on one of the other compassionate grounds specified by the University regulations (e.g., a death in the close family) will the student be allowed to write at the supplementary (“*siektetoets*”) opportunity. The Department will also accommodate students who, according to the official test timetable, have test clashes – *on the same day and at the same time* – with that of another subject, but this must be arranged with the Department well in advance, and proof must be provided.

Under the new University regulations only one other (“supplementary”) test time is provided, and **students who have applied for and have been granted permission** will have to write at that time. It is the responsibility of students who miss the first test date to report as soon as possible after their return to the campus to the Administrative Officer (Mrs Passerini, Room 581), in order to register for the supplementary test date. **You will only be allowed to write the supplementary test if your name appears on the list of students registered for the test**—all other students will be denied access to the test venue. **No further opportunities to write will be provided.**

### **4.3 TEST MARKS**

In exceptional cases, where a student is convinced that a test answer has been seriously underrated, s/he must follow the procedure of appeal.

**ALL appeals regarding ANY test MUST be made to the course coordinator by email within two weeks of the general test results having been announced.**

The appeal procedure is as follows: The student should send an email to the course coordinator requesting that the test script be re-examined. S/he will decide whether the appeal is warranted. If it is, s/he will check the script in consultation with the marker and, if necessary, assign a second marker

(another member of staff) to re-evaluate the script. The student will be notified of the outcome by the course coordinator once the process has been completed.

Students should appeal only when they are convinced that they have a legitimate case for re-evaluation. The test script must have received a mark that is at least 10% less than the student's seminar average.

Please note: Students, and not parents, should initiate this process.

## 5. ESSAYS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The submission of all essays and assignments by the set deadlines is a basic course requirement. All work must be handed in on the due date; late submissions will be penalised. If you have been absent from class it is your responsibility to check in with your lecturer regarding written work that may be due. **Students who fail to submit ALL of the required work will be regarded as 'incomplete', which in effect means they cannot pass the course. No outstanding work will be accepted on or after the date on which the end-of-semester test is written.**

**ALL appeals regarding an essay mark MUST be made to the course presenter/lecturer by email within two weeks of the said mark having been announced.**

### 5.1 SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Students must take responsibility for the proper submission of their work. This includes keeping a copy of any written work they submit. Unless otherwise stated, work must be *handed directly to the lecturer* in the seminar class on the due date. A signed and dated copy of the Department's declaration on plagiarism must accompany your submission. You should also submit your work to Turnitin. **Dual submission** (hard copy and Turnitin or email and Turnitin) **is always necessary** to ensure that work does not go astray. Late submissions should be arranged with the relevant tutor.

### 5.2 LATE SUBMISSIONS

If you have a valid reason for being unable to submit the work by the deadline, it is your responsibility to notify your tutor via email before the work is due, and to provide the relevant corroborating document, e.g. the original copy of the medical certificate if you have been ill. If you have no valid excuse, expect a **late penalty** of 5% of the mark per day. NB: Late submissions have to be genuine and worthwhile attempts at the topic.

Even if an assignment or essay is so late that it will earn 0%, it must be handed in, since if you fail to hand in all of your assignments and essays, you will be regarded as "Incomplete" and **you will fail the course. You are not allowed to submit any late work on or after the date of the end-of-semester test.**

### 5.3 PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism refers to any attempt by a student to pass off someone else's work as his or her own; it may for example be the work of a fellow student, a friend or relative, or a critic whose work you have found in the library or on the internet. **At all times distinguish between the ideas of those whose work you have read and your own comments based on their ideas.** The safest, the fairest, way to acknowledge your indebtedness is to use established conventions of documentation and referencing such as the MLA Style. Please consult the "Guide to Writing Essays" (available on the Department's website) in order to check how to reference properly in MLA style.

Plagiarism includes the use of notes or critical material (from the internet or elsewhere) that is **memorised and repeated (often with minor changes to the wording) in test answers**, without any attempt to acknowledge indebtedness to the source. Depending on the extent and seriousness of the

offence, such answers will fail, and are likely to receive a mark of 0%. The procedures prescribed by the university for cases of plagiarism will be followed.

Plagiarism is a most serious academic offence, which negates everything we try to encourage in our students in this department. Please familiarise yourself with the Faculty policy on plagiarism; if you remain unsure of what is meant by “plagiarism,” consult your seminar leader. A signed and dated copy of the Department’s declaration on plagiarism (see SUNLearn) must accompany all formal written work you submit.

**Any attempt to represent someone else’s work as your own will be regarded as a most serious offence and (depending on the severity of the offence) may result in your exclusion from the course and from the university.**

## 6. POSTGRADUATE COURSES

The English Department offers a stimulating and challenging Honours programme. Our graduates find that the training provides them with a good grounding for their future professions or further graduate studies in literary and/or cultural studies, as well as offering an opportunity for personal growth. As part of the Honours package, we also aim to offer professional, skills-based workshops in areas such as web design and writing for the web, and short filmmaking.

The official mark for admission to the Honours programme is 65% for English 318 and English 348 combined. Students are invited to submit their applications early in the second semester, and can address any queries to the Honours Co-ordinator, Dr Nadia Sanger ([nsanger@sun.ac.za](mailto:nsanger@sun.ac.za)).

The Postgraduate Prospectus for next year will be available during the course of the last term, but this year’s prospectus will give you a good indication of what is on offer.

## 7. BURSARIES

There are various bursaries available for continued study in the English Department. Consult *Calendar 2020, Part 2*. For further inquiries contact Ms F Niemann at the University Administration (tel 808 4627; email [fn@sun.ac.za](mailto:fn@sun.ac.za)).

The Babette Tautz bursaries offer generous amounts for fees etc., as well as book grants for buying networks for students going into their third year. Also note the Winnifred Wilson bursary.

### **VAN SCHAIK’S ANNUAL BOOK PRIZES**

Three prizes are awarded each year to the student who achieves the highest overall marks for the year (only students who have completed both semesters of English at level two, and the same at level three, will be eligible for the prize):

English 178: R1000

English 221/244: R1000

English 318/348: R1000

## **8. STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT**

The departmental telephone number is 808 2040 (Departmental Secretary) and each member of staff can be dialled directly at his/her own number. Please note that some staff members are on leave in 2020.

### **ACADEMIC STAFF**

	<b>e-mail</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Room</b>
Bangeni, NJ (Dr)	njban	2399	585
De Villiers, DW (Dr)	dawiddv	2043	583
Ellis, J (Dr)	jellis	2227	588
Green, L (Prof)	lagreen	3102	564
Jones, M. (Dr)	meganj	2048	572
Mbao, W (Dr)	wmbao	2054	577
Murray, S (Prof)	samurray	2044	573
Oppelt, RN (Dr)	roppelt	2049	580
Phalafala, U (Dr)	uphalafala	2042	582 (on leave)
Roux, D (Dr)	droux	2053	570
Sanger, N (Dr)	nsanger	2041	576
Slabbert, M (Dr)	mslabbert	3652	578
Steiner, T (Prof)	tsteiner	3653	566
Van der Rede, L (Dr)	lvdr	2046	586
Viljoen, SC (Prof)	scv	2061	575 (on leave)

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Mrs Colette Knoetze (Senior Departmental Officer)	colettek	2040	574
Mrs Johanita Passerini (Administrative Officer)	johanitap	2051	581

### **PROFESSORS EMERITUS/EMERITA**

Prof AH Gagiano	ahg	2605	562
Prof L de Kock	leondk		

### **PROFESSORS AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS EXTRAORDINAIRE**

Prof Gabeba Baderoon (Pennsylvania State University)  
 Prof Chielo Eze (Northeastern Illinois University)  
 Prof Patrick Flanery (Queen Mary University of London)  
 Prof Evan Mwangi (Northwestern University, Illinois)  
 Prof Stephanie Newell (Yale University)  
 Dr Meg Samuelson (University of Adelaide)

### **RESEARCH ASSOCIATES**

Dr Tyrone August (Independent scholar)  
 Dr Denise DeCaires Narain (University of Sussex)  
 Dr Danson Kahyana (Makerere University)  
 Dr Serah Kasembeli (Independent scholar)  
 Dr Eve Nabulya (Makerere University)  
 Dr Emmanuel Ngwira (University of Malawi)  
 Prof Maria Olaussen (University of Gothenburg)  
 Dr Fernando Rosa Ribeiro (Independent scholar)  
 Dr Matthew Shum (Independent scholar)  
 Dr Godwin Siundu (University of Nairobi)  
 Dr Marciana Were (Mboya University College, Kenya)