



Stellenbosch

**UNIVERSITY
IYUNIVESITHI
UNIVERSITEIT**

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

53880 ENGLISH STUDIES

318

COURSE PROSPECTUS

2024

**COURSE
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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 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 InZync 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 7-11 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 setworks 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 7-11 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 **before 12h00 on 3 February 2024**. 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 **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 Lauren van der Rede at lvdr@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	Krotoa 3001
Tuesday	09h00 – 09h50	Krotoa 1012
Wednesday	11h00 – 11h50	Krotoa 1012
Friday	12h00 – 12h50	Krotoa 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)

Attend all FOUR weekly lectures.

2.2. LECTURE SCHEDULE: 2024

SEMESTER 1: ENGLISH STUDIES 318

Students must attend all **FOUR** weekly lectures.

TERM 1: 12 February – 28 March 2024			
Mon 15:00	Tue 09:00	Wed 11:00	Fri 12:00
12 February Introduction U Phalafala	13 February Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	14 February Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	16 February Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)
19 February Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	20 February Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	21 February Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	23 February Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)
26 February Romantic Poetry (D de Villiers)	27 February <i>Mansfield Park</i> (D Roux)	28 February <i>Mansfield Park</i> (D Roux)	01 March <i>Mansfield Park</i> (D Roux)
04 March <i>Mansfield Park</i> (D Roux)	05 March <i>Mansfield Park</i> (D Roux)	06 March <i>Mansfield Park</i> (D Roux)	08 March <i>Mansfield Park</i> (D Roux)
11 March <i>Mansfield Park</i> (D Roux)	12 March <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	13 March <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	15 March <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)
18 March <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	19 March <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	20 May <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	22 March <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)
25 March <i>Jane Eyre</i> (J Ellis)	26 March Theories of the real (L Green)	27 March Theories of the real (L Green)	29 March Public Holiday
RECESS: 29 March – 07 April 2024			
TERM 2: 08 April – 17 May			
Mon 15:00	Tue 09:00	Wed 11:00	Fri 12:00
08 April Theories of the real (L Green)	09 April Theories of the real (L Green)	10 April Theories of the real (L Green)	12 April Theories of the real (L Green)
15 April Theories of the real (L Green)	16 April Theories of the real (L Green)	17 April <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	19 April <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)
22 April <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	23 April <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	25 April <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	26 April <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)
29 April <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	30 April <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (R Oppelt)	01 MAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY	03 May Black Modernisms (W Mbao)
06 May Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	07 May Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	08 May Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	10 May Black Modernisms (W Mbao)
13 May Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	14 May Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	15 May Black Modernisms (W Mbao)	17 May

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 8-12 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.

As is outlined elsewhere, the seminar component of the course constitutes 50% of the overall grade of the English 318 module. **As such, seminar attendance is compulsory.**

A student may not miss more than 3 seminars, regardless of the reason for the absence, and regardless of documentation verifying the reason for the absence.

A student who misses four seminar classes will be registered 'Incomplete', and will fail the course.

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 may 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 8 February 2024 at 10:00 and CLOSSES on 16 February 2024 at 10:00. Seminars commence in the second 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) 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	Venue
1	Wamuwi Mbao	The South African Historical Novel in the 21 st century	Mon 11:00 & 12:00	Yellow Molteno
2	Tina Steiner	Narratives of Migration	Tues 10:00 & 11:00	Yellow Molteno
3	Louise Green	Keeping it Real: Interrogating the Promise of Objectivity	Tues 10:00 & 11:00	Blue Molteno
4	Uhuru Phalafala	Thinking Through Jazz	Tues 11:00 & 12:00	Room 571
5	Lauren van der Rede	Psychoanalysis, Metaphor and Myth	Tues 14:00 & 15:00	Yellow Molteno
6	Eckard Smuts	Re-Inventing Time in the South African Novel	Tues 14:00 & 15:00	Blue Molteno
7	Sally Ann Murray	Reading for Writing: Short Fiction	Wed 09:00 & 10:00	Yellow Molteno
8	Dawid de Villiers	Visions of the Real: Four American Modernist Poets	Wed 09:00 & 10:00	Blue Molteno
9	Tilla Slabbert	Damon Galgut's (Non)Fiction	Wed 14:00 & 15:00	Yellow Molteno
10	Daniel Roux	On the Subject of Chaucer	Wed 14:00 & 15:00	Blue Molteno
11	Nwabisa Bangeni	Literary Responses: Implicating the Self	Wed 14:00 & 15:00	Room 571
12	Riaan Oppelt	Theatre of the Absurd	Thurs 14:00 & 15:00	Yellow Molteno
13	Jeanne Ellis	Zadie Smith's <i>The Fraud</i> (2023): Writing About the Nineteenth Century	Thurs 14:00 & 15:00	Old Main 2027

2.5 ENGLISH 318 ELECTIVE SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

THE SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORICAL NOVEL IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Wamuwi Mba

Historical fiction has become a popular contemporary genre of fiction. But does it illuminate or distort our understanding of history? This course reads two recent South African historical novels to think through how they approach the question of storytelling. We will pay attention to some of the questions that accrue to historical novels, such as whether their “success” is determined by how closely we perceive the author to have conformed to “the facts”, or whether all history is fiction (in the sense of being an agreed-upon narrative), and what the potential benefits of historical fiction might be.

Students will be required to submit one short assignment (25% of the seminar mark) and a research blog (25% of the seminar mark), and one longer semester essay (50% of the seminar mark)

Texts:

Marguerite Poland: *A Sin of Omission*. Penguin Random House: 2019.

Fred Khumalo: *Dancing the Death Drill*. Penguin Random House: 2017.

NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION

Tina Steiner

Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers depend on the stories they tell in order to make sense of their fragmented lives and disorienting journeys. In this seminar we will explore contemporary migration narratives by the Sudanese authors Leila Aboulela and Jamal Mahjoub and the Zanzibar-born author Abdulrazak Gurnah. In looking at particular travellers and their itineraries we will gain a better understanding of migration as a common condition of the postcolonial world. Moreover, we will be asking whether there is such a thing as a “migrant aesthetics” in our reading of the texts. Relevant postcolonial and migration studies theory will be provided alongside the primary texts.

Students will be required to write short weekly assignments and an abstract for their research essay (50% of the seminar mark) and one long research essay (50% of the seminar mark).

Texts

Aboulela, L. *The Translator*, any edition.

Gurnah, A. *Pilgrims Way*, any edition.

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.

Tutorial Exercises [50%]: 2 x Assignments [25% each] Approximately 1000-1500 words; Essay [50%]: includes 1 presentation on essay topic & essay [2500-3000 words].

Readings will be supplied.

THINKING THROUGH JAZZ

Uhuru Phalafala

In her novel *Jazz* Toni Morrison deploys the modality of jazz to “free up language from its sometimes sinister, frequently lazy, almost always predictable deployment of racially informed and determined chains”. On the other hand, Fred Moten argues that the trajectory of black performances *is* black history, which is to say black performativity is the archive of blackness. Jazz as modality for cultural and political expression in both South Africa and the United States of America is understood as a site par excellence to study countercultures to colonial modernity. What does it mean to think through the prism of jazz? What are its poetic and discursive functions? How does jazz form, inform and transform black socio-political and cultural life transnationally? What is the political currency of jazz and its technologies? What gender dynamics can be learnt from its histories and present futures? In this course we traverse transnational geographies of shared racial struggles via sonicscapes and ideoscapes of this aural/oral practice. We will deploy various media – scholarly writings, jazz records and the tradition of liner notes, *Drum* reportage, music videos, short stories, autobiographies, photography and listening sessions – as maps to wander and wonder through these terrains.

Students will be required to submit a long essay that weights 50%, a shorter essay that weights 25%, and a creative component/in-class oral presentation that counts 25%.

A course pack will be provided with short stories, chapters from varied autobiographies, liner notes, and scholarly articles.

THE PSYCHOANALYTIC EDDYING OF MYTH AND METAPHOR

Lauren van der Rede

The theories of psychoanalysis are a dance with the literary: a swirl of borrowing, adapting and translating the metaphors and lessons of the mythology of the very many civilizations from which it takes its lessons. In this seminar we will think this swirling through the work of three figures central to the study of psychoanalysis. The first of these is Sigmund Freud, who is credited with having founded the discipline of psychoanalysis, and who often turned to the mythology of the Greeks for the narratives which would act as the vessels for articulating this theory. The second is Carl Jung, who uses myth, as a concept, to ground his notion of the “collective unconscious”; which we will trouble. The third and final thinker with whom we will engage is Frantz Fanon, who thinks myth as method for his postcolonial critique in relation to the construction of what he refers to as the “Manichean world”. Thus, together we will read the myths of 1) Thanatos and Eros – used to figure Freud’s concepts of a death and life drive; 2) the myth of Osiris – used to demonstrate Jung’s notion of the “collective unconscious”; 3) and finally, the myth of the Negro, which Fanon argues is the foundation on which colonial difference is premised. So together we will think about the charge of the relationship between psychoanalytic theory and the literary, treating the latter as a mode of reading the potential of myth and metaphor.

Assessment will take the form of two shorter class exercises and one oral presentation (that together will account for 50% of the mark), as well as one semester essay (remaining 50%).

The relevant texts will be made available via SUNLearn.

RE-INVENTING TIME IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN NOVEL

Eckard Smuts

Timothy Wright has described South Africa’s contemporary moment as a period of “temporal stasis”: a time in which the promises of freedom and justice once imagined as the country’s future have uncoupled from historical processes to form part of the bric-a-brac of a ruined present. In this elective, we will read two recent South African novels that grapple with problems of history and temporality in our disjointed present: Imraan Coovadia’s *Tales of the Metric System* and C.A. Davids’s *How to Be a Revolutionary*. Our discussion of these novels, and of the various cultural and theoretical issues they address, will be supplemented by required additional reading.

Students will be required to write two shorter papers of approximately 1,500 words each for the course (40% of the seminar mark), and one long research essay of approximately 3,000 words (50%). Attendance and class participation will also be factored into your final mark (10%).

Texts:

Coovadia, Imraan. *Tales of the Metric System*, Umuzi, 2014.

Dauids, C.A., *How to Be a Revolutionary*, Verso, 2022.

* Required additional readings will be made available.

READING FOR WRITING: SHORT FICTION

Sally Ann Murray

The only thing that matters about a short story is whether it's alive or dead, asserts Canadian author Mavis Gallant. But how do we know this? There is no simple checkbox. In this elective, we explore some of the fictional elements which might animate or deaden short stories. We pay attention not only to established short story elements such as character, voice and plot, but look to disruptive features: unusual language, experimental style, generic unease. We will encounter many different kinds of stories by writers who use and rework familiar conventions, among them writers such as Anton Chekhov, George Saunders and Charles Yu; Lydia Davis, Petina Gappah, Grace Paley, Jhumpa Lahiri and Chigozie Obioma. We will debate critical opinion on short fiction as a changing genre, and on the success, or otherwise, of particular examples of short fiction. Our key purpose in reading and thinking deeply will be to inform our creative writing: throughout the elective, we aim to develop our story writing skills using structured prompts to produce original pieces towards a portfolio of short fiction.

Students will produce one elective course essay which takes both critical and creative reading into account. This is worth 50% of the elective mark. A portfolio of shorter, creative tasks produced in response to writing prompts makes up the other 50%, with the most substantial component being a completed short story.

All resources provided.

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.

Students will be required to submit weekly forum posts (for an impression mark weighing 5%), two short assignments (weighing 25% and 20% respectively) and a longer semester essay (50% of the seminar mark).

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

DAMON GALGUT's (NON)FICTION

Tilla Slabbert

In this elective we explore questions of genre, form, authorship, and narration in three of Damon Galgut's narratives. *In A Strange Room: Three Journeys* is a work of autobiographical fiction consisting of three essays in epistolary form. Galgut's biofiction, *Arctic Summer* focuses on a period in English author E.M. Forster's life that saw the making of Forster's novel, *A Passage to India*. In his novel, *The Promise* Galgut employs a mode of narration that resembles a moving camera to configure multivocality. We consider aesthetics that establish a dialogic between texts and emphasise concerns with outsider identities, issues of private and public conflict, creativity, gender and sexuality, and the politics of friendship.

Students will be required to write one in-class assignment and one short essay (together contributing to 50% of the seminar mark), as well as one long research essay of approximately 3 000 (contributing to the remaining 50% of the seminar mark).

Texts:

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

Galgut, Damon. *Arctic Summer*, 2015.

Galgut, Damon. *The Promise*, 2021.

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.

The course is assessed by means of two in-class assessments and one essay. The in-class assessments constitute 50% of the final mark, and the essay the remaining 50%

Text:

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.

Students will be required to submit two shorter written assignments, weighing 20% and 30% respectively (50% of the seminar mark) and a longer, semester essay (50% of the seminar mark).

Texts:

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 “Absurdists” 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. Students will be required to submit two shorter written assignments, both weighing 20% each, along with a class exercise that weighs 10%. This amounts to 50% of the seminar mark. The other 50% of the seminar mark is attributed to the long, final semester essay.

Texts:

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*.

ZADIE SMITH’S *THE FRAUD* (2023): WRITING ABOUT THE NINETEENTH CENTURY **Jeanne Ellis**

In an interview, Zadie Smith described her recent novel *The Fraud* (2023) as “a contemporary novel about the nineteenth century”, and in this seminar we explore what that pivotal “about” which couples present and past entails by reading this historical novel as an example of neo-Victorian biofiction. While retrieving the prolific Victorian author of popular historical romances William Ainsworth from obscurity, it is the perspective of his housekeeper and sometimes lover, Eliza Touchet, that the novel privileges. Ranging from Victorian literary London to Australia and the slave plantations of Jamaica, the plot unfolds in relation to the Tichborne trial and the life story of the servant and former slave Andrew Bogle who was a key witness. Like other neo-Victorian novels, *The Fraud* thus fictionally repurposes historical facts and figures from a critical, presentist perspective, while also self-consciously reflecting on its own project – on what it does with and to the Victorians – often configured as a form of unscrupulous or fraudulent pilfering, as Eliza Touchet implies when she thinks that “[f]rom such worn cloth and stolen truth are novels made.”

Students will be required to write two 3000-word essays, one at mid-semester and one at the end of the course.

3. ASSESSMENT

3.1 FLEXIBLE ASSESSMENT

This Department has adopted the system of flexible assessment. 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 requires your preparation for and active participation in all aspects of the course. This means that it is crucial for you to do the prescribed reading, attend lectures and seminars, and submit all the written tasks by the set deadline. If you miss an assessment or are unable to meet a deadline because of medical incapacity or one of the other compassionate grounds specified by the University regulations (e.g., a death in the close family), you must notify your seminar presenter via email and supply valid corroborating documentation, e.g., the original medical certificate.

Students who (1) do not write the official tests, or (2) do not submit the final seminar essay, or (3) do not adequately participate in the seminars (see page 6) will be regarded as having failed to complete the course and will be registered as “incomplete.”

Notional Hours:

Notional Hours indicate the estimated learning time taken by the average student to achieve the specified learning outcomes of the module, and the amount of study and degree of commitment expected. Each credit represents ten notional hours, i.e. a ten-credit module is equal to 100 notional hours. The Notional Hours for 318 are 240 hours.

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:

<p>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 test questions.</p>	<p>50%</p>
<p>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 2500 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.</p>	<p>50%</p>

4. TESTS

Notices with dates, times and venues will be available on the notice board and on SUNLearn approximately 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.)**

4.1 TEST DATES

MID-SEMESTER

Test
Mon 8 April

Supplementary
Wed 24 April

END-OF-SEMESTER

Test

Supplementary

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" above) 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 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 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 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 miss assessments due to absence and who do not submit a formal excuse will not be extended any additional opportunities. **Failing to submit your final essay will result in you being regarded as 'incomplete', which in effect means that you 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, seminar work must be *submitted directly to the lecturer* by the stipulated deadline. 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** (hardcopy or email, **and** Turnitin) **is always necessary** to ensure that work does not go astray.

5.2 LATE SUBMISSIONS

Late submissions should be arranged with the relevant seminar presenter.

If you have a valid reason for being unable to submit the work by the deadline, it is your responsibility to notify your seminar presenter 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 your final essay is so late that it will earn 0%, it must be handed in, since if you fail to hand it in, 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 Departmental Plagiarism Policy (2023), the diagram detailing this policy and the accompanying procedures (below), as well as 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)**, 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.

Department of English Plagiarism Policy & Implementation

CATEGORY 1

Outright plagiarism:

Involves cases in which the assignment or written material of another person is taken over blatantly without any acknowledgement

Examples

- * any form of plagiarism committed by a postgraduate student
- * Handing in someone else's work as your own
- * Lifting directly from source material without properly acknowledging the source

Procedure and penalty General

- 1) zero for the assignment
- 2) The tutor/lecturer emails the student, cc'ing the holder of Plag. portfolio.

Recording of case: Letter

Student must sign an admission of plagiarism form. The plag. portfolio holder stores this in the Departmental records

Honours:

1st offense a hearing with p/g plagiarism committee (Chair, Hons. Coordinator & Plag. portfolio holder - either 0% or mark capped at 30% Second offense is referred to the CDC

MA

The case is referred first to a Departmental committee, constituted by the course coordinator, Head of Department, Plag. Portfolio holder, supervisor, and one other colleague.

Thereafter the case may be referred to the HDRC & if needed thereafter to the CDC

Phd

Case referred to the HDRC & potentially the CDC

All cases involving MA and PhD students must be referred to Student Discipline (Legal Services) for investigation, as per SU policy

Category 2

Injurious handling of sources

"Less serious instances where sources are dealt with injudiciously – in terms of plagiarism – but which in the nature of things still count as plagiarism."

Examples

- * Repeating ideas from someone else's work in one's own words without acknowledging the original source
i.e. paraphrasing, summarizing the ideas of an author's work, without acknowledging the source.
- * Handing in work or parts of a work that has already been submitted for another module or programme without indicating where the material was originally used.
- * Failing to cite the primary literary text as a source.

Procedure and Penalty

- 1) the student must resubmit, having correctedly acknowledged all sources.
- 2) deduction of 25%
- 3) The tutor/lecturer emails the student, cc'ing the holder of the Plag. portfolio.

Recording of case: Letter

The plag. portfolio holder stores this in the Departmental records

Category 3

Negligent or Inaccurate acknowledgement of sources

Offences that can be regarded as showing carelessness or inaccuracy in using and acknowledging sources, but which are still regarded as plagiarism.

Examples:

- * inconsistent referencing
- * Using direct quotes without quotation marks

Procedure and penalty General

- 1) First time offense: the student must resubmit, having correctly acknowledged all sources.
-- Mark as usual with a deduction of 10%
- 2) Second time offense: Treat as Category 2
- 3) In all cases the tutor/lecturer emails the student, cc'ing the holder of the Plag. portfolio.

Recording of case:

The plag. portfolio holder stores this in the Departmental records

In the case of a 178 student, who is guilty of a category 3 offense for the first time, within the first semester, the assignment will be marked as usual.

Recorded in the Department's Records.

Masters & PhD cases recorded with Department, FASS, HDRC.

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 Jeanne Ellis (jellis@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 2023, Part 2*. For further inquiries please make use of the Universities Undergraduate Bursaries and Loans webpage: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/learning-teaching/undergraduate-bursaries-loans/su-funding> which also includes information on external funding opportunities. Forms, resources, and a list of external funders (subject to change) can be found by following the following link: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/learning-teaching/undergraduate-bursaries-loans/forms-and-resources>

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 2023.

ACADEMIC STAFF

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

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Mrs Johanita Passerini (Administrative Officer)	johanitap	2051	581
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Professors Emeritus/Emerita

Prof Annie Gagiano

Prof Shaun Viljoen