

**Masters Module (Advanced Level), ENPO75, 7.5 credits.
Approaches to Postmodernism.**

Course Description.

Most of us have some sort of idea of what postmodernism and postmodernity are. Whether we think of it primarily as a way of describing certain modes of cultural expression (Intertextuality? Pastiche? Experimental narrative?), a logic of a political and economic system (the end of ideology? The dissolution of grand narratives?), or a form of periodization (it is called “post” after all—does that simply mean it comes after Modernism?), or perhaps nothing that has much to do with literature and culture at all (architecture? History? Geography?), postmodernism and postmodernity are terms that are frequently used for example in media, at museum exhibitions, and, of course, in academic studies and research. The Masters course “Approaches to Postmodernism” (7.5 hp) focuses on central discussions regarding the aesthetic, narratological and theoretical definitions of these concepts. Taking the course will give you a broad and deepened understanding of central literary and theoretical concepts associated with postmodernism. In this course we read original theoretical key texts on the topic of postmodernism. Through our readings and seminar discussions we will extract conceptual frameworks to apply to a set of central postmodern literary texts. We will develop our understanding of postmodernism as a theoretical and historical phenomenon and as a recent cultural dominant. By engaging with significant theorists of postmodernism, such as Lyotard, Derrida, Deleuze, Baudrillard, Jameson, Foucault and Irigaray, we will probe deeply into the complexity of ideas constituting the postmodern condition.

Intended Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course the student is expected to be able to

- critically take a position in relation to, and construct arguments about, the theoretical as well as literary texts in the course
- with a certain historical and theoretical depth—well anchored in sample texts—reason about postmodernism as a concept and to identify and understand other central concepts
- independently formulate an interpretation of a literary text in relation to the problematisation of “reality” that is central in many postmodern texts
- present structured reasoning around different understandings of postmodernism and develop an individual stance

Reading list

Theoretical texts

Cosgrove, Lisa. “Feminism, Postmodernism, and Psychological Research.” *Hypatia* 18 (3), 2003: 85–112.
Drolet, Michael (ed). *The Postmodernism Reader: Foundational Texts*. London & New York: Routledge, 2004. ISBN 978-0415160841. (You will be assigned a selection of texts from this anthology).

Literary texts

Atwood, Margaret. *The Blind Assassin*. London: Virago, 2001. ISBN 978-1860498800
Auster, Paul. *The New York Trilogy*. London: Faber & Faber, 2011 [1988]. ISBN 978-0571276653
Banville, John. *The Book of Evidence*. London: Picador, 2014 [1989]. ISBN 978-1447275367
Byatt, A. S. *Possession*. London: Vintage, 2009 [1990]. ISBN 978-0099800408
DeLillo, Don. *White Noise*. New York: Penguin, 2011 [1985]. ISBN 978-0330524841
Robinson, Marilynne. *Housekeeping*. London: Faber & Faber, 2005 [1980]. ISBN 978-0571230082

Examination

The individual student will hand in two essays of 2000 words each. Essay 1 50% and essay 2 50% of the final grade.

Submission deadlines:

Essay 1: 4 March 23:59

Essay 2: 21 March 23:59

Re-take deadline for both essays, 25 April 23:59.

Reading and Schedule:

Seminar	Reading
1	Introduction; Practical information. Drolet, Introduction, 1-35.
2	Auster, <i>The New York Trilogy</i> , ch. 1, 2 and 5 in Drolet
3	DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> , ch. 7, 8, 9 and 14 in Drolet
4	Banville, <i>The Book of Evidence</i> , ch. 16, 18 and 20 in Drolet
5	Atwood, <i>The Blind Assassin</i> , ch. 12, 13 in Drolet and Cosgrove article
6	Byatt, <i>Possession</i> , ch. 6, 11 in Drolet
7	Robinson, <i>Housekeeping</i> , ch 17, 21 in Drolet
8	Outroduction, (presentations)

For exact days and times, see TimeEdit.

Assessment and Grade Criteria

OUTSTANDING

For a grade of **A** the student should ...

- Display wide-ranging knowledge of the themes and concepts covered by the course material and seminar presentations as well as a profound familiarity with the texts we have read.
- Show the ability, in written work, to critically analyze theoretical arguments and literary works in a manner that is on occasion innovative and often illuminating, consistently deploying appropriate critical concepts in an elegant way.
- Present his/her arguments in a persuasive and coherent manner, in correct, fluent and idiomatic English, in a consistently academic style of writing.

EXCELLENT

For a grade of **B** the student should ...

- display a broad knowledge of the themes and concepts covered by the course material and seminar presentations as well as a solid familiarity with the texts we have read.
- show the ability, in written work, to critically analyze theoretical arguments and literary works in a manner that is on occasion illuminating, with frequent and correct use of appropriate critical concepts.
- present arguments in a solid and coherent manner, in correct and fluent English, in an academic style of writing and in an acceptably formal register.

GOOD

For a grade of **C** the student should ...

- display considerable knowledge of most of the themes and concepts covered by the course material and seminar presentations as well as an adequate familiarity with the texts we have read.
- show the ability, in written work, to critically analyze theoretical arguments and literary works, with at least occasional and correct use of appropriate critical concepts.
- present arguments in a coherent manner, in adequate English with only minor errors, with only some lapses from an academic style of writing.

SATISFACTORY

For a grade of **D** the student should ...

- display basic knowledge of most of the themes and concepts covered by the course material and seminar presentations as well as some familiarity with the texts we have read.
- show the ability, in written work, to critically analyze literary works and theoretical arguments, with some, basic use of appropriate critical concepts.
- present his/her arguments in a largely coherent manner, in adequate English with only minor errors, in a consistent, formal register of writing.

ADEQUATE

For a grade of **E** the student should ...

- display basic knowledge of some of the themes and concepts covered by the course material and seminar presentations as well as a basic knowledge of some of the elements of plots, characters, settings and narrative structure in most of the texts we have read.
- show some ability, in written work, to critically analyze literary works and theoretical arguments, with at least a minimal employment of technical terms.
- present his/her arguments in an intelligible manner, in adequate English, in a largely formal register of written delivery.

INADEQUATE

A grade of **Fx** will be set if the student

- has displayed some, but not all, of the skills of the level of the criteria for E.

INADEQUATE

A grade of **F** will be set if the student

- does not display any of the skills of the level of the criteria for E.