

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course name: BMNAN02500A Contexts of Literary History 3, 2023/24/2

Time and venue: Thu: 10:15-11:45 (BTK D 110); Thu: 12:30-14:00 (BTK D 110)

Instructor: Dr Ákos Farkas

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Course content:

This course is designed to (re)introduce certain key aspects of late nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first century English literature by placing the literary phenomena examined in the very broad context of such other major domains of human knowledge and social activity as (mostly Christian) religion, the ('hard') sciences, (Anglo-Saxon, rather than Continental) law, (international as well as domestic) politics, and (mostly the visual) arts. The readings of imaginative literature to be looked at from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives include works of modern and contemporary fiction, poetry, exploratory prose, and popular culture ('sci-fi', 'detective fiction', music, and film).

Course objectives:

Students will recognize the relevance of familiarity with other domains of human experience to English literature and its modern cultural contexts. Their skills of reading, understanding, appreciating, and discussing English-language primary and secondary sources such as those listed below will be enhanced by the experience.

Weekly Schedule (w/ primary sources):

1. Mar. 7 – Introduction: Richard Eyre, dir., *The Children Act* (film, 2017)
2. Mar. 14 – Literature and religion–1: Chesterton, 'The Hammer of God' (1911); T. S. Eliot, 'East Coker' (1940); Philip Larkin, 'Church Going' (1954)
3. Mar. 21 – Literature and religion–2: Graham Greene, *Monsignor Quixote* (1982)
4. Mar. 28 – HOLY THURSDAY: NO TEACHING
5. Apr. 4 – Literature and science–1: Greg Egan, 'Mitochondrial Eve' and 'Reasons to Be Cheerful' (1999)
6. Apr. 11 – Literature and science–2: T. H. Huxley, 'Science and Culture' (1880); Matthew Arnold, 'Literature and science' (1882)
7. Apr. 18 – Literature and science–3: C. P. Snow, 'The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution' (1959); F. R. Leavis, 'Two Cultures?: The Significance of C. P. Snow' (1962)
8. Apr. 25 – MID-TERM TEST (quiz and essay); Literature and the arts: Robert Browning, 'My Last Duchess'; David Lodge, 'My Last Missis' (2017)
9. May 2 – Literature and politics–1: Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon* (1940, 2019)
10. May 9 – Literature and politics–2: Tibor Fischer, 'Ice Tonight in the Hearts of Young Visitors' (2000)
11. May 16 – Literature and law–1: Agatha Christie, 'Witness for the Prosecution' (1924)
12. May 23 – Literature and law–2: Ian McEwan, *The Children Act* (novel, 2014);
END-OF-TERM TEST (quiz and essay)

Secondary Sources (appropriate sections from):

- Atkins, G. Douglas. *Literary Paths to Religious Understanding*. New York: Palgrave, 2009.
- Cartwright, John H. and Brian Baker. *Literature and Science: Social Impact and Interaction*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005.
- Dolin, Kieran. *A Critical Introduction to Law and Literature*. Cambridge: CUP, 2007.
- Fuller, Michael. *Science and Religion in Western Literature*. London and New York: Routledge, 2023.
- Gibson, John. 'Literature and Knowledge.' *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Literature*. Ed. by Richard Eldridge. Oxford: OUP, 2009. 467–485.
- Jasper, David. *The Study of Literature and Religion: An Introduction*. London: Palgrave, 1989.
- Kennedy, David and Richard Meek, eds. *Ekphrastic Encounters: New Interdisciplinary Essays on Literature and the Visual Arts*. Manchester: MUP, 2019.
- Posner, Richard A. *Law and Literature*. Third edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Roston, Murray. *Victorian Contexts: Literature and the Visual Arts*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1996.
- Rush, Fred. 'Literature and Politics.' *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Literature*. Ed. by Richard Eldridge. Oxford: OUP, 2009. 496–516.
- Stratton, Matthew. *The Routledge Companion to Politics and Literature in English*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2023.
- Tampakis, Kostas and George N. Vlahakis, eds. *Science and Literature: Imagination, Medicine and Space*. Athens: Institute of Historical Research, 2020.

(Presenters should also feel free to scour Jstor for further material.)

Requirements:

Students will read the texts assigned (see titles under 'weekly schedule') for each session, in which they will actively participate, listen to the instructor's lectures and each other's presentations (the latter prepared according to the instructor's advice and based on the appropriate secondary sources as listed below), and prepare for the two term tests and the (voluntary) oral examination.

Assessment:

Each student will be asked to make at least one presentation and write two in-class tests, the aggregate result of which will serve as the basis of a projected exam mark proposed by the instructor (this can be modified by a voluntary viva exam).

ENJOY YOUR WORK.

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