

Modern British and American Literature and the Arts: Popular Literature

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Week 1 (Feb 14) Introduction:

- Definitions: popular culture/fiction; fans, cults, bestsellers, genre fiction; audiences

Week 2 (Feb 21) Postmodern Rewritings of Tales

- Neil Gaiman: “Snow, Glass, Apples”
- Tanith Lee: “Red as Blood”
- If you do not remember the Grimm version of the fairy tale, refresh your memory by reading “Little Snow-White” by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm.
<https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm053.html>
- *Written task:* Choose two components of the original tale that is altered by the author in either of the stories, and explain how the changes affect the concept / effect compared to the original text (ca. half a page).

Week 3 (Feb 28) The Coming of Age Novel as Dark Fantasy

- Neil Gaiman: *Coraline*
- *Written task:* Choose three scary components, and write one short paragraph of each, explaining its significance in its scariness.

Week 4 (March 6) The Detective Story:

- Neil Gaiman: “A Study in Emerald”
- If possible, watch “A Study in Pink” (Episode I of BBC's Sherlock; 2010)
- *Written task:* Explain the role of the advertisements shown at the beginning of the chapters. (c.a. half a page)

Week 5 (March 13) Science Fiction (Dystopia and Apocalypse)

- Robert Sheckley: “A Ticket to Tranai”;
- Ray Bradbury: “The Last Night of the World”
- *Written task:* Check the terms utopia and dystopia. Choose two bizarre customs of planet Tranai and explain briefly in what ways they contribute to making one see Tranai as Utopia and as Dystopia.

Week 6 (March 20) **Presentations (student projects)**

Week 7 (March 27): **Presentations (student projects)**

Week 8 (April 3) **Presentations (student projects)**

Week 9-10 (Apr. 10, 17): **SPRING BREAK**

Week 11 (Apr 24): **Presentations (student projects)**

Week 12 (May 1): Holiday

Week 13 (May 18): **Presentations (student projects)**

Week 14 (May 15): Evaluation

Requirements:

- **active participation** in class, **reading** literature and coming prepared;
- a **research project**, presented in class (ca.15 mins, on any example of popular literature) – with slide show, handout, individual research, sources identified, etc. The presentation should illustrate how the given piece could be used for pedagogical purposes/in class (identify age group, type of class, purpose of using the text, exact details of length, place in lesson plan, etc) **AND**
- **two** short written tasks, **brought to the class** when we discuss the work, not later! **AND**
- **A HOME ESSAY (CA. 5 PAGES) ON ANY WORK OF ART THAT CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS CONTEMPORARY POPULAR FICTION, ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN ENGLISH (ANALYSIS, COMPARISON, INTERPRETATION, CLASSROOM USE, ETC.) DUE APRIL 24.** Extended deadline for home essay: May 18, which has two consequences: 1) I take off half a point from the mark of the paper; 2) it may not be corrected by May 15, thus evaluation may be discussed at a later date.

All written papers should have double line spacing, 12 pt., Times New Roman letters, normal margin of cc. 2 cms.

Important information on accessing texts: I have created a closed Facebook group so as I may effectively share the kind of reading material that is harder to access otherwise. You may also use this group for sharing information and discussing ideas relating to the seminar, as well as uploading reading materials. In order to join the Facebook group, you need to mark me as friend on FB. (After I have let you in the group, you may “unfriend” me in case you don't really want to meet me on FB.)

Marking depends on: your project/oral presentation (ca. 35%), short written homework and class work (30%) and end term paper (ca. 35%). Please note that **if the long essay does not meet the basic requirements either because of language quality or because of plagiarism, you may not receive a passing mark for the course.** Also note that without a regular participation in class work, you may not receive a final mark 5 for the course.