

Debating World Literature

Instructor: Prof. Dr. Hendrik Birus
Time: Intersession, January 21-29, 2016
Room:
Office Hour: by appointment
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Course Description

The course offers an introduction to the concept of *world literature* as a key term of Comparative Literature as well as Cultural Studies. During the 19th and 20th century it was almost exclusively a 'European affair', but since the turn of the century there is a fruitful discussion of this concept especially in the United States.

The course deals with the most important exponents of the current debate and its preconditions and results. In a next step it questions the connection of the rise of *world literature* with the socio-economical as well as ideological advance of globalization. Finally it casts light on the historical roots of this concept which was coined by the late Johann Wolfgang Goethe and propagated by his liberal contemporaries in France as well as e.g. by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

Instruction focuses on the theoretical potential of this concept by discussing actual theoretical texts as well as those from its founding period. The aim of the course is to give students an understanding of the usefulness of theoretical debates in the humanities and of their applicability to actual problems in Literary and Cultural Studies.

Laptops and smartphones are not allowed in class.

Attendance is mandatory. You can be absent without an official excuse for two out of 13 sessions. Any further session missed without medical certificate will lead to a deduction of 0.33 of the total grade.

Requirements and Grades

Active participation: 15%

Review of a book or an article (ca. 1,500 words): 20%

Presentation: 25%

Prepare a presentation and a hand-out (max. 2 pages). Hand in to me a provisional hand-out one day before the presentation at the latest.

Final Exam: 40%

Course Materials

The Routledge Companion to World Literature, ed. Theo D'haen, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir, London 2011.

World Literature: A Reader, ed. Theo D'haen, César Domínguez, and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, London 2013.

Hendrik Birus, Art. "Weltliteratur", in: *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, vol. 3, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller & al., Berlin, New York 2003, 825-826.

Course Schedule:

Thursday, January 21, 2016

2:15-5:00 p.m. Introduction: Debating *World Literature* today

Friday, January 22, 2016

9:45-12:30 a.m. New starting points: (1) Pascale Casanova

2:15-5:00 p.m. (2) Franco Moretti

Literature:

Pascale Casanova, *La République mondiale des Lettres*, Paris 1999; transl.: *The World Republic of Letters*, Cambridge, Mass. 2004.

Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading*, London, New York 2013, esp. pp. 43-62 and 91-135.

Saturday, January 23, 2016

9:45-12:30 a.m. (3) David Damrosch

2:15-5:00 p.m. (4) Emily Apter

Literature:

David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, Princeton 2003.

Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*, London 2013.

Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles, ed. Barbara Cassin, Paris 2006; transl.: *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, ed. Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood, Princeton 2014.

Monday, January 25, 2016

9:45-12:30 a.m. Debating World Literature

2:15-5:00 p.m. World Literature and Globalization

Literature:

Debating World Literature, ed. Christopher Prendergast, London, New York 2004.

Jürgen Osterhammel / Niels Petersson, *Globalization: A Short History*, Princeton 2003.

C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, Oxford 2004.

Adam McKeown, "Periodizing Globalization", in: *History Workshop Journal* 63 (2007), 218-230.

Tuesday, January 26, 2016

9:45-12:30 a.m. *World Literature* and National Literatures

2:15-5:00 p.m. *World Literature* and Canon

Literature:

Victor Lange, "Nationalliteratur und Weltliteratur", in: *Goethe-Jahrbuch* NF 33 (1971) 15-30.

Hendrik Birus, "On the Complementarity of National Literature(s) and World Literature" (unpubl.)

Alexander Beecroft, "World Literature Without a Hyphen: Towards a Typology of Literary Systems", in: *New Left Review*, Sec. Ser. 54, 2008, pp. 87-100.

Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, New York, San Diego, London 1994.

The Canonical Debate Today, ed. Liviu Papadima, David Damrosch, and Theo D'haen, Amsterdam 2011.

Wednesday, January 27, 2016

9:45-12:30 a.m. Traditional Views on *World Literature* (I):
Explanations of the conceptual meaning
2:15-5:00 p.m. Traditional Views on *World Literature* (II):
Goethe revisited

Literature:

Erich Auerbach, "Philologie der Weltliteratur", in: Auerbach, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur romanischen Philologie*, Bern, München 1967, 201-310; transl.: „Philology and Weltliteratur“, in: *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the Enlightenment to the Global Present*, ed. David Damrosch, Natalie Melas, and Mbongiseni Buthulezi, Princeton 2009, 125-138.

René Etiemble, « Faut-il réviser la notion de *Weltliteratur*? », in: Etiemble, *Essais de littérature (vraiment) générale*, 3me éd., Paris 1975, 15-36.

A. Owen Aldridge, *The Reemergence of World Literature*, Newark & al. 1986.

Horst Steinmetz, "Weltliteratur: Umriß eines literaturgeschichtlichen Konzepts", in: Steinmetz, *Literatur und Geschichte*, München 1988, 103-126 and 136-141.

Hendrik Birus, „Am Schnittpunkt von Komparatistik und Germanistik: Die Idee der Weltliteratur heute“, in: *Germanistik und Komparatistik. DFG-Symposium 1993*, ed. H. Birus, Stuttgart, Weimar 1995, 439-457.

Thursday, January 28, 2016

9:45-12:30 a.m. World Literature and Comparative Literature
2:15-5:00 p.m. Wrap up

Literature:

Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism, ed. Charles Bernheimer, Baltimore, London 1995.

Hendrik Birus, "The Goethean Concept of World Literature and Comparative Literature", in: *Comparative Literature and Comparative Cultural Studies*, ed Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, West Lafayette, Ind. 2003, 11-22.

Hendrik Birus, "The Co-emergence of *Weltliteratur* and *littérature comparée*", in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Multiculturalism. Proceedings of the XVIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, ed. Reingard Nethersole. Pretoria 2005, 26-35.
Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization, ed. Haun Saussy, Baltimore 2006.

Friday, January 29, 2016

9:45-12:45 a.m. Final Exam