

ENG 6075

LITERARY THEORY: ISSUES

KÜNSTLERROMAN



Professor Phillip Wegner
Monday 6-8 (12:50-3:50 p.m.)
Turlington 4112

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and by appointment

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This course will undertake an extensive reading of works in one of the most important of the modernist subgenres of the novel, the *Künstlerroman*, or the novel of the artist. Novels will be selected from a variety of primarily 20th century national and generic traditions (with, hopefully, a few surprises in the mix). We will focus in

particular on the relationship between the *Künstlerroman* and its great realist predecessor, the *Bildungsroman*; the work of the genre in thinking what Alain Badiou describes as the *event*; and the relationship between modernist and postmodern/post-contemporary practices of the form.

Texts

Alain Badiou, *Ethics: Towards an Understanding of Radical Evil*

Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774)

ETA Hoffmann, *The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr* (1820-22)

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927)

Thomas Mann, *Dr. Faustus* (1947)

Willa Cather, *Song of the Lark* (1915)

James Weldon Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912)

Richard Wright, *Black Boy (American Hunger)* 1945

John Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse* (1968)

William Gibson *Pattern Recognition* (2003)

David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas* (2004)

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2006)

Yoshihiro Tatsumi, *A Drifting Life* (2008)

Michel Houellebecq, *The Map and the Territory* (2010)

Ben Lerner, *Leaving the Atocha Station* (2011)

Students will be responsible for procuring copies of the readings for the semester. Harder to find and shorter texts will be made available as the semester progresses.

Aims and Methods

1. Full presence in every spatial, ontological, existential, and intellectual sense of the word, as well as active and engaged participation in the seminar discussions. Given your presence here, I assume that all of you are looking forward as much as I am to having the opportunity for a serious and careful engagement with these novels. Thus, the most general expectation that I have for this semester is that all of you intend to read these works, and to do so in a responsible and rigorous fashion, and in a spirit of good faith and intellectual camaraderie. I would ask then that you make every effort to engage in, to use a much abused term, a *dialogue* with these works, being attentive to their respective voices, acknowledging their particular historical and otherwise contingent beings in the world, and finally working to imagine how we today might best retool the insights and modes of analysis of their various “unfinished projects.” In this way, I hope that we will develop a much more complex and profitable understanding of both the power and originality of these arguments and traditions.

2. In order to facilitate and enrich our discussion of these works, I want to ask each of you to be responsible for introducing and situating each week's readings. As I imagine all of our work fundamentally to be a collective project, you will do this in groups of two or three, with each group being responsible for the readings on two different occasions. Each group will be asked both to provide a brief introduction to the material and to serve as general "experts" on the readings for that week. Your group can take a variety of approaches to this task: you may want to highlight some of the central issues the readings address; briefly outline their main arguments; note the ways they engage with what has come before; place them in historical, intellectual, and political contexts; note connections to other practices; give overviews of some of the secondary readings on these works; offer some questions for discussion; provide creative illustrations and applications of the thesis; and so forth. I only ask that you keep the opening comments brief (15 minutes maximum total) so that we can begin our general discussion as soon as possible. I also hope that your groups will continue to work together throughout the semester, sharing ideas, giving support, discussing research projects, drinking beer, and other important tasks. I will be very happy to meet with your group beforehand to suggest some secondary readings and discuss approaches and tactics.

3. Some events of special note this coming term. First, on **February 26-27**, we have planned a symposium in honor of UF professor and renowned Joyce scholar R. Brandon Kershner, entitled, "James Joyce, Science Fiction, Cultural Studies, and other Modernist Wonders." Secondly, the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the Marxist Reading Group will be held **March 26-28**, with keynote addresses by Eric Cazdyn and Jodi Dean. Finally, the 12th annual UF Conference on Comics and Graphic Novels, "Comics Read but Seldom Seen: Diversity and Representation in Comics and Related Media," is scheduled for **April 10-12**. As there will be a great deal of discussion relevant to our class, I would like to encourage all enrolled students to consider attending some of the sessions and events.

4. For the major written component of the course, I will ask each of you to develop an independent research program, which will take one of two forms: either a) two shorter essays of 10-15 pages in length examining the questions or issues raised by the material in more depth, or drawing connections between these works and other areas of interest; *or*, b) a major critical research project of some 25-30 pages in length. The aim of the longer project will be to produce: 1) a sustained engagement with some of the works we discuss in class; 2) a further independent examination of the issues raised by the work we have looked at; 3) a discussion drawing upon some of the recommended secondary or additional readings; or 4) an original reading of another other work –be it literary, theoretical, filmic, architectural, cultural, digital, virtual, or otherwise— deploying the concepts and models we elaborate during the course of the semester. I would also like to ask that all 3rd year PhD students plan to pursue option b, with the goal of producing an essay that will serve either as the basis of a dissertation chapter or a publishable essay (or even both). I ask each of you who choose this second option to turn in a detailed paper proposal, complete with bibliography, about a month before the paper is due. If you require additional

time to work on this project, I am happy to allow you to do so. However, in order to avoid extending the course indefinitely, I expect that the project will be completed by the end of the summer term; work turned in after that time should not expect to receive extensive (if any) comments.

Grading Criteria

Attendance and Participation: 25%

Group presentations: 25%

Seminar paper: 50%

UF Policy Statements

1. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

2. UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/policies-2/sexual-harassment/>

3. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

4. Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

5. Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Tentative Discussion Schedule

1. January 12 - Introduction

Readings: Maurice Beebe, *Ivory Towers and Sacred Fonts: The Artist as Hero in Fiction from Goethe to Joyce* (1964), Preface and Ch. 1

Ernst Bloch, "A Philosophical View of the Detective Novel" and "A Philosophical View of the Novel of the Artist" (1965)

Fredric Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism*, Ch. 7, "Realism and the Dissolution of Genre" (2013)

Alain Badiou, *Ethics: Towards an Understanding of Radical Evil* (1998)

2. January 19 - MLK Day: NO CLASS

3. January 26 -

Readings: Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774)

ETA Hoffmann, *The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr* (1820-22)

The Modernist Künstlerroman

4. February 2 -

Readings: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)

Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, Introduction and Appendix

James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*



5. February 9 -

Readings: Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927)

Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Auerbach, "The Brown Stocking," from *Mimesis*

6. February 16 -

Readings: Thomas Mann, *Dr. Faustus* (1947)

The American Künstlerroman

7. February 23 -

Readings: Willa Cather, *Song of the Lark* (1915)

8. March 2 - NO CLASS Spring Break

9. March 9 -

Readings: James Weldon Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912)



10. March 16 -

Readings: Richard Wright, *Black Boy* (*American Hunger*) 1945

11. March 23 -

Readings: John Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse* (1968)
Barth, "The Literature of Exhaustion"
Mark McGurl, from *The Program Era*

The Post-contemporary Global Künstlerroman

12. March 30 -

Readings: William Gibson *Pattern Recognition* (2003)
Phillip E. Wegner, "Recognizing the Patterns" from *Shockwaves of Possibility*

13. April 6 -

Readings: David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas* (2004)
Fredric Jameson, "The Historical Novel Today, or, Is It Still Possible?" from *The Antinomies of Realism*

14. April 13 -

Readings: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2006)
Yoshihiro Tatsumi, *A Drifting Life* (2008)



15. April 20 -

Readings: Michel Houellebecq, *The Map and the Territory* (2010)
Ben Lerner, *Leaving the Atocha Station* (2011)

16. April 29 - FINAL PROJECTS DUE by 10 a.m. (in order to receive spring grade)

