

INTRODUCTION TO EAST EUROPEAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION FROM THE NATIONAL REVIVALS TO THE PRESENT

Daniel Abondolo, Tim Beasley-Murray, Dennis Deletant, Zoran Milutinović,
Katarzyna Zechenter

Description

This course introduces students to the literature in Eastern Europe from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. In approximate chronological order, texts by Bohemian-German, Bosnian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, Polish, Serbian and Slovak writers are presented in their historical, literary, cultural, social and political contexts. Texts studied include the possibly familiar (Franz Kafka's 'In the Penal Colony' and Milan Kundera's short stories) as well as less well-known works by authors such as the contemporary Polish writer, Pawel Huelle, and the opium-addled fantasist of the Hungarian *fin-de-siècle*, Géza Csáth. In addition to the study of primary texts, attention is paid to the major literary trends to which these texts belong (Realism, Expressionism, Post-Modernism *et cetera*).

The course also considers the question of the relationship between literary and political activity in a region whose history has been shaped by the ideological currents of nationalism, communism, and now nationalism again plus free-market economics. Finally, students are introduced to the principles of literary criticism and to some of the basic concepts of literary theory in search of approaches to questions such as: How does an author relate to a text and to a reader? How can we talk about characters? How is a story told?

This course is recommended for students taking the Literature Track of East European Language Degrees who wish to acquire a general introduction to their subject. It is also suitable for students of the Social Sciences and History who are willing to risk the possibility that studying Eastern Europe means gaining an insight into culture and ideas as well as indirect foreign investment, peasants, treaties, and constitutional courts.

Title Introduction to East European Literature in Translation

Course code SEEE1001

Course unit value 1 cu

Availability Annual

Open to All first year students; second year students subject to the agreement of the relevant course tutor.

Course Leader Tim Beasley-Murray

Other Participants Daniel Abondolo, Dennis Deletant, Zoran Milutinović,
Katarzyna Zechenter

Aims

- To provide students with an overview of fiction in Eastern Europe from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day through the study of the works of authors from a wide range of cultures of the area.
- To introduce students to the main trends in European literary history of the period studied.

- To give students an awareness of the issues involved in the process of literary criticism and to provide students with an introduction to the basic issues of literary theory.

Objectives

By the end of the course you will have acquired

- A good knowledge of the texts, authors and major literary trends of the region in the period studied.
- An understanding of the cultural, political and historical context of literary production in Eastern Europe.
- Enhanced skills of research, essay-writing, analysis and presentation of ideas in class discussion.
- A greater awareness of the variety of possible approaches to literary criticism and their relative merits.

Teaching and Learning Methods	Number of Hours
Seminars	40
Private Study	160

The group meets Mondays 10-12 in room 532.

The teacher will introduce each author, set the work in its cultural and literary-historical context, and outline the main points to be aware of when considering the work. This introduction will be followed by students' presentations and discussion. Two students will give presentations each week – separately or jointly. Presentations should be based on the topics given on the course outline, unless otherwise agreed with the teacher. Presentations will be allocated at the beginning of each term.

Each student is expected to do the essential reading for each week. Presentations should last about 10 minutes, and need not be in polished prose; they can be refined and submitted later as essays. Presentations must be accompanied by an outline, which the teacher will photocopy and circulate to all other members of the class.

Assessment

A. Coursework

Two essays of 1500 words to be submitted by the deadlines (two in the first term, one in the second). These are not assessed formally, but are a prerequisite for entry to examination. They should be typed, DOUBLE-SPACED, and conform to the Slavonic Review style-sheet.

B. Examination

A three-hour written paper requiring answers to four essay questions. The examination-paper will contain questions relating to all texts studied.

There will be a revision-session at the beginning of the Summer Term.

Affiliate Students

This course can be taken by affiliate students in either or both terms.

Consultation

Dr Beasley-Murray will hold office-hours in room 326, Tuesdays 14-15-15.15. Students should also feel free to consult the other teachers on the course and indeed other members of the East European Department for advice on specific literatures:

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