

BTP2BR\_T\_29

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH FICTION

Bényei Tamás

Autumn 2021

Studio 111

Thu 8.00-9.40

**Under the current regulations, the course is planned to be a face-to-face, classroom-based course, HOWEVER, if due to the pandemic we have to switch to remote teaching, PLEASE be prepared to use the University of Debrecen E-Learning system at [elearning.unideb.hu](http://elearning.unideb.hu).**

**In case of such a switch, the course evaluation methods (e.g., for class participation) and grading rules may be subject to change. You will be notified of these changes by the instructor if needed.**

**It is our shared responsibility to observe effective hygiene rules and follow the relevant government, university and faculty regulations regarding the pandemic. If you become ill or experience any symptoms, please stay home to protect others from infection.**

**Technical information - please read this carefully!**

The course is mainly intended as a satellite seminar to the lecture course on Postwar British Fiction and Film. The novels are selected with a view to the list of required books for the exam, trying to “cover” as many slots as possible within the scope of a seminar.

The course is by default recommended for second-year MA students. On the other hand, there are places for first-year MA students, too. Next year, when our first-year students will be attending this particular compulsory lecture course, it will be accompanied by an entirely different seminar, with a list of different novels – thus, students may wish to take this course now and the alternative contemporary British fiction course, with different novels, next year. Since the seminar course is not compulsory for anyone, there will certainly be places for first-year students. First-year students who find themselves unable to sign up for the course are advised to consult me via email or personally.

Despite being a satellite course, the seminar also stands on its own as a self-contained unit, concentrating on a single decade, the 1980s, which was an extraordinary period for British fiction: in this decade, established writers like William Golding, J. G. Ballard and Angela Carter produced their best work, and this was the decade when the leading figures of contemporary British fiction (Martin Amis, Salman Rushdie, Ian McEwan, Kazuo Ishiguro, Anita Brookner, Graham Swift, Hilary Mantel, Jeanette Winterson, Pat Barker, Julian Barnes and others) made their reputations. In general, the period might be seen as that of the rise of postmodern British fiction.

The seminars will be devoted to the close reading of the novels; the main emphasis will always be on the workings of the text. This is why we shall only read six novels, but read them with great thoroughness.

**Requirements:** the success of the seminars will greatly depend on your contributions; it is essential, therefore, that participants read the assigned material and contribute to the discussion.

The reading assignment will be kept on a manageable level throughout, not exceeding 150 pages per week (on average). In turn, your familiarity with the assigned texts will be **tested at the start of each seminar**. **FAILURE TO PREPARE FOR THE SEMINAR WILL COUNT AS ABSENCE:** thus, **if you fail more than three such tests, your seminar is a failure** (the grade is a ‘one’), and, barring serious health issues or other emergencies, there will be no opportunity to make up for these occasions. This system is meant to encourage you not to come to the seminar if you haven’t read the text. Thus, theoretically, you may miss three classes, or miss one class and fail to read the material for two classes, or not miss any classes but fail to prepare for three seminars, etc.

Since there is no end-term test, **seminar participation** will be a very important factor in the grades.

**Home essay.** Deadline: 12.00, 10 December (Friday).

Length: 2,500-3,000 words. **Essays will have to be submitted in hard copies.** Essays must be written in the form of a research paper: use of secondary material and scholarly documentation, conforming to the MLA Style Sheet, are essential. Failure to meet any of these requirements will result in the reduction of the grade. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will, without any further comment, result in a failure as described in the Academic Handbook of the Institute.

**Schedule**

Week	Date	Topic
1	9 Sept	Introduction to the course
2	16 Sept	Martin Amis: <i>Money</i> /1 (p. 1-143)
3	23 Sept	Martin Amis: <i>Money</i> /2 (p. 145-243)
4	30 Sept	Martin Amis: <i>Money</i> /3 (p. 275-394)
5	7 Oct	Angela Carter: <i>Wise Children</i> /1 (p. 1-109, Ch. 1-2)
6	14 Oct	Angela Carter: <i>Wise Children</i> /2 (p. 110-232, Ch. 3-5)
7	21 Oct	Ian McEwan: <i>The Innocent</i> /1 (Ch. 1-13)
8	28 Oct	Ian McEwan: <i>The Innocent</i> /2
9	4 Nov	<b>CONSULTATION WEEK (No class)</b>
10	11 Nov	Jeanette Winterson: <i>Sexing the Cherry</i>
11	18 Nov	Graham Swift: <i>Waterland</i> /1 (chapters 1-22, p. 1-154)
12	25 Nov	Graham Swift: <i>Waterland</i> /2 (chapters 23-52, p. 154-310)
13	2 Dec	Ali Smith: <i>Hotel World</i> OR Iain Banks: <i>The Wasp Factory</i> OR Nirpal Singh Dhaliwal: <i>Tourism</i>
14	9 Dec	Essay deadline (Friday, 10 December, 12.00)