

FS 2021 – B.A. Seminar
**American Modernism:
Dreams and Catastrophes**

Prof. Elisabeth Bronfen

Wednesdays 16.15-18.00

- (1) Feb 24 Meet & Greet with Charlie Chaplin, *Modern Times* (1936)

HIGH MODERNISM

- (2) Mar 3 Gertrude Stein, “Melanctha: EACH ONE AS SHE MAY” (1909)
(3) Mar 10 Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun also Rises* (1926)
(4) Mar 17 F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night* (1934)
(5) Mar 24 Zelda Fitzgerald, *Save Me the Waltz* (1932)
(6) Mar 31 William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom* (1936)

HARLEM RENAISSANCE

- (7) Apr 14 Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem* (1928)
(8) Apr 21 Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (1928)
(9) Apr 28 Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)

CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD

- (10) May 5 The Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire musical:
Swing Time (1936) and *Shall we Dance* (1937)
(11) May 19 The Gangster Movie:
The Roaring Twenties, Raoul Walsh (1939)
(12) May 26 The Sophisticated Comedy:
Adam’s Rib, George Cukor (1949)

INTO THE POSTMODERN

- (13) June 2 Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (1955)

Course Requirements

Portfolio

Forum Posts

All students must prepare write a forum post **for 10 of the seminar sessions** (200-300 words), to be posted on the OLAT forum by 9 a.m. on Tuesday of the respective week. Each post should entail a **thesis**, but could also contain a series of questions, comments or associations. It should present an argument; indeed, it should help you practice your skills at argumentation. At the same time, it will facilitate class discussion and allow us to see in what directions you have been thinking while preparing for each session. The point is not to read out what you have written but, using what you have developed in writing, to enter into a dialog with the other members of the class. The thesis papers will count towards your portfolio and, thus, are compulsory. Please note that thesis papers that are not posted on time will not be counted towards your points, i.e. portfolio grade.

Short Research Paper

Students will do background research on the subject of session and compile this research in a short essay (1000-1500 words). They will be asked to speak to the content of their research **in the corresponding session**. A final version of the research paper should be sent as a PDF **one week after the session** to morgane.ghilardi@es.uzh.ch.

Handing in your portfolio: At the end of the semester, please compile your forum posts and your short research essay using **the template provided on OLAT**. Students should send their portfolio as a PDF by **June 4, 2021** to morgane.ghilardi@es.uzh.ch. The portfolio accounts for **20% of the final grade**.

Final Essay

All students should hand in an essay (4000-5000 words) by **October 1, 2021**. The essay should be typed in a 12p serif font, double spaced, and have a title page. Hand in your essay as a PDF version (incl. *Selbstständigkeitserklärung*) to morgane.ghilardi@es.uzh.ch.

The essay, which accounts for **80% of the final grade**, should be based on the materials covered in this B.A. seminar, as well as the class discussions. Your essay must include a strong thesis statement (this can be several sentences) at the beginning of your paper (within the first page). A thesis is a statement that is arguable; but, also one that requires a coherent argument and materials supporting the argument. You are also expected to do research on your topic beyond the recommended literature and the theoretical texts discussed in the seminar. If you would like to discuss your thesis and outline before writing your essay, you can get in touch with Prof. Elisabeth Bronfen or one of her assistants, Morgane Ghilardi and Mansi Tiwari.