The future of the novel: New literary forms beyond the centres

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Course code: KIR.234

Monday 12–14. First class 15 January 2024, final exam 22 April 2024

Grading based on: 50 % exam (0-5), 25 % tasks (pass-fail), 25 % active attendance (0-5).

Regular attendance and timely submission of individual tasks required.

The course consists of: 1) lectures 2) individual tasks 3) an open book exam.

Reading requirements: regular theory readings and extracts from literary texts AND one book of your choosing from the reading list.

Abstract

The novel is the globally dominant genre of prose fiction today. How is it being transformed in the twenty-first century? And what new literary forms are being developed in European cultural peripheries? This course addresses these questions by offering a broad introduction to new formalism and contemporary theories of world literature, and through a series of diverse literary readings. The focus of the literary readings will be on literature beyond the current centres of the international literary field, especially literature from continental European peripheries: texts from Ukrainian and Polish contexts, from rural France and the Swedish smalltown, among others. The texts will be read in excerpts in English translation.

Literary texts will act as key resources and the students will be asked to actively reflect on the ways literary forms are tied to the socio-cultural functions of literary works. Regular theory reading and active participation are required. The evaluation will be based on participation, course work, and an open-book exam.

The course will provide students with a thorough understanding of contemporary debates on literary form and world literature, and will enable to understand how new literature from beyond the centres is pushing the boundaries of the contemporary novel. The overall objective of the course is to help shape a better awareness of literature as an integral part of society and a key element of the way we construct notions of identity, memory, language, ethics, politics – and, in short, social reality.

Course outline

1. Introduction 1


2. Introduction 2

The novel within the twenty-first century literary field. World literature.

3. Machine Forms: À La Ligne


4. Polyphone: Osebol

Voice, authenticity, and polyphony


5. Narrative: Mondegreen

Focus on form: the novel, satire and narrative form


6. Capital: Time Shelter

Focus on world-literary context: literary value and aesthetic capital


7. Experiment: The House of Day, the House of Night

"Experimental novel", literary experiment


8. Guest lecture by Eric Hayot: “The End of Aesthetic History; or, Provincializing Modernism”

9. Conclusion: Solaris corrected

Epic, future language, concluding remarks

Literary reading: excerpt from Øyvind Rimbereid 2004/2011: Solaris korriger / Solaris corrected


10. Open book exam