

DRAFT

American University of Beirut, Fall Term 2015/2016

ENGL 217 The Novel

Dr. Sonja Mejcher-Atassi

Class Times: TR 9:30-10:45

Room: Fisk 339

Office: Fisk 345

Office Hours: TR 11-12:30 or by appointment

Email: sm78@aub.edu.lb

Description

The course aims at introducing you to the novel, to theories of the novel as well as to a range of literary practices that are usually defined as novels. In the theoretical sections, we focus on foundational texts by twentieth-century theorists of the novel, such as Georg Lukács, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Franco Moretti. These will be read in conversation with literary texts written after WWII. The formation of the novel has a long history that some trace back to antiquity, but it is usually placed in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe. The genre flourished in genuinely new ways after WWII with writers, such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, who were closely linked to modernist avant-garde movements. WWI also served Lukács as “the immediate motive for writing” his *The Theory of the Novel* (1916), as he recalls in his 1962 preface. The novel as genre has travelled widely. While the majority of our texts are from European/Western literary contexts, an excursion on world literature and the novel, focusing on ‘Abd al-Rahman Munif, offers insights into the novel in non-Western contexts and raises questions about the circulation and translation of literary texts.

The course includes three novels, which have to be read by all students, in addition to five novels to be chosen, presented, and discussed by groups of 3 to 4 students together from within the range of (1) the nouveau roman/new novel, (2) fantasy, (3) detective/crime/thriller, (4) world literature, and (5) the graphic novel.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, you will be able to

1. **critically engage** with theories of the novel as well as with a range of literary practices that are usually defined under the term novel
2. **analyze** novels of different historical and cultural background
3. **formulate questions and construct arguments** in academic writing about the novel

Course Requirements and Grading

1. Class **participation** is crucial. It is 10% of your final grade. Please, do not miss any class. In case you cannot make it to class, please do let me know in advance. Participation means that you must do all the required reading, bring the relevant material to class, and contribute to our discussions in class.
2. You have to do **two written responses** of c. 1000 words to be handed in by October 15 (*in lieu* of a midterm). One response has to be on a theoretical text, the other on a literary text. The responses should demonstrate your engagement with the texts and raise critical questions. Each response is 10% of your final grade.
3. You have to participate in a **group presentation** (3 to 4 students) about a novel of your choice. A list will circulate at the beginning of term for you to sign up. Each group has to provide the class with a 1-2 pages max. handout. The handout should include the course's number and title, your names, the title of your presentation, your main argument/thesis, a brief structure of your presentation with key quotes and terms, and a list of all sources you consulted for the presentation. The presentation is 20% of your final grade.
4. You have to draft an **encyclopedia entry** of 1000 words on the novel, informed by our reading and class discussion, which is 10% of your final grade.
5. You will hand in a **research paper** at the end of the semester which accounts for another 40% of your final grade but is broken down into two stages: an **abstract/proposal** (10%) and the **final paper** (30%). The abstract/proposal should be concise and not exceed 350 words in addition to a preliminary bibliography. Please, make sure to make a clear argument in your abstract, which you will then pursue in your paper. Your paper can build on your reading responses and/or the group presentation you participated in. You can choose to either (1) focus on a text/texts from our syllabus and go more deeply into some of the questions this text/these texts raises/raise, or (2) bring in a new text/new texts and discuss it/them in view of the questions discussed in class. The final paper should not exceed 3000 words.

Plagiarism is a serious assault on academic integrity and honesty. It results in a failing grade of forty and is dealt with in accordance to the AUB "Student Code of Conduct" – see *Student Handbook* and <http://pnp.aub.edu.lb/general/conductcode/158010081.html>.

Please, hand in all required work in hard copy as well as on Moodle (through turnitin). Due dates are marked below and posted on Moodle.

1. Participation	10 %	
2. Two written responses (each 10%)	20 %	- due by Oct. 15
3. Group presentation	20 %	
4. Draft encyclopedia entry	10%	- due by Nov. 24
5. Research paper	40 %	
- consisting of an abstract/proposal (10%) due Dec. 1 and the paper (30%) due Dec. 8		

Help and resources

Writing Center:

The Writing Center offers free, one-hour consultations for AUB writers at Ada Dodge Hall, 2nd floor balcony; West Hall 336; or Jafet Library, second floor reading room. Check the Writing Center webpage on the AUB website. Make an appointment by walking in or by logging on to <http://www.rich75.com/aub>.

Library Information Services:

Reference librarians and information specialists in the AUB libraries can support you individually with finding academic sources for your research. Jafet information librarians can be contacted in the Jafet Library lobby or by email at libinfo@aub.edu.lb.

Counseling Center, Student Affairs:

The center offers counsel and help to students with a range of academic and non-academic problems. If anything happening in your life is causing you distress and influencing your academic performance, and you feel you could benefit from professional help, contact Dr. Antoine Khabbaz at ext. 3178, email: ak28@aub.edu.lb, or Dr. Nay Khatcherian at ext. 3158, email: nk63@aub.edu.lb, in West Hall 210.

Course Material

You have to purchase the following books from AUB Bookstore: Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*; James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*; Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*; ‘Abd al-Rahman Munif, *Endings*. These are marked in the weekly schedule below with an asterisk (*). All other required reading is available on Moodle. Please, make sure to always bring the required reading for the week with you to class. You can find further recommendations below.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Text
Week 1	Sept. 3	Introduction to the Novel	Syllabus
Week 2	Sept. 8	Defining the term	Reading encyclopedia entries
	Sept. 10		Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller,” in <i>Illuminations</i> , ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn, (London: Pimlico, 1999), 83–107.
Week 3	Sept. 15		Georg Lukács, From <i>The Historical</i>

			<p>Novel, in <i>The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism</i>, ed. Vincent B. Leitch, (New York: Norton, 2010), 905–21.</p> <p>Georg Lukács, <i>The Theory of the Novel: A historico-philosophical essay on the forms of great epic literature</i> (London: Merlin Press, 2006; 1916) 40–55, 56–69, 70–83.*</p>
	Sept. 17		Continued.
Week 4	Sept. 22		James Joyce, <i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008; 1916).*
	Sept. 24	Al-Adha Holiday – No classes	
Week 5	Sept. 29		Continued.
	Oct. 1		Virginia Woolf, <i>A Room of One's Own</i> (London: Penguin, 2004; 1928).*
Week 6	Oct. 6		Virginia Woolf, <i>Orlando</i> (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015; 1928).* – and film by Sally Potter, 1992.
	Oct. 8		Continued.
Week 7	Oct. 13		Mikhail M. Bakhtin, From <i>Discourse in the Novel</i> , in <i>The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism</i> , ed. Vincent B. Leitch, (New York: Norton, 2010), 1072–1106.
	Oct. 15	Hijra New Year – No classes	
Week 8	Oct. 20		John Neubauer, “Inscriptions of Homelessness in Theories of the Novel,” <i>Poetics Today</i> 17.4 (1996): 532–46.
	Oct. 22		Novel of your choice – group 1 (new novel/nouveau roman)

Week 9	Oct. 27		<p>Franco Moretti, “Lukacs’s Theory of the Novel: Centenary Reflections,” <i>New Left Review</i> 91, January 2015, http://newleftreview.org/II/91/franco-moretti-lukacs-s-theory-of-the-novel</p> <p>Franco Moretti, “Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History,” in <i>The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism</i>, ed. Vincent B. Leitch, (New York: Norton, 2010), 2438–64.</p>
	Oct. 29		Continued.
Week 10	Nov. 3		Novel of your choice – group 2 (fantasy)
	Nov. 5		Novel of your choice – group 3 (detective, crime, thriller)
Week 11	Nov. 10		David Damrosch, “Introduction,” in <i>What Is World Literature?</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 1–36.
	Nov. 12		Brian T. Edwards, “Logics and Contexts of Circulation,” in <i>A Companion to Comparative Literature</i> , eds. Ali Behdad and Dominic Thomas, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 454–72.
Week 12	Nov. 17		‘Abd al-Rahman Munif, <i>Endings</i> , trans. Roger Allen (Northampton, Mass: Interlink, 2007; 1977).*
	Nov. 19		<p>Continued.</p> <p>John Updike, “Satan’s Work and Silted Cisterns,” <i>The New Yorker</i> 17.10.1988, 117–21.</p>
Week 13	Nov. 24		Novel of your choice – group 4 (world literature)

	Nov. 26		Novel of your choice – group 5 (graphic novel)
Week 14	Dec. 1	Revising the term	Wrap-up and writing encyclopedia entries
	Dec. 3		Wrap-up and research paper abstracts

Further Recommendations

Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Frederic Jameson, From *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch, (New York: Norton, 2010), 1818–60.

Franco Moretti (ed.), *The Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 2 vols.

Franco Moretti, “History of the Novel, Theory of the Novel,” *Novel* 48.2 (2010): 1–10.