

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
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Séminaire " Textes en contexte " : Madness and Vision: the Figure of the Artist in 19th and

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
Pilier principal B A - langue et littérature anglaises	Séminaire: 2 ph	cont. continu	
Pilier principal M A - littératures	Séminaire: 2 ph	cont. continu	5
Pilier secondaire B A - langue et littérature anglaises	Séminaire: 2 ph	cont. continu	5
Pilier secondaire M A - littératures	Séminaire: 2 ph	cont. continu	5

ph=période hebdomadaire, pg=période globale, j=jour, dj=demi-jour, h=heure, min=minute

Période d'enseignement:

- Semestre Automne

Equipe enseignante:

Mme Roxana Vicovanu

Objectifs:

This seminar aims to study the general shift that the representation of the figure of the artist and the literary reflection on the creative process underwent over the course of the 19th century. Invested by Romanticism with the power to re-enact creation in art's "second nature", the artist is during the first half of the 19th century a God-like or Promethean figure, but also, by virtue of the same power, subject to demonic temptation and failure. He can either give life or take it away, use his mental gifts or abuse them. The ambivalence is manifest in Poe's mad artist (Roderick Usher), overwhelmed by his own exacerbated sensitivity. At the beginning of the 20th century, however, the emphasis is no longer on the figure of the visionary artist, but on the artwork and on the process of artistic production itself. James's character of the writer in *The Figure in the Carpet* (Hugh Vereker) can thus be seen as the displacement of the Romantic belief in divine inspiration and artistic temperament toward concerns with both life experience and formal composition, toward the notion of an artwork which configures itself, as well as its producer.

Through the discussion of the figure of the artist in writings by Edgar Allan Poe, Oscar Wilde, Henry James and Virginia Woolf, the course will also explore one of the main features of literary and artistic modernity, namely the relationship between literature and painting. As we will see, it is precisely the figure of the artist as celebrated by Romanticism which provides a renewed link between the two "sister-arts" at the beginning of the 20th century, in spite of the modernist insistence on each medium's specificity.

Contenu:

We will explore and discuss the following elements:

- conceptions of art, the nature of the artist and the creative process in Romanticism, Aestheticism and Modernism
- different literary paradigms of the relationship art – life, art – society, art – ethics
- major themes related to the literary representation of the artist: the deadly or magic portrait (Poe, James); reversals of the Pygmalion myth (Poe); perception as a synesthetic and visionary experience (Poe, Woolf); the motif of the secret (Wilde, James, Woolf); the question of transmission and lineage, artistic filiation or blood relation (Poe, James, Woolf); the tension between art and nature, between content and form, between conception and production.

Forme de l'évaluation:

Participation in class discussion, oral reports in class (30%) and final written essay (15-20 pages) to be handed in two weeks after the end of classes (70%).

"Rattrapage"/Retake: written essay (15-20 pages) (100%).

Documentation:

E.A. Poe, *The Oval Portrait* (1842), *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839) (Will be part of the printed reader)

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890/1891) (Oxford World's Classics ed.)

Henry James, *The Figure in the Carpet* (1896), *The Beldonald Holbein* (1901), *The Art of Fiction* (1884) (Will be part of the printed reader. Also online in numerous electronic editions: gutenberg.org, etc.)

Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse* (1927) (Oxford World's Classics ed.)

A selection of additional readings (prefaces by Henry James, essays by Virginia Woolf...) and a critical bibliography will be made available at the beginning of the seminar.

Early 20th Century British and American Literature (2AN2046)

Forme de l'enseignement:

Seminar