

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
- www.unine.ch/lettres

Seminar 4: Modern and Contemporary Literature: Contemporary American Fiction (2AN1475)

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
Pilier B A - langue et littérature anglaises	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	6

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

Période d'enseignement:

- Semestre Printemps

Equipe enseignante

Patrick Vincent

Contenu

Novels have never felt more important in a digital age in which truth can longer be distinguished from fiction and attention has become a scarce commodity. In this seminar, we will discuss six significant short American novels published since 2000, asking how they address our contemporary age, and in what ways they may be read as allegories on the state of the nation. Focusing on the connected themes of immigration and race, education and society, and religion and family, we will look at ways in which the United States, in the words of George Packer, may be 'unwinding'. Supplementary material will be presented in class addressing contemporary topics such as the myth of American exceptionalism, neoliberalism, secularization, multiculturalism, racism, LGBT rights, the 'culture wars', climate catastrophism and ecocide, as well as the place of reading and writing in the digital age. Is America, as Julia Kristeva has argued, a depressed society because it cannot get past its lost ideals?

Forme de l'évaluation

Weekly reading and discussion, critical essay (+- 2000 words) and 1 book review (1000 words)

Students will have the option to read 5 novels of their choice out of the 6.

Modalités de rattrapage

The essay can be rewritten once if it receives a failing grade.

Documentation

Available at Payot:

Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (2006)
 Junot Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2008)
 Marilyn Robinson, *Lila* (2014)
 Ottessa Moshfegh, *Eileen* (2016)
 Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019)
 Colson Whitehead, *The Nickel Boys* (2019)

Supplementary reading, including secondary criticism and reviews will be placed on Moodle: Cours 2023-24 > Institut d'Anglais > Contemporary American Fiction

Pré-requis

Introduction to Literature in English. Lecture course 4 is also recommended.

Forme de l'enseignement

seminar, with mini-lectures and classroom discussion