

## Dr. Göran Nieragden, M.A.: Vergebene Examens-Klausurthemen (Stand NOV 2011)

### 'Literaturwissenschaft' (including film, history, politics, cultural studies)

- Argue in how far we can understand Post-World War II US-American plays as portraits of a 'decline' of salesmanship in America. Refer to three-four different plays by at least three different playwrights.
- Compare and contrast the gender images in your own selection of short stories by Ernest Hemingway
- Compare the representation of London in a selection of poems from various epochs. Consider both content and formal elements of the poems, and develop different 'versions' of the city.
- Discuss and systematize the functions, symbolic values, personifications, and the 'meaning' of the London Underground system, the 'Tube', in contemporary English prose writing. Refer to at least two different textual sources.
- Discuss arguments relating to the issue of the 'Death Penalty' in 'Civilized Societies'. Refer to more than one nationally or culturally defined collective/society.
- Discuss in how far a specific social background and economic status can influence the potential for creative expression with reference to a variety of trends in popular music.
- Discuss in how far we can talk of the USA as 'A Changed Nation' after the events of "9/11". Refer to a variety of medial and textual representations of the event and its aftermath and to a variety of everyday life practices and rituals.
- Discuss in how far we can understand the works of Paul Auster as a critique/portrait of American society, or of 'Americanness' in general. Refer to a selection of two-four of his novels.
- Discuss in what ways post-1945 African-American literature influenced, and was influenced by, anti-racist political movements. Refer to a variety of examples.
- Discuss the (earlier) film and the (later) book version of N. Kleinbaum's *Dead Poets Society* as an example of 'novelization'. You should refer to the treatment of several themes and motifs in both narrative forms.
- Discuss the analytic value which selected models from Linguistics *and* from Cultural Studies can have for the field of Intercultural Communication.
- Discuss the degree to which we can read Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield as chief exponents of both (early 20<sup>th</sup> century) Modernist Fiction *and* (timeless) Feminist Fiction. Refer to several narrative texts by both authors.
- Discuss the development of the characters in Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love* and *Saturday*.
- Discuss the image complexes of 'gender' and 'race' in your own selection of writings by US-American novelist Toni Morrison.
- Discuss the presentation of setting and landscape in American literature, with special reference to large urban areas.
- Discuss the recent notion of 'Chavs' as an emerging British subculture. Refer to fashion, style, intellectual attitude, urban geography, and relate the whole movement to contemporary British society at large.
- Discuss the representation of the topic area of adolescence in contemporary American narrative literature.
- Discuss the representations of race, racism and identity in your own selection of writings by US-American novelists Richard Wright and Toni Morrison.
- Discuss the significance of Intercultural Communication for the global society of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Address diverse models and concepts of IC.
- Edgar Allan Poe – Versatile Genius, Tormented Personality. Discuss with reference to both his life and works.
- Give a historically contrastive overview of the ways in which the areas of print media and advertising portray[ed] female gender images. Your aim should be to point out in how far e.g. stereotyping of content and semiotic technique of representation have changed through a series of campaigns from various epochs.
- Hamlet* and the '*Hamlet* Industry': Discuss the play's historical contextualization, ongoing significance and inspiration for neverending scholarship.
- Illustrate in how far we can read the main characters in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Helen Fielding's *The Diary of Bridget Jones* as symbolic representations of their respective times' chief values
- Illustrate in how far we can understand the movies *The Fearless Vampire Killers* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* as parodies of traditional Gothic narrative tales. Refer to filmic elements, techniques, and contents.
- Illustrate the (potentially changing) historical significance of Pearl S. Buck's novel *The Good Earth*. How can a story set in pre-revolutionary China be understood as a 'lesson' for contemporary America?
- Illustrate the elements of contemporary life, such as politics, geography, traditions, which recent Tasmanian fiction concentrates on. You should refer to at least two different novels.
- Illustrate the elements of Postmodernism in three of Ian McEwan's Novels

- Illustrate the extent to which we can understand Oscar Wilde's "The Happy Prince" as a typical and/or as a counter-example of traditional English fairy tales.
- Illustrate the manner in which perspectival shifts influence the plot of Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. Point out the effects upon readers' expectations (at a number of significant moments) and their changing willingness to 'believe' and 'trust' specific characters.
- Illustrate the role that 20<sup>th</sup> Century American narrative literature has played in expressing the identity of diverse social or ethnic groupings. Refer to examples from the sub-genres of African-American, Jewish-American and 'Beat Generation' fiction.
- Illustrate the treatment of the idea(l) of Englishness in the following poems by John Betjeman: "Beside the Seaside"; "In Westminster Abbey"; "Diary of a Church Mouse". Refer to various elements of the idea(l) in Betjeman's understanding, and to a number of poetic techniques and devices. [The poems are attached to this sheet on a separate page]
- Illustrate the ways in which the movie *Remember the Titans* takes up issues of American racism. Pay special attention to the function that real historical and personal references are given in order to support the movie's general anti-racist 'message'.
- In what ways and to what extent can we understand Nick Hornby's fiction as serious social criticism of contemporary society's concerns? Refer to at least two different novels.
- In what ways can we compare the essence and the development of female identity against the historical backgrounds in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*?
- In what ways do the various theories within the field of 'Intercultural Communication' help promoting a better understanding among two target cultures of your choice?
- In what ways does Helen Fielding's *The Diary of Bridget Jones* take up elements (characters, conflicts, topics, themes, motifs) from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*?
- On which levels (e.g. stereotyping, prejudices etc.) does the movie *Bend It Like Beckham* manage to portray the serious topic of 'culture clashes' with funny and benevolent undertones? Refer to a mixture of issues such as parenthood, friendship, religious orientation etc.
- On which structural and/or topical grounds can we compare the 'Americas' presented in Paul Auster's *Moon Palace* and Dean Bakopoulos' *Please Don't Come Back From the Moon*?
- Outline and assess the theoretical model of 'individualism vs. collectivism' against the background of the general framework of Intercultural Communication.
- Point out the gender role models that Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* present for 18<sup>th</sup> Century society.
- Provide a detailed account of how Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* deals with questions of 'identity formation' and 'identity preservation'. You should base your arguments on key concepts from Postcolonialism and refer to character, setting and style.
- Religious Life in a Secular Society – Life, Beliefs, Integration and Separation of the Amish People in the United States.
- Sketch out the foundations and central elements of the development towards an American identity as evident in prose writings from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present Age.
- Sketch out the general attitude to nature in a number of 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Poets of your choice.
- Sketch out the images of colonialism and the gender images of 'man' and 'woman' which E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* displays
- Sketch out the origins, the ethical strongholds, the internal structure and the contemporary significance of Quakerism with reference to the religious identity of the United States.
- Sketch out the place of the 'Punk' movement in the development of British national identity. Refer to its role in cultural affairs, in youth movements, and its origins.
- Sketch out the various 'meanings' that body movements, gestures, and facial expressions as parts of non-verbal communication can have in a selection of different intercultural contexts. Refer to a variety of national and geographical examples.
- Undertake a contrastive-comparative analysis of family life and family values in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Pat Barker's *Liza's England*. Pay special attention to the historical changes within society through the 150 years lying between the novels' publication.
- Undertake a contrastive-comparative analysis of the image of the Native American in the movies *Dances with Wolves* and *Thunderheart*. Refer to filmic elements, techniques, and contents.
- Undertake a contrastive-comparative analysis of the 'images of women' in three - four of Oscar Wilde's late comedies.
- Undertake a contrastive-comparative analysis of the representation of 'Adolescence' in a selection of two-three contemporary US-American novels.

- Undertake a critical assessment of the treatment of marriage in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* against the backdrop of the real-life situation in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England.
- Undertake a detailed comparative analysis of the 'images of women' which Quentin Tarantino's movies display. Refer to a minimum of two and a maximum of four different movies.
- Undertake two detailed analytical readings / interpretations of William Wordsworth's poem "I wandered lonely as cloud". Your approaches must be markedly different and highlight diverse form and content-based elements of the text. [The poem is attached to this sheet on a separate page]
- Wendy Cope – A Contemporary British Poet. Outline her main thematic concerns and technical preferences against the general background of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Women's Poetry.
- What are the dominant characteristic features of these three genres of so-called 'small forms' of literature: Mini-Saga, Urban Legend, Short Short Story?
- What are the dominant values of 'family', 'womanhood' and 'society' in feminist novels of past ages? Discuss with reference either to Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (GB, 1722) or Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (USA, 1899).
- What are the key similarities *and* differences between four of these narrative short forms (parable, fable, anecdote, short short story, mini-saga, urban legend, ballad, short story)
- What are the 'Landmarks' of Contemporary American Life that Bill Bryson's *Notes from a Big Country* focuses on?
- What makes Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth 'tragic'?
- Which arguments pertaining to the issue of the death penalty do the film and book versions of *Dead Men Walking* present? Which argumentative conclusions are drawn in either?
- Which different, or conflicting interpretations of the motif of the 'American Dream' can we see in selected 20<sup>th</sup> Century American rhetoric? Refer to a variety of political speeches.
- Which elements mark Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* and David Lodge's *Changing Places* as typical representatives of the sub-genre of campus novels?
- Which elements of contemporary American society are the object of criticism in Dean Bakopoulos' *Please Don't Come Back From the Moon*?
- Which elements of Indian life and Indian society does Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* focus on? Pay special attention to points where the novel adopts a critical rather than descriptive position.
- Which features of the idea of a 'Multicultural Britain' does the movie *Bend It Like Beckham* portray? Refer to characters, setting, situations, and verbal humour.
- Which ideals of spiritual and physical love do Shakespearean sonnets display? What do these ideals tell us about the 'spirit' of the Elizabethan Age?
- Which strategies does 20<sup>th</sup> Century African-American prose writing employ to deal with aspects of the topic of personal and ethnic identity? Refer to a variety of examples.
- Which strategies of portraying gender roles do contemporary American filmic and literary narratives employ, and which ideals of society are manifest through these?
- Which subtypes of comedy do Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Joe Orton's *Loot* belong to? Give evidence for your claims!
- Which thematic and formal changes does the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) by Jean Rhys undertake regarding its forerunner *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Brontë?
- Which treatment of historical reality does Ian McEwan's *Atonement* feature? Pay special attention to the so-called 'Dunkirk Retreat' section of the novel.
- Writing Ireland – Irish Writers and their Contribution to the Nation's Identity. Refer to various writers, genres and epochs.
- Youth cultures are supposed to struggle against 'uniformity' and strive for 'individuality' at the same time. Discuss against the backdrop of a number of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Anglo-American youth cultural movements.

### **'Literaturdidaktik'**

- Among English learners, which age groups and competences can profit in particular from using the Internet in English teaching?
- Discuss the aims, methods, benefits, and problems of teaching reading skills to Primary School learners of English as a Foreign Language. Keep in mind both curricular expectations and cognitive-linguistic insights.
- Explore a variety of strategies for the practical teaching of contemporary narrative texts in the English classroom.

- Outline both strategies used, and competences addressed by using songs and poems in Primary School English teaching.
- Outline strategies used, competences addressed, and suitable target learners for using the genre of 'Urban Legend' in English teaching.
- Point out which competences can be addressed, and which teaching aims can be reached by using songs as teaching materials in 'Sek. I'-range English Teaching contexts. Refer to a variety of both song (type)s and learner age groups.
- Point out which competences can be addressed, and which teaching aims can be reached by using songs and poems as teaching materials in English Teaching contexts for various learner groups.
- Sketch out a number of learner-activating and –motivating methods and strategies for English teaching in grades 5-10 and focus both on advantages and shortcomings, and on the competences that they can train.
- Suggest reasons for, and strategies of, using short stories for English Language Teaching. Be precise concerning your choice of teaching aims, age groups, and teaching activities.
- Suggest reasons for, and strategies of, using Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* for the purposes of English Language Teaching.
- What are the possibilities of a production-oriented use of the movie *Bend It Like Beckham* for interculturality-oriented English teaching and learning?
- Which potential can be claimed for the use of so-called 'small forms' of literature in English teaching? You may refer to a choice of the following genres: poem, short story, mini-saga, ballad, song lyric, and should debate different methods and different target learner groups.
- Which thematic concerns make Dean Bakopoulos' *Please Don't Come Back From the Moon* and D.B.C. Pierre's *Vernon God Little* appear suitable for literature teaching in the English language classroom? Discuss with reference to both target learners, and methodical procedures.