

AMN 340.94

Spring 2007

Rm 238

Tue 15:30-17:00

Office hrs: Tue 14:00-15:00 or by appointment

Performing the Subject in Literature

Enikő Bollobás

This is a comparative and interdisciplinary course using concepts, assumptions, and methodologies borrowed from literary criticism, linguistic pragmatics, and feminist theories to explore the discursive constructedness of racial, gender, sexual, and animal identity in literary and other cultural texts. Reading various narratives of identity and passing, we will focus on performative textual and readerly processes that bring about these identities. Not only will the texts be diverse – taken from male and female, black and white, homosexual and heterosexual authors – but their interpretations will also be shown to involve different cultural assumptions and other presuppositions we as readers bring to the texts.

Authors to be discussed include: Mark Twain, Henry James, James Weldon Johnson, D.H. Lawrence, Jonathan Swift, T. S. Eliot, Ignotus, Géza Szócs, Gertrude Stein, H. D., Willa Cather, and Djuna Barnes.

The course falls into two parts: in the first part (ca. two months) we shall read literary texts, while in the second part (during the last four weeks) students will take the floor as they present their research results in some aspect of American and/or Hungarian culture. More specifically, students will be expected to give a presentation on how identities can be seen as performed outside literature too (for example, in films, photography, politics, education, everyday culture, public relations). As to the presentations, if our campus does indeed have to move during the semester, we might even pack them into one day (I would recommend a Saturday) some time in May (say, the 12th).

Requirements: in the first part of the course students will first comprehend the theoretical apparatus (given during my first two presentations), then apply it to the literary texts assigned for each class. In the second part of the course, students will use the theoretical concepts and methodologies when giving a ca. 20 minute presentation, and will write up their presentation in a 6-8 page research paper. Grades will be based on class participation (50%) and the presentation-cum-research paper (50%).

Schedule of topics and assignments

February 6	Orientation
February 13	Linguistic Pragmatics, Speech Act Theory, Literary Pragmatics (instructor's presentation)
February 20	Performing gender: Swift, Eliot, Ignotus, Szócs, etc. (instructor's presentation) READ: Jonathan Swift, "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed" T. S. Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i> (typist episode, lines 222-248) Ignotus, <i>Madame Récamier</i> Szócs Géza, <i>Találkozás a József téren</i> (A Meeting on József Sq) Bollobás Enikő, "Hogyan készül a nő?" <i>Holmi</i> XIV/3 (2002 márc.). 326-334. OR: E. Bollobás, "(De-)Gendering and (De-)Sexualizing Female Subjectivities." <i>Eger Journal of American Studies</i> VIII (2002). 105-120.
February 27	Performing texts, performing readings READ: Henry James, <i>The Beast in the Jungle</i> , <i>In the Cage</i>
March 6	Performing the real READ: Mark Twain, <i>The Mysterious Stranger</i>
March 13	Performing passing READ: James Weldon Johnson, <i>The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i> (in <i>The Norton Anthology of African American Literature</i>)
March 20	D. H. Lawrence, <i>The Fox</i>
March 27	D. H. Lawrence, <i>St. Mawr</i>
April 17	Presentations
<hr/>	
April 24	Presentations
<hr/>	
May 8	Presentations

May 15

Presentations

May 18

TERM PAPERS DUE (NO LATE SUBMISSIONS)