Engelska institutionen
Konst för konstens skull: Estetik och dekadens i kontext
Art for art’s sake: Aestheticism and Decadence in Context

7.5 Högskolepääng
5. ECTS credits

Kurskod: ENAD75
Gäller från: HT 2019
Fastställd: 2019-01-25
Institution: Engelska institutionen

Huvudområde: Engelska
Fördjupning: A1N - Avancerad nivå, har endast kurs/er på grundnivå somförkunskapskrav

Course Description

The course deals with aesthetic and decadent literature from the 19th century, beginning with its roots in Romanticism and following the movement through to the point at which decadence feeds into modernism. Central is the concept of ‘art for art’s sake’, with the course focusing on how this concept challenged the aesthetic and literary conventions of the 19th century, in particular the ideas of ‘realism’ and ‘naturalism’. Additionally, the course considers the ways in which the aesthetic movement related to traditional ideas about the relationship between art and reality.

Intended Learning Outcomes

To pass the course, the student should be able to:

- critically analyze different works that can be described as aesthetic and decadent literature, and be able to situate these works historically and culturally;
- critically reflect on the purpose of literature and its role in society;
- independently identify literary elements pertaining to the relationship between art and reality, and ‘art for art’s sake’;
- formulate a relevant issue for their final thesis;
- explain and motivate one’s own theoretical standpoints and interpretations of literary works and at the same time show respect for the views of others.

Teaching

The teaching consists of eight two-hour long seminars. The language of instruction will be English.

Grading

The module adopts the 7-grade SU scale.
To receive a final grade, students must have completed all the examination assignments [not done all examination assignments=no mark].
To receive a passing grade (A to E), students must complete the written assignments and demonstrate that they achieved all the learning outcomes at least at the minimum level (as described below).

Module activities

The module consists of the following activities:

- Eight two-hour seminars;
- Before each seminar, students are expected to finish the assigned reading, do any accompanying tasks, and discuss the texts and tasks in groups. Students should be prepared to discuss the reading and tasks at the seminar;
- Students are expected to complete all the tasks assigned by the teacher.
Examination

Students are required to complete the following:

- Written assignment one: a practical criticism essay of 1500 words, which must make reference both to a primary source and to at least two secondary peer reviewed sources: 30% of the final grade.
  **Deadline: 7 February, 17.00**

- Written assignment two: a research-led argument essay of 2500 words, which must make reference both to at least two primary sources and to at least two secondary peer reviewed sources: 70% of the final grade.
  **Deadline: 19 March, 17.00**

Module format

The module will take place in the form of seminars. The language of instruction will be English.

Seminars are intended to be active, hands-on opportunities for students to practice the skills they will learn throughout the module; for this reason, the students should bring the assigned text(s) with them to every seminar.

Required reading

Nearly everything we will be reading is out of copyright and available online, but it is important to have the same editions, especially if the texts are translated (as in the case of Baudelaire, Huysmans and Mann) or where explanatory notes are useful (as in the case of Pater). The following are the editions we will use:

  —— *Marius the Epicurean*: any edition, but ideally get a hold (second hand, as both are currently out of print) of either the Oxford classics edition, ed. Ian Small, or the Penguin classics edition, ed. Michael Levey. This is a novel where explanatory notes are useful.

While I haven’t asked you to buy specific editions for ‘Michael Field’, Machen, Lee, Shiel, Swinburne or Symons, the following are recommended if you are looking to buy your own copies:

- Thain, Marion, & Ana Vadillo, eds., *Michael Field: The Poet* (Broadview, 2009)

Other reading (shorter texts) will be disseminated as handouts via mondo:

- Arnold, preface to *Poems*
- Baudelaire, ‘The Painter of Modern Life’
- Foucault, from *The Will to Knowledge*
- Keats, ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, ‘Ode on Melancholy’, ‘Ode to a Nightingale’
Mansfield, ‘The Man, the Monkey and the Mask’
Moréas, ‘Symbolist Manifesto’
Nietzsche, from The Birth of Tragedy
Pater, ‘The Age of Athletic Prizemen’, ‘Style’
Poe, ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’
Plato, from the Symposium
Rossetti, ‘Goblin Market’
Ruskin, from Modern Painters, The Stones of Venice and Fors Clavigera
Swinburne, ‘Notes’; from Charles Baudelaire; from William Blake
Symons, ‘The Death of Peter Waylin’; ‘The Decadent Movement in Literature’
Tennyson, ‘The Palace of Art’
Verlaine, ‘Languer’
Whistler, from Mr Whistler’s Ten O’Clock
Yeats, ‘Sailing to Byzantium’, ‘The Second Coming’

Further reading

Students are expected to read around the topic in order to produce their written assignments, which must show engagement with at least two secondary peer reviewed sources per written submission. The following represents a non-exhaustive list of useful places to start:

Editions
Lee, Vernon, Hauntings and Other Fantastic Tales, ed. Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham (Broadview, 2006)

Peer reviewed criticism
Brown, Julia Prewitt, Cosmopolitan Criticism: Oscar Wilde’s Philosophy of Art (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997)
Danson, Lawrence, Wilde’s Intentions: The Artist in his Criticism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
Denisoff, Dennis, Aestheticism and Sexual Parody 1840-1940 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
Ellmann, Richard, Oscar Wilde (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988)
Evangelista, Stephano, British Aestheticism and Ancient Greece (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)


Maxwell, Catherine, and Stefano Evangelista, eds., *Algernon Charles Swinburne, Unofficial Laureate* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013)


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*Please note that there may be occasional changes to seminar dates/times and rooms. Check Time Edit regularly for updates.*
Assessment and Assessment Criteria

Excellent

For a grade of A the student should …

- Show the ability to critically analyze theoretical arguments and literary works in a manner that is innovative and illuminating, and where appropriate, deploying critical concepts in a nuanced manner.
- Show the ability to critically reflect on the relationship between art, life, reality and society.
- Show the ability to independently formulate a research question which is arguable and of scholarly significance.
- Show the ability to explain and motivate one’s own theoretical standpoints and interpretations, while also showing the ability to respect the views of others.

Very good

For a grade of B the student should …

- Show the ability to critically analyze theoretical arguments and literary works in a manner that is illuminating, and where appropriate, deploying critical concepts in a nuanced manner.
- Show the ability to critically reflect on the relationship between art, life, reality and society.
- Show the ability to independently formulate a research question which is arguable and of scholarly significance.
- Show the ability to explain and motivate one’s own theoretical standpoints and interpretations, while also showing the ability to respect the views of others.

Good

For a grade of C the student should …

- Show the ability to analyze theoretical arguments and literary works in a manner that is illuminating, and where appropriate, deploying relevant critical concepts.
- Show the ability to critically reflect on the relationship between art, life, reality and society.
- Show the ability to independently formulate a research question which is arguable.
- Show the ability to explain and motivate one’s own interpretations, while also showing the ability to respect the views of others.

Adequate

For a grade of D the student should …

- Display basic knowledge of most of the themes and concepts covered by the course material as well as a familiarity with the texts we have read.
- Show some ability to analyze theoretical arguments and literary works, and where appropriate, show a basic use of relevant critical concepts.
- Show the ability to reflect on the relationship between art, life, reality and society.
- Show the ability to independently formulate a research question which is arguable.
- Show the ability to explain and motivate one’s own interpretations, while also showing the ability to respect the views of others.

Satisfactory

For a grade of E the student should …

- Show some ability to analyze theoretical arguments and literary works, and where appropriate, with at least a minimal employment of technical terms.
- Show the ability to reflect on the relationship between art, life, reality and society.
- Show the ability to formulate a suitable research question.
- Show the ability to explain one’s own interpretations, while also showing the ability to respect the views of others.
Inadequate

A grade of F will be set if the student

- Shows scant or no knowledge of the themes and concepts covered by the course material and little or no familiarity with the texts we have read.
- Fails to reach a satisfactory level of critical analysis in written assignments.

Incomplete

The Fx grade is set if the student has displayed some, but not all, of the skills of the level of the criteria for E.