UPPSALA UNIVERSITY
Department of English
David Watson
Fall 2014

**Postmodernism: Narrative Turns since 1960**
15 credits

**Aims of the course**
The course introduces narrative fiction written in English since 1960. Ranging across postmodernism and other significant literary movements, it focuses on key issues in this period: the narration of history and the body, the impact of popular culture and national identity on literary narratives, postmodern games with world-making, the status of emotions within often self-conscious and ironical literary texts, and the rise and possible demise of the postmodern aesthetic.

**Course schedule and material**

**Sept. 1** Introduction

1) Postmodern Beginnings:

Sept. 8    Nabokov, Vladimir. *Pale Fire*.
(handout)

**Assignment 1 (Due: September 26):** Summarize in no more than 800 words what you take to be the central claims of two of the following three book chapters:


**Sept. 29** Oral Presentation: Postmodern Short Stories

Offer a 10 minutes presentation of one of the following short stories (handouts) in which you offer an account of its postmodern characteristics:

John Barth, “Lost in the Funhouse”
Donald Bartheleme, “The Indian Uprising”
Robert Coover, “The Babysitter” or “Quenby and Ola, Swede and Carl”
William Gass, “In the Heart of the Heart of the Country”
2) Postmodernism, History and Metafiction


**Assignment 2 (due: October 15):** Write a commentary of about 800 words on the usefulness of Linda Hutcheon’s notions of historiographic metafiction and the ex-centric for your understanding of Fowles’s and Winterson’s novels.


3) Postmodernism and Gender

Oct. 27 Acker, Kathy. *Great Expectations.*

**Assignment 3 (due: October 29):** Write a brief account (800 words) of the tense relationship between feminisms and postmodernism. Consult the following texts:


4) The Postmodern Condition

Nov. 3 Ballard, J.G. *Crash.*
Nov. 10 DeLillo, Don. *White Noise.*

**Assignment 4 (due: Nov. 12):** List at least three features of the postmodern condition. Consult the following:

Jameson, Fredric. “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.” (handout).

5) Postmodernism and Genre Fiction

Nov. 17 Gibson, William. *Neuromancer.*

**Assignment 5 (due: Nov. 26)** Discuss how postmodernism impacts on the conventions of either science fiction or the detective novel (800 words). You may wish to consult the following:


6) Postmodernism and Postcolonial Literature

Dec. 1  Coetzee, J.M. *Foe.*

**Assignment 6 (due: Dec. 10)** Briefly discuss (800 words) potential overlaps and tensions between postmodernism and postcolonialism. You may wish to consult the following, among others:


7) Postmodernism and Identity Politics


**Assignment 7 (due: Dec. 17)** Write a response (800 words) to Mohanty in which you indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following account of postmodernism and Beloved.


Readings and dates are subject to change. Please check your online schedules regularly.

Course Requirements:

1. Mandatory attendance of seminars; any absence will have to be made up for by a written assignment specified by the teacher. If you miss more than two seminars, you run the risk of not being allowed to complete the course. All assignments have to be submitted for you to complete the course.
2. Active participation in class discussions.

3. Assignments (4 of 7)
   You are expected to submit 4 assignments responding to your assigned critical reading. Each assignment should be in the neighbourhood of 800 words, and follow MLA conventions.

4. Oral presentations: You are asked to hold an oral presentation (10 minutes) on a postmodern short story.

5. A research paper (4000-4500 words; MLA format). Write a research paper in which you identify three important features of, or movements within postmodernism, and relate these to at least three texts you have encountered in your seminars. Refer to the critical material you have encountered throughout. You are welcome to make use of the material you have discussed in your assignments. Submission date: 10th of January.

**Assessment**
Your final grade will be based on the following
- active participation in seminar discussions and quality of discussion (total 10)
- assignments (0-10; highest total 40)
- oral presentation (10)
- research paper 40)

Max points: 100

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