

The English Estate Novel

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ECTS: 10

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Year: JS

Module description

This option explores the English 'estate' or 'country house' novel in the twentieth century. We will survey the development and transition of the estate novel in this period, consider the critical and thematic mainstays of the genre, and read from a range of British authors who have engaged this tradition in their writing. In seminar discussions we will pay close critical attention to the impact on the novel of the First and Second World Wars; changing concepts of Englishness; literary representations of class, religion and sexuality, and the estate novel's relationships to Modernism and Postmodernism, Post-imperialism, Metafiction and Gothic. There will also be an opportunity to view some film adaptations of the novels studied. The module texts will be accompanied by directed critical reading (provided on Blackboard). Students taking this module will be expected to have read and prepared both primary and secondary bibliography in full for each class.

Module outline

Week 1: Introduction: Defining the 'estate novel': H.G.Wells, *Tono Bungay* (1909) [extract]

Week 2: E.M.Forster, *Howard's End* (1910)

Week 3: D.H.Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928)

Week 4: Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca* (1933)

Week 5: The Ghost Story and the English Estate

Week 6: Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* (1946)

Week 7: Reading Week

Week 8: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (1989)

Week 9: Critical reflection

Week 10: Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (2001)

Week 11: Sarah Waters, *The Little Stranger* (2009)

Week 12: Critical review and assessment preparation

Preliminary background bibliography:

Caserio, Robert (ed). *Cambridge Comp. to C20th English Novel* (2009)

Connor, Stephen. *The English Novel in History 1950-1995* (1996)

Esty, Jed. *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture* (2004)

Harris, Alexandra. *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper* (2010)

Head, Dominic. *Modern British Fiction 1950-2000* (2002)

Hewison, Robert. *Under Siege: Literary Life in London, 1939-1945* (1977)

School of English

Mackay, Marina. *Modernism and World War II* (2007)

Sinfield, Alan. *Literature Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain* (1989)

Smith, Andrew and Jeff Wallace (eds). *Gothic Modernisms* (2001)

Williams, Raymond, *The Country and the City* (1993)

Wright, Patrick. *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (1985)

The English Estate Novel:

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this module students will be able to:

- Outline with competence the history and development of the English estate novel as a distinct literary tradition.
- Discuss in detail the historical, cultural and political contexts of English estate fiction since 1900.
- Display a thorough knowledge of the theoretical and critical issues raised by novelistic deployment of the estate fiction genre.
- Summarise and critique the work of several leading twentieth-century novelists writing within the tradition.

Assessment: 5-6000 word essay (100%)

Please note:

- Curricular information is subject to change.
- Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.