

Genre: An Introduction to Literary Studies (JF MT 2022)

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Module Description

This module examines the concept of genre in order to introduce some of the key structures, themes, reading skills and critical perspectives that underpin English literary studies. We will focus on three major literary genres – poetry, drama and prose fiction -- and discuss the ways in which these have evolved from the classical through to the contemporary era. The module lecturers will explore a range of set texts to illustrate particular formal, stylistic and thematic qualities, and to consider the relationship between literary genre and various social, historical and cultural contexts. The module will also introduce some important critics and theorists of genre and reflect on the role of criticism in the formation of literary canons and traditions.

Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this module students will:

- Understand the evolution of literary genre in its major forms from the classical to the contemporary era
- Be able to locate specific literary genres in historical and cultural context
- Develop awareness of the critical frameworks and categories relevant to the study of literary genre
- Acquire a critical vocabulary relevant to the discussion of literary genre and related concepts
- Gain interpretative skills in reading a selection of illustrative texts from different periods in literary history.

Mode of delivery:

2 lectures each week with accompanying small group tutorials

Assessment:

Mid-semester assignment (1000 words) and 2-hour end-of-semester written examination.

MODULE OUTLINE

Week 2

a) Introduction: What is Genre?

b) Reading for Genre

Text: Aristotle, 'Poetics'

Week 3

a) What is Poetry?

b) Reading Poetry

Texts: Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy* (c.1580) [extracts]; William Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems* (1802).

Week 4

a) Lyric and the Sonnet

b) Texts: Christina Rossetti, 'Monna Innominata' (c.1881); Tony Harrison, *From the School of Eloquence* (1978)

Week 5

a) Epic

b) Texts: Alexander Pope 'The Rape of the Lock' (1712–17); Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (1990) [book 1].

Week 6

a) Introduction to Greek Theatre

b) Text: Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

Week 7

a) Drama and the Comic Genre

b) Text: William Wycherley, *The Country Wife* (1675)

Week 8

a) Changing Forms of Theatre

b) Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days* (1961)

Week 9

a) What is a Novel?

b) The Rise of the Novel and Social Realism:

Text: Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (1848)

Week 10

a) Modernist Fiction: Time, Narrative and 'Story'

b) Texts: D.H. Lawrence, 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' (1909)*, Virginia Woolf, 'The Mark on the Wall' (1917)*, Katherine Mansfield, 'Prelude' (1918)*

Week 11

a) Postmodernism and Metafiction

b) Text: Angela Carter, *Nights at the Circus* (1984)

Week 12

a) Conclusion: The Limits of Genre

b) Course Review and Assessment Preparation

Primary Texts

Students will be advised further on managing their reading at the beginning of the module. Set texts marked with an * will be made available via Blackboard or through one of TCD library's databases. This means that the only book you will need to buy for this course is the Angela Carter novel. It is readily and cheaply available secondhand online.

Aristotle, 'Poetics'*
 Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy* (c.1580) [extracts]*
 William Wordsworth, *Preface to Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems* (1802)*
 Christina Rossetti, 'Monna Innominata' (c.1881)*
 Tony Harrison, *From 'the School of Eloquence' and Other Poems* (1978)*
 Alexander Pope 'The Rape of the Lock' (1712–17)*
 Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (1990) [book 1]*
 Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* *
 William Wycherley, *The Country Wife* (1675)*
 Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days* (1961)*
 Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (1848)*
 D.H. Lawrence, 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' (1909)*
 Virginia Woolf, 'The Mark on the Wall' (1917)*
 Katherine Mansfield, 'Prelude' (1918)*
 Angela Carter, *Nights at the Circus* (1984)

Secondary Reading

Various secondary reading suggestions will be available or signposted via Blackboard and the lectures through the term. Further to this, the below offer some very useful background reading:

POETRY

Attridge, Derek, *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction* (1995)
 -----, *Moving Words: Forms of English Poetry* (2013)
 Hurley, Michael and Michael O'Neill, *Poetic Form: An Introduction* (2012)
 Lennard, John, *The Poetry Handbook* (Second Edition, 2006)
 Matterson, Stephen and Darryl Jones, *Studying Poetry* (2011)
 Ramazani, Jahan, *Poetry and Its Others: News, Prayer, Song, and the Dialogue of Genres* (2013)

DRAMA

Bentley, Eric *The Theory of the Modern Stage* (1968)
 Brook, Peter, *The Empty Space* (1968)
 Carlson, Marvin *Theories of the Theatre* (1993)
 Meisel, Martin *How Plays Work* (2007)
 Steiner, George *The Death of Tragedy* (1961)

PROSE FICTION

Eagleton, Terry, *The English Novel: An Introduction* (2005)
 Hale, Dorothy, ed., *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* (2006)
 Levine, Caroline, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (2015)
 McKeon, Michael, ed., *Theory of the Novel* (2000)
 Prince, Gerald, *Narratology* (1982)