

## US American Identities: Harlem Renaissance to the Present

Module convenor: Prof Stephen Matterson

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Lecturers: Dr Julie Bates, Dr Philip Coleman, Prof Stephen Matterson, Dr Bernice Murphy

ECTS weighting: 5

Year: SF

Term taught: Michaelmas Term

Assessment: Exam

### Module Description:

This module examines modern and contemporary US writing in a variety of genres, interrogating the changing ideas of national literature and exploring the emergence of a variety of voices laying claim to being American. While texts will vary from year to year, they will be drawn from the main genres of prose fiction, drama and poetry, with some consideration also of the short story, the essay and film. The module starting with the Harlem Renaissance is both a historical marker and a cultural statement, taking Langston Hughes's 'I, too, sing America' as one of its core themes.

### Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to

- demonstrate detailed understanding of the origins, development and range of modern U.S. literature
- show awareness of the social and historical contexts of literary production
- engage critically with a range of writing genres: poetry, prose non-fiction, drama, the novel, and the short story
- demonstrate close textual knowledge of key influential and characteristic US texts
- show understanding of various American genres and literary movements such as Gothic, Naturalism, Romanticism, Modernism
- reflect critically on how gender, race and sexual orientation have shaped literary production and are represented in key texts

### Indicative Module Outline:

1. I too sing America: Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance
2. Robert Eggers, dir, *The Witch*
3. Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*
4. Martha Gellhorn, Selections
5. Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire*
6. Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems*
7. Reading Week
8. Shirley Jackson - *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*
9. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
10. Joan Didion, Selections
11. Tony Kushner *Angels in America*
12. Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*

