Gender, Sexuality and Autobiography (SMLM231)

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<th>MODULE CODE</th>
<th>SMLM231</th>
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<tr>
<td>MODULE TITLE</td>
<td>Gender, Sexuality, Autobiography</td>
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<tr>
<td>LECTURER(S)</td>
<td>Dr Jo Gill; Dr Danielle Hipkins; Dr Helen Vassallo (convenor)</td>
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<td>CREDIT VALUE</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>ECTS VALUE</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRE-REQUISITES</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>CO-REQUISITES</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>DURATION OF MODULE</td>
<td>1 term</td>
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<td>TOTAL STUDENT STUDY TIME</td>
<td>300 hours (including 8-20 hours of seminars, depending on the number of students, and the remainder of hours as private study)</td>
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AIMS

This module aims to discuss and analyse autobiographical texts by English, American, French and Italian authors within a thematic framework of gender, sexuality and ‘otherness’, and a theoretical framework of gender, sexuality and autobiography; To consider the implicit and explicit impact of the social conditioning of gender and sexuality on the life narrative; To examine the ways in which the chosen texts challenge the limitations of ‘traditional’ or canonical autobiographies.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILO’s)

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Module Specific Skills:

   a) demonstrate an awareness of the impact of gender and sexuality on the autobiographical project;

   b) analyse how authors/narrators negotiate their agency through a written narrative;

   c) demonstrate an understanding of ‘otherness' and its importance in the re-claiming of agency;

   d) use relevant theory and secondary criticism to probe questions of gender, sexuality and social dis-ease in the autobiographical project.

2. Discipline Specific Skills:

   a) orientate him/herself quickly within cultures with which he or she is initially unfamiliar;

   b) engage critically with a broad range of cultural phenomena, including texts, visual media,
material artefacts, institutions and public discourses;

c) analyse texts and film dialogue in the language(s) in which s/he is competent and otherwise in English translation;

d) understand the assumptions on which his or her own approaches to cultural analysis are based;

e) argue at length and in detail about aspects of the cultures studied, supporting the argument with textual evidence and with opinions from secondary literature;

f) access, and use critically, printed and, where appropriate, electronic learning resources identified as useful by the course tutors;

g) find independently and evaluate critically other relevant resources;

h) using recommended bibliographical tools, present a critical bibliography giving a balanced overview of an aspect of the subject.

3. Personal and Key Skills:

a) Manage own learning time and learning activities, where appropriate with guidance from course tutors;

b) undertake independent researches on the basis of a taught course;

c) negotiate individual assessment tasks and/or topics with course tutor(s), identifying own areas of strength and interest;

d) present information and arguments on a designated or negotiated topic to a group of listeners and respond to questions and responses from the group;

e) adopt a critical approach to the selection and organisation of a large body of material in order to produce, to a deadline, a written or oral argument of some complexity;

f) demonstrate ability to combine a variety of IT skills in researching and reporting on a topic.

LEARNING/TEACHING METHODS

The module is taught primarily through seminars. Students benefit from varied teaching styles and methods, but in all cases a high degree of preparation and participation is expected. Students are required to give presentations. Students are given an opportunity to discuss essays individually with the relevant tutor at the planning stage, and detailed feedback is given once marking is complete.

ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative or % Contribution</th>
<th>Form of Assessment</th>
<th>Size of the assessment e.g. duration/length</th>
<th>ILO's assessed by this assessment</th>
<th>Feedback method:</th>
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<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>3500-4000 words</td>
<td>1a-d; 2a-h; 3a-f</td>
<td>Essay feedback sheet and meeting with tutor</td>
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SYLLABUS PLAN

The seminars on offer will vary slightly from year to year depending on the size of the group taught (8 hours for one student, 12 for two students, 16 for three students, 20 for four or more students), student interests and other factors.

Week 1 Autobiographical fiction and fictional autobiography: theory and discussion. Introduction to Italo Svevo (Dr Danielle Hipkins)

Week 2 Discussion of Zeno's Conscience (1923) (Dr Danielle Hipkins)

Week 3 Women, autobiography and the canon. The background to Sibilla Aleramo (Dr Danielle Hipkins)

Week 4 Discussion of A Woman (1906) (Dr Danielle Hipkins)

Week 5 Introduction to autogynography and relational autobiography. Discussion of Simone de Beauvoir's Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter (Dr Helen Vassallo)

Week 6 Discussion of Simone de Beauvoir's Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter and secondary reading The Second Sex (Dr Helen Vassallo)

Week 7 Introduction to illness theory. Discussion of Hervé Guibert's To the friend who did not save my life (Dr Helen Vassallo)

Week 8 Discussion of Hervé Guibert's To the friend who did not save my life, and secondary reading Audre Lorde's Cancer Journals, and Ruth Picardie's Before I Say Goodbye (Dr Helen Vassallo)

Week 9 Introduction to poetry as autobiography. Discussion of Sharon Olds, Strike Sparks: Selected Poems 1980-2002 (Dr Jo Gill)


Week 11 Introduction to confessional autobiography. Discussion of Nigel Slater, Toast (Dr Jo Gill)

Week 12 Discussion of Nigel Slater, Toast, and secondary reading Blake Morrison, And When Did you Last See your Father? (1993), and J.M. Coetzee, Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life (1998) (Dr Jo Gill)

INDICATIVE LEARNING RESOURCES

Indicative basic reading list:

Primary texts

Sibilla Aleramo, A Woman (1906)

Simone de Beauvoir, Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter (1974)
Hervé Guibert, *To the friend who did not save my life* (1990)

Sharon Olds, *Strike Sparks: Selected Poems 1980-2002*

Nigel Slater, *Toast*

Italo Svevo, *Zeno's Conscience* (1923)

**Secondary texts**

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1949)


Louise Glück, *Descending Figure* (1980)


Blake Morrison, *And When Did you Last See your Father?* (1993)


Tony Harrison, *Continuous* (1981)

**Other resources:**

**Other recommended reading**


Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, Translated by Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986)


Ursula Fanning: ‘Sibilla Aleramo's *Una donna*. A Case Study in Women's Autobiographical Fiction', *The Italianist*, 19 (1999), 164-177


Luce Irigaray, *This sex which is not one* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1985)


| DATE OF LAST REVISION | 11 June 2009 |