**ANG 313 Contagious Disease in American Fiction (Seminar (Intermediate Level))**

**EN**

**Lecture type:**

Seminar (Intermediate Level)

**ECTS:**

6.0

**Course suitable for:**

**Language of instruction:**

English

**Hours per week:**

2

**Attendance:**

Online, live

**Literature:**

Texts:

* Charles Brockden Brown. *Arthur Mervyn; or, Memoirs of the Year 1793*.
* Jack London. *The Scarlet Plague.*
* Ling Ma. *Severance.*

Additional texts will be made available on ILIAS.

**Instructor(s):**

Sabine Metzger

**Date(s):**

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| Tuesday  (weekly) | 02.03.2021 – 15.06.2021 | 15:30 – 17:00 | PHIL-ZOOM-05; Virtuelles Gebäude |

**Description:**

Covid-19 has triggered an increasing appeal of pandemic fiction. Lists of contagion novels are proliferating and show that the fear of infectious diseases and the invisible world of microbes has inspired and haunted authors from Jewish, Greek and Roman Antiquity to Giovanni Bocaccio, from Daniel Defoe to contemporary writers. Whereas during Antiquity and the Middle Ages epidemics were conceived of as divine punishment, the Enlightenment and the growing insights into the mechanisms of infection brought about a shift of focus in contagion narratives. Writers have started to problematize issues like isolation and survival, illness and the process of recovery, the post-pandemic desolation and the breakdown of infrastructures, but as well other anxieties lurking behind the fear of the invisible microbic enemy.

This course will deal with fictional representations of contagious diseases – historical plagues, metaphorical fevers and fictitious epidemics – in American literature from the late 18th to the 21st centuries. We will consider contagious diseases in Gothic and urban literature, in literary Realism and Naturalism, and in dystopian fiction, and focus on novels by Charles Brockden Brown, Jack London and Ling Ma, and on short fictions by E. A. Poe, Edith Wharton and Katherine Anne Porter.