**ANG 414 Neo-Victorian Fiction (Seminar (Advanced Level))**

**EN**

**Lecture type:**

Seminar (Advanced Level)

**ECTS:**

8.0

**Course suitable for:**

**Language of instruction:**

English

**Hours per week:**

2

**Attendance:**

Online, live

**Registration procedure:**

**Registration**: All incoming exchange students at the School of Humanities need to register for their courses via Portal 2. For further details, please check the [instructions](https://unitwikis.uni-mannheim.de/xwiki/bin/view/userdocs/Portal%C2%B2%20Nutzer-Dokumentation/%5BEN%5D%20Documentation/For%20Students/Course%20Registration/Course%20Registration%20for%20International%20Exchange%20Students/) for course registration or contact [incoming@phil.uni-mannheim.de](mailto:incoming@phil.uni-mannheim.de?subject=Course%20registration).

**Literature:**

**Texts**  
  
John Fowles. The French Lieutenant’s Woman  
A.S. Byatt. Possession  
Sarah Moss. Bodies of Light  
Sarah Perry. The Essex Serpent

**Examination achievement:**

Hausarbeit (15-page term paper) or oral exam (20 minutes). Students will also be expected to take part in group work, presentations etc. (Studienleistungen) as a mandatory requirement for taking the final exam. The Studienleistungen will be specified at the beginning of term.

**Instructor(s):**

Stefan Glomb

**Date(s):**

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| Tuesday  (weekly) | 02.03.2021 – 15.06.2021 | 10:15 – 11:45 | PHIL-ZOOM-08; Virtuelles Gebäude |

**Description:**

Paradoxically enough, the Victorian Age appears to be alive and kicking. Judging from the number of novels, films, and series produced year by year, there must be something about the 19th century that still speaks to us: to find out what this might be is one of the objectives of this seminar, which will focus on novels published in the 20th and 21st centuries and set during the reign of Queen Victoria. We will discuss two ‘classics’ of the genre: John Fowles’ The French Lieutenant’s Woman (1969) and A.S. Byatt’s Possession (1990), as well as two more recent examples: Sarah Moss’ Bodies of Light (2014) and Sarah Perry’s The Essex Serpent (2017). Fowles employs an intrusive authorial 20th century narrator to bridge the gap between his Victorian story set in 1867 and the time of the novel’s publication, thus highlighting differences between the two time frames and providing a wealth of background information which helps to contextualize mindsets and events. It is mainly due to the fact that, in doing so, the author also includes metafictional elements, that the novel has been considered to be the first postmodern novel in Britain. Byatt’s Possession also appears to be a prime example of postmodernism, combining metafiction, intertextuality, and a heady mix of genres (it is a historical/campus/detective novel rolled into one): these features along with a suspenseful plot made the novel an instant success both with the general reading public and literary studies departments. Bodies of Light is considerably less playful and humorous, addressing as it does the repercussions of the ‘separate spheres’-ideology which made it virtually impossible for a woman to attain the kind of independence easily granted to men. With the protagonist becoming one of the first woman doctors in Britain, the novel focusses on the painfully slow process of emancipation. This, along with a number of other themes, is also dealt with in The Essex Serpent, a novel which, like many examples of the genre, combines readability with well-researched insights into the problems and challenges besetting the Victorian age. We will read the novels in chronological order.