Seminar (SUV-Kategorie: 'Seminare Level 2 – für höhere Semester'):

Sherlock
A Literary and Cultural History

Due to my participation in a somewhat urgent academic committee, the second meeting cannot take place as planned. There won’t be a meeting on 24/10 so that, from that date onwards, our original agenda will be delayed by one week (as laid down in this changed course plan).

THU 10-12 // Philosophie-Gebäude, Ü 13

Office hours:
THU 12.30-13.30 // Room 5/E/20 – Please enter your name in the list next to the door of my office.

SUV (description of the course category)


Course description

Sherlock Holmes is of the present as well as the past. The world’s first "consulting detective" does not only testify to the vast changes that pushed Victorian Britain into the early twentieth century but continues to be busily active as a potent ideological tool in the third millennium.

Brought to fictional life by a Scottish physician who believed in parapsychological phenomena, Holmes usually has functioned as an emblem of British rationalism, nationalism and imperialism. Indeed, the power, fascination and adaptability of the Baker Street sleuth as fictional character and iconic figure are due to his very contradictoriness: Holmes is an eccentric who protects normalcy, a drug addict who ensures law and order, and a maniac devoted to the arts of impassionate reasoning.

The seminar will combine literary studies and cultural scholarship in order to trace the contours of the Holmes phenomenon. We will closely assess Arthur Conan Doyle's original stories and their (shifting) historical contexts. However, we will be just as interested in the long and vibrant history of adapting, transforming and (re-)functionalizing the Sherlock Holmes figure (and its sidekick/counterpart Dr Watson) in various media – from Sidney Paget's famous illustrations for the Strand magazine to Benedict Cumberbatch's freshly blasé impersonations.

Books to be obtained & preparatory reading

Please buy the following two books and read A Study in Scarlet before the first seminar meeting:

- -----, The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (1892); vol. 3 (2011) of The Penguin Sherlock Holmes Collection; ISBN 978-0-241-95290-0; c. € 8,-).

As to preparing for the first meeting, please see the course programme below (and ideally also the selected list of secondary sources).
17 /10  **Introduction**

Course organization // Literary studies & cultural studies // Key questions & concepts for the seminar.

Preparatory questions:

In preparation for the first meeting, please make up your mind in relation to the following questions. All participants will be expected to have well-considered answers to all of these questions and to state these answers in class. The questions look very simple, but they are in fact highly demanding.

1. What is literary studies? What is the point of literary studies? What do you hope to learn and achieve by doing literary studies?  
(If you feel unsure about these questions consult the material of the introduction to literary studies that you have attended – or pursue the texts listed below as background reading.)

2. What is cultural studies? What is the point of cultural studies? What do you hope to learn and achieve by doing cultural studies?  
(If you feel unsure about these questions consult the material of the introduction to cultural studies that you have attended – or pursue the texts listed below as background reading.)

3. How can or should literary studies and cultural studies be combined?

4. How can or should literary studies and cultural studies be combined in relation to the Sherlock Holmes phenomenon? (Allow the text listed below as assigned reading to inform your response.)

5. What are the three most important terms or concepts to be applied in this seminar?

**Assigned reading [AR]:**

[Available online through the website of the university library.]

**Background reading:**

- "What is Literature and Does It Matter?" (18-41)
- "Literature and Cultural Studies" (42-54)

[24 /10  **No meeting!**]

31/10  **Context: The (Late) Victorian Period / the Fin de Siècle**

First investigation of historical contexts // First exchange on *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) // Notes on contributions to the seminar (presentations; experts) & on academic writing (reading responses; developing an essay topic; etc.)

Preparatory questions:

Irrespective of specific applications to the Sherlock Holmes phenomenon, the two 'secondary' readings assigned for this meeting provide a first overview of the Victorian...
period in general (Frawley) and the late Victorian period or ‘fin de siècle’ in particular (Ledger and Luckhurst). Which of the facts and concepts mentioned in these texts seem particularly pertinent or productive in relation to understanding the Sherlock Holmes stories and the cultural/ideological work undertaken by those stories? – Please prepare a respective list of facts and concepts and be ready to explain your choices. In doing so, you should refer to *A Study in Scarlet* in particular.

AR:


07/11  *Sherlock Holmes and the history of crime/detective fiction*

Genre // The genre/s of crime/detective fiction: history; conventions & plot patterns or formulae; topics; types of detective // Functions of the genre.

Short presentations:

❖ Detective fiction: The history of the genre before Doyle – and Doyle’s innovations (10-15 mins)

❖ Detective fiction: Theses concerning the sociocultural functions of the genre (10-15 mins)

AR:

Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892).


FR:


14/11  *Author – gestation – dissemination – reception – canon*

The figure of the author as a theoretical problem // Arthur Conan Doyle – physician, scientist, writer, spiritualist: a brief (intellectual) biography // Writing and publishing the Holmes stories // Marketing and reception of the Holmes stories // Doyle’s other literary productions and aspirations // Killing Holmes // The Holmes Canon // The cultural and scholarly status of the Holmes stories // Doyle as a representative late Victorian cultural agent and figure?

Short presentations:

❖ The Sherlock Holmes stories: Publication & marketing – historical reception – the canon (10-15 mins)

❖ Arthur Conan Doyle: A brief (intellectual) biography (10-15 mins)
AR:

By this point, all participants ought to have read all the stories in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892).

Primary texts in focus: (1) One new story selected from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by the presenters for this meeting // (2) Doyle, preface to *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes* (1927) [the latter to be found on WueCampus].


FR:

Clare Clarke, "Doyle, Holmes and Victorian Publishing," *The Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes* 29-41. [Available online through the website of the university library.]

21/11

*Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: Character/ization, interaction, and functions of an eminent literary pair*

Character & characterization (concepts) // Literary pairs // The beginning and development/transformation of Holmes's and Watson's friendship/partnership // Homosociality and homosexuality in the Holmes stories? // Holmes's and Watson's (ex)centricity // Holmes's as (manic) depressive and drug user? // Holmes's speech habits // Watson as narrator // Holmes's "science of deduction" and Watson's intellect

Short presentations:

- Maniac depressive and/or paragon of intellectual prowess? – The characterization of Sherlock Holmes (10-15 mins)
- Watson as Holmes's counterpart and narrator (10-15 mins)

AR:

Primary texts in focus: Chs. 1 & 2 from *A Study in Scarlet* AND one new story selected from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by the presenters for this meeting.

"Figur, literarische" / "Figurendarstellung, literarische" / "Figurenkonstellation", *Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie*, ed. Ansgar Nünning, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2013) 212-215. [Accessible online through the website of the university library.] → Use the three entries listed as a starting point for investigating the terminology and theory of investigating the problem of 'character' and 'characterization'. Follow the links to other entries if necessary.


FR:

28/11 **Visuality / Iconography / Physiognomy:**
Narrative, personal looks and the printed image

Victorian visual culture // Visuality in the Holmes stories and the original illustrations // Victorian theories of physiognomy // Personal looks and physiognomy in the Holmes stories and the original illustrations // Picturing Holmes and Watson in 20th/21st-century visual culture

Short presentations:
- Sidney Paget's Illustrations and their interplay with Doyle's narratives (10-15 mins)
- Picturing Holmes and Watson in 20th/21st-century visual culture: Samples (with commentary) from various sources and domains (10-15 mins)

AR:

Primary text in focus: one new story selected from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by the presenters for this meeting.


FR:


05/12 **Gender, women and sexuality**

Gender in Victorian Britain // Victorian notions of female domesticity // Erotics and sexuality: Victorian notions and practices // Victorian culture and the empowerment of women // The respective problems raised and stances suggested in the Holmes stories // Who read the Holmes stories originally?

Short presentations:
- Gender in the Holmes stories (10-15 mins)
- Erotics and sexuality in the Holmes stories (10-15 mins)

AR:

Primary text in focus: one new story selected from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by the presenters for this meeting.

Stacy Gillis, "Gender and Sexuality in Holmes," *The Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes* 68-80. [Available online through the website of the university library.]
Class:
The middle class and its (aristocratic / plebeian / criminal / racial) Others

The Victorian class system: Structures, attitudes and codes // Where in the system do Holmes and Watson seem to belong? // Class and the Baker Street household // Aristocrats, the working class and the underclass in the Holmes stories // Affirmation and subversion of the class system in the Holmes stories

Short presentations:

- Holmes's and Watson's position in the Victorian class system: Narrative indications and performative affiliations (10-15 mins)

- Aristocrats, the working class and the underclass: Representations and attitudes in the Holmes stories (10-15 mins)

AR:

Primary text in focus: "The Man with the Twisted Lip."

Stephen Knight, "Doyle, Holmes and London," The Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes 42-54. [Available online through the website of the university library.]

Place/s and space/s:
London – the countryside – the empire – 'Englishness' & 'Britishness'

AR:

Primary text in focus: one new story selected from The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by the presenters for this meeting.


FR:


—— Christmas break ——

[Please see continuation on the next page!]
09/01 Exchange on academic research & writing

15/01 (WED, 18-20): Film screening: Guy Ritchie (dir.), *Sherlock Holmes* (2009)

16/01 A new kind of hero? – Guy Ritchie’s *Sherlock Holmes* (2009)
Discussion of scenes selected and introduced by the EXPERTS for this meeting.
AR:


FR:

See various publications listed below.

23/01 The BBC’s *Sherlock* (2010-17)
Discussion of scenes selected and introduced by the EXPERTS for this meeting.
FR:

See various publications listed below.

26/01 Essay proposals due (from participants who actually need to write an essay).

30/01 The CBS’s *Elementary* (2012-19) / Finalizing essay topics / course critique
Discussion of scenes selected and introduced by the EXPERTS for this meeting.
FR:

See various publications listed below.
Selected key publications

Please, note also the essays on the Holmes phenomenon that can be retrieved online through the Project Muse and JSTOR data bases.

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Participants' Contributions

Please see specifications below on what contributions are expected within specific modules.

Presentations

Presentations are short (ideally 10 mins, absolutely no longer than 15 minutes!) oral and visual introductions to a specific topic. Please offer a manageable amount of well-structured information, communicated from a well-considered and clearly laid out viewpoint. There can be only one presenter for each topic.

Presentation topics are listed in the syllabus above and (again) in the list below. You can sign up for a presentation in the first seminar meeting.

Please come to my office hours to discuss your plans two weeks before your presentation.

Experts

Experts are teams of two (and no more than two) participants who do special preparatory work for a specific seminar meeting (see the last couple of meetings). In collaboration with me, the experts will chair parts of a seminar meeting. Their tasks include:

→ doing further reading and research work on the topic of the meeting;
→ selecting relevant material (e.g. images, text passages or film scenes) that will allow us to gain access to specific films, texts and discourses;
→ preparing this material for discussion in class.

Setting a clear agenda for discussion and suggesting exciting positions of their own is essential for a successful 'expert performance.'

Please consult the course programme above or the list below to find out when experts will be needed. You can sign up as an expert in the first seminar meeting.

All experts are expected to come to my office hours to discuss their plans at least a week before their 'performance'.

Reading responses

A reading response is a short (c. 2 pp.) essay-like academic text that responds to the material to be discussed in a specific meeting.

It therefore needs to consider both the 'primary' text/s (such as specific stories, novels or films) that are to be analysed in the meeting and the 'secondary' texts set up as assigned reading.

'Responding to' means to contextualize and discuss the material in light of the seminar's agenda. Important questions to be addressed are:

→ How can the material be contextualized? (What is it? Who produced it for which purposes?)
→ How does the material tie in with the seminar discussion so far?
→ What questions should be posed in relation to the material?
→ What can (probably) be shown or established by posing these questions?

Reading responses are due two days before the respective meeting. Send your reading response by e-mail, as an attachment in Word or a PDF file. Please note that I may decide to publish reading responses on WueCampus.
Research essays

Not every participant will need to actually write a research essay. (Please see specifications below.)

A research essay addresses one or two major concerns of the seminar (see, e.g., topics for our meetings or points listed as 'agenda' in the syllabus).

Students will suggest a topic for their essay by submitting an essay proposal (= an outline of the intended topic and approach, which is due by 26/01 and should be sent as an e-mail attachment).

The essay must conform to acknowledged standards (see Stilblatt Englische Literaturwissenschaft / Amerikanistik <LINK> and MLA Handbook) and include a sound 'List of Works Cited.'

Essays are due by 15/03 at the very latest.

For further information on finding a topic, writing an essay proposal and researching the essay see my 'Guidelines for Essay Writing' (on WueStudy).
REQUIREMENTS

04-EnBA-AM-BLK-102-m01
Aufbaumodul Britische Landeskunde und Kulturwissenschaft
(5 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ Proposal (value: 1) + research essay (value: 4)

04-EnBA-AM-ELW1-102-m01
Aufbaumodul Englische Literaturwissenschaft 1 (BA)
(10 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ a) Presentation OR acting as an expert (marked, value: 1) + b) proposal and research essay (together value: 4)

04-EnBA-AM-ELW-092-m01
Aufbaumodul Englische Literaturwissenschaft (BA)
(10 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ a) Presentation OR acting as an expert (marked, value: 1) + b) proposal and research essay (together value: 4)

04-EnBA60-AM-ELW-102-m01
Aufbaumodul Englische Literaturwissenschaft (BA60)
(5 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ Proposal (value: 1) and research essay (value: 4)

04-EnGy-AM-LK-092-m01
Aufbaumodul Landeskunde und Kulturwissenschaft
(5 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ Proposal (value: 1) and research essay (value: 4)

04-EnRGH-AM-LK-092-m01
Aufbaumodul Landeskunde und Kulturwissenschaft (LR, LG, LH)
(3 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ a) Presentation OR acting as an expert + b) one reading response

04-EnGy-AM-LW2-092-m01
Aufbaumodul Literaturwissenschaft 2
(10 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ a) Presentation OR acting as an expert (marked, value: 1) + b) proposal and research essay (together value: 4)

04-EnBA-AM-LW-092-m01
Aufbaumodul Literaturwissenschaft (BA)
(10 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ a) Presentation OR acting as an expert (marked, value: 1) + b) proposal and research essay (together value: 4)

04-EnGH-AM-LW-092-m01
Aufbaumodul Literaturwissenschaft (LG, LH)
(5 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ Proposal (value: 1) and research essay (value: 4)

04-EnR-AM-LW-092-m01
Aufbaumodul Literaturwissenschaft (LR)
(7 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ a) Presentation OR acting as an expert (marked, value: 1) + b) proposal and research essay (together value: 4)

04-En-HT-Ang1-152-m01
Historisch-thematische Ausrichtung Anglistik
(5 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ Portfolio = a) presentation OR acting as an expert + b) one reading response

04-EnLA-HT-Ang1-152-m01
Historisch-thematische Ausrichtung anglistische Literaturwissenschaft
(5 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ Portfolio = a) presentation OR acting as an expert + b) one reading response

04-En-Th-Ang1-152-m01
Theoretische Ausrichtung Anglistik
(5 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ Portfolio = a) presentation OR acting as an expert + b) one reading response

04-EnLA-Th-Ang1-152-m01
Theoretische Ausrichtung anglistische Landeskunde und Kulturwissenschaft
(5 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ Portfolio = a) presentation OR acting as an expert + b) one reading response

04-En-ÜM-ELW1-152-m01
Vertiefendes Übungsmodul anglistische Literaturwissenschaft
(5 ECTS; numerische Bewertung)
→ Portfolio = a) presentation OR acting as an expert + b) one reading response