

LT265: Concepts of the Person

Seminar Leader: James Harker

Course Times: Wednesdays and Fridays, 9:00-10:30

Email: j.harker@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: 10:30-11:30 Wednesday and Friday or by appointment

Course Description

This course will examine terms for the person that are important for literature and literary theory. We will begin with the “agent” before moving on to probably the most important such term in literary study, “character,” and processes by which characters are created and understood. What is the relationship of character to action? What distinguishes a character from an agent? We will compare accounts of “character” with the concept of “personality” as it emerged in the twentieth century and “mind” as it is understood in analytic philosophy. We will look at the concept of “theory of mind,” growing interest in literary treatments of “mind” as well as the concept of “intentionality.” Finally, we will consider treatments of the “subject” and “identity.” Our examination of theories of the agent, character, personality, mind, intentionality, subject, and identity will be complemented by our reading of a chronological series of novels that illuminate these concepts: Aphra Behn’s *Oronooko*, Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Alain Robbe-Grillet’s *Jealousy*, Mark Haddon’s *The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night-Time*, and Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*.

Participants are expected to acquire the following texts in paper or digital form:

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night-Time*

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

All other readings will be available in digital form on Google Classroom.

Requirements

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Accessibility

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability

Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for longer-term accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) will not affect the participation grade or require documentation. Documentation may be required for further absences to be excused. Further unexcused absences will each lower the participation grade by one step (i.e. B+ to B).

The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Assessment and Grade Breakdown

Participation:	30%
Paper #1	20%
Midterm Exam	15%
Paper #2	20%
Final Presentation	15%

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and

feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Schedule

Week 1: The "Agent"

Wednesday, September 4

Introduction and Heider and Simmel video

Friday, September 6

Vladimir Propp from *Mythology of the Folktale*, chapters 2, 3, 6
"The Horse-Dew and the Witch" Ignaz Künos

Week 2: A Proto-Novel, between "Agent" and "Character"

Wednesday, September 11

Aphra Behn, *Oronooko*

Friday, September 13

Aphra Behn, *Oronooko*

Week 3: The "Character" and the Novel

Wednesday, September 18

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
E.M. Forster from *Aspects of the Novel*

Friday, September 20

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
Roland Barthes from *S/Z*

Week 4: The "Character" and the Novel

Wednesday, September 25

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
James Phelan from *Reading People, Reading Plots*

Friday, September 27

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

Catherine Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality"

Week 5: "Character" continued

Wednesday, October 2

Guest Lecture

Friday, October 4

Writing Workshop

Week 6: Psychological "Types"

Wednesday, October 9

Carl Jung from *Psychological Types*

Friday, October 11

Excerpts from DSM V

Paper #1 Due at 23:59

Week 7: Test Week

Wednesday, October 16

Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator

Merve Emre from *The Personality Brokers*

Friday, October 18

Midterm Exam

Fall Break

Week 8: The "Mind"

Wednesday, October 30

Katherine Mansfield, "The Garden Party"

Paul Ricoeur from *Time and Narrative*
Dorrit Cohn from *Transparent Minds*

Friday, November 1

David Herman from *The Emergence of Mind*
Alan Palmer from *Fictional Minds*

Week 9: The New Novel and “Intentionality”

Wednesday, November 6

Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Jealousy*
John Searle from “Minds, Brains, and Programs”

Friday, November 8

Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Jealousy*
Daniel Dennett from *The Intentional Stance*

Week 10: Mindblindness and Theory of Mind

Wednesday, November 13

Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night-Time*
Simon Baron-Cohen from *Mindblindness*

Friday, November 15

Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night-Time*

Week 11: The “Subject”

Wednesday, November 20

Emile Benveniste “Subjectivity in Language”

Friday, November 22

Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power”

Week 12: Identity, Intersectionality, and the Contemporary Novel

Wednesday, November 27

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

Friday, November 29

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

Week 13: Identity, Intersectionality, and the Contemporary Novel

Wednesday, December 4

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

Friday, December 6

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

Kimberlé Crenshaw "Mapping the Margins"

Week 14: Final Presentations

Wednesday, December 11

Final Presentations

Friday, December 13

Final Presentations

Completion Week:

Friday, December 20

Paper #1 Due at 23:59