

## **DRAFT SYLLABUS: PLEASE NOTE THAT CHANGES AND ADJUSTMENTS MIGHT BE MADE BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER**

Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures  
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Sprechstunden Dienstags: 13-14 Uhr und nach Vereinbarung

### **GERM 390: Topics in 21st Century German Literature and Culture: Autofiktion**

Autofictional storytelling has developed into a highly acclaimed contemporary literary form of expression. The desire for play and self-expression, the "reality hunger", and the almost endless possibilities for self-reflection on social media have certainly contributed to the rise of autofictional writing worldwide: For example, Karl Ove Knausgård's volumes *Min Kamp* have advanced to bestsellers and Anne Erneaux received the Nobel Prize for Literature. In this seminar we will discuss autofictional texts and will try to circumscribe the term autofiction in its complexity, not least in order to understand autofiction in the context of the history of German and European literature (texts by Goethe, Nietzsche, Marcel Proust, James Joyce and Robert Walser are important models for contemporary autofictional storytelling).

We examine autofiction in connection with themes such as trauma, migration, pathology, milieu, digital culture, interiority, perception and identity construction. We read texts by Herta Müller, Maxim Biller, Christian Kracht, Peter Handke, Deniz Ohde, Sarah Berger, among others. Texts and discussions are in German.

Shorter texts are made available on myCourses. The other texts are available at the McGill bookstore.

GERM 325 or equivalent are prerequisite. Reading these texts in German will be a challenging and ultimately very rewarding experience. At the beginning of the course, we will discuss reading strategies that may help your comprehension. My advice when you feel frustrated or overwhelmed: keep reading!

Autofiktionales Erzählen hat sich zu einer vielbeachteten zeitgenössischen literarischen Ausdrucksform entwickelt. Die Lust zu Spiel und Selbstdarstellung, der "reality hunger" und die fast unendlichen Möglichkeiten der Selbstbespiegelung in den sozialen Medien haben sicherlich viel dazu beigetragen, dass autofiktionales Schreiben weltweit an Aufmerksamkeit gewonnen hat: Zum Beispiel sind Karl Ove Knausgård's Bände *Min Kamp* zu Bestsellern avanciert und Anne Erneaux wurde mit dem Nobelpreis für Literatur ausgezeichnet. In diesem Seminar diskutieren wir autofiktionale Texte und werden versuchen, den Begriff Autofiktion in seiner Komplexität zu erfassen -- nicht zuletzt um zu verstehen, welche Rolle Autofiktion in der Geschichte der deutschen und europäischen Literatur spielt (Texte von Goethe, Nietzsche, Marcel Proust, James Joyce und Robert Walser sind wichtige Modelle für das autofiktionale Erzählen in der Gegenwart).

Wir untersuchen Autofiktion im Zusammenhang mit Themen wie Trauma, Migration, Pathologie, Milieu, digitale Kultur, Innerlichkeit, Wahrnehmung und Identitätskonstruktion. Wir

lesen u.a. Texte von Herta Müller, Maxim Biller, Christian Kracht, Sarah Berger und Deniz Ohde. Texte und Diskussion in deutscher Sprache.

Voraussetzung ist der erfolgreiche Abschluss von GERM 325 oder einem gleichwertigen Kurs. Das Lesen der Texte auf Deutsch ist eine Herausforderung, aber schlussendlich eine sehr lohnende Erfahrung. Zu Beginn des Kurses besprechen wir Lesestrategien, mit denen Sie Ihr Leseverständnis verbessern können. Mein Rat, wenn Sie sich frustriert oder überfordert fühlen: Weiter lesen!

Kürzere Texte werden auf myCourses zur Verfügung gestellt. Folgende Texte sind im McGill bookstore erhältlich:

Christian Kracht: *Eurotrash*

Maxim Biller: *Der falsche Gruß*

Deniz Ohde: *Streulicht*

Peter Handke: *Wunschloses Unglück*

4. Januar: Einführung, Erwartungen, Kennenlernen

9.-11. Januar: **Was ist Autofiktion?**

Di: Schreiben und Lesen; Gronemann, Claudia (2019). "Autofiction." Handbook of Autobiography/Autofiction (Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf ed.). Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 241-246  
myC

Do: **Autofiktion, neue Medien und queere Identitäten**

Sarah Berger: *Lesen und Schreiben* (Auszug) myC

16.-18. Januar: **Autofiktion und Coming-of-age**

Deniz Ohde: *Streulicht*

23.-25. Januar: **Autofiktion und Mileu**

Deniz Ohde: *Streulicht*

30. Januar-1. Februar: **Transgression, Transgender, Transgenre**

Kim de l'Horizon: *Blutbuch* (Auszug) myC

6.-8. Februar: **Autofiktionale Familiengeschichte(n)**

Peter Handke: *Wunschloses Unglück*

13.-15. Februar: **Trauma und Trauer**

Peter Handke: *Wunschloses Unglück*

20.-22. Februar: **Autofiktion als Selbstbehauptung**

Herta Müller: *Niederungen* (Auszug) myC

27.-29. Februar: **Autofiktion schreiben**

Di: 2 Gruppenprojekte  
Do: Schreibwerkstatt

Ferien

12.-14. März: **Auktoriale Selbstinszenierung**

Christian Kracht: *Eurotrash*

Do: Projekt zum individuellen und kollektiven Gedächtnis

19.-21. März: **Autofiktion und Erinnerung**

Christian Kracht: *Eurotrash*

26.-28. März: **Autoschaft und Literaturbetrieb**

Maxim Biller: *Der falsche Gruß*

2.- 4. April: **Autoschaft, Autofiktion, Identität**

Di: Maxim Biller: *Der falsche Gruß*

Do: Gruppenprojekte

9. April: Zusammenfassende Diskussion

### **Required coursework and Methods of Evaluation**

--**Preparation** is key to productive class meetings, and each participant is expected to come prepared with questions and ideas and be responsive to the questions and ideas of others. This course requires a commitment to sustained work. First and foremost, reading the texts carefully and in a timely fashion is key to learning and understanding. We will engage in the practice of close reading and textual analysis while historically contextualizing the works and taking into consideration various approaches to and theories of memory studies.

--**Attendance** is necessary for a positive learning outcome. I ask that you email me every time you

have to miss a class. You are allowed 3 excused, undocumented absences. After 3 absences, excuses need to be accompanied by medical or other documentation.

--**Participation** is essential and is expected from everyone. Participation means to ask informed questions and to make informed observations with the aim to create an open and engaging thought forum.

### **Contributions to in-class discussions**

Attendance is expected. Attendance alone will not get you a high participation grade. To get a good participation grade, you must participate in all class activities. By participating in the discussions, you will hone your language and rhetorical skills. No silent observers, please. No hiding behind screens. Distracted media and technology users will be asked to leave the classroom. Please note that I take participation very seriously. 15%

### **Presentation and Discussion Prompts**

You will each be responsible for an oral presentation followed by prompting a discussion. Your

presentation should be about 15 min (including discussion prompt). You will be asked to submit the presentation at the latest 1 day before the date of your presentation on myCourses. In your presentation you are asked to introduce the text/topic we are studying and engage in an analysis of an aspect of the text/film/artwork. With your discussion prompt, you should direct attention to an interesting, resonant, and/or troubling aspect of the text that you would like to discuss in class. A strong prompt will briefly outline and contextualize the issue to be discussed and point to a passage or aspect of the text that warrants further critical reflection; it will explain why the passage seems significant. It might refer to other texts we have read and offer a possible approach to resolving the issue. The goal is to open up an insightful and productive discussion. You may indicate your preferences by the end of drop-add period, otherwise assignment is done at random by the instructor. First come, first served. 25%

### **Papers**

2 papers (each 4-5 pages, 1 1/5 spaced, 12 ft):

1. An autofictional text 15%
  2. analysis of a text or film of your choice from our reading list and works discussed in class.
- The paper is an opportunity to develop further your analytical and interpretive skills in writing. Papers are in German; submission deadline April 18. 25%

### **Team Project**

Unless you state (send me an email) your preferences, you will be randomly assigned to form a team that researches and critically and creatively responds to issues connected to autofictional writing. Your group selects a topic from a list posted on myCourses. Working in teams will provide you with collaborative research and presentation experience. Project presentations should be about 20 min and should include discussion questions and a bibliography. First 2 groups present February 27 and the second set of groups on April 4. 20%

### **SUBMIT ALL DOCUMENTS ON MYCOURSES IN WORD OR COMPATIBLE OR POWERPOINT. NO PDF!**

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#).” (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (See McGill’s [guide to academic honesty](#) for more information.)

« L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le [Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires](#). » (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 29 janvier 2003) (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le [guide pour l’honnêteté académique de McGill](#).)