

Instructor: Martin Kindermann

Title: The Poet in the City: Poetic Representations of Urbanity from Romanticism to the Present

Course: Seminar II

Course number: 53-547

Time: Tuesdays 16-18

Room: Phil 1250

Starts: 01.04.2014

### **Course description**

Discourse on representations and figurations of space in literature has drastically changed since the urban planner Edward Soja called for a reconsideration of our notions of space in the 1990s. Still though, the poetic articulation of space, especially urban space, has by far not received the attention one could expect from the relevance of the city within literature since the emergence of the modern metropolis.

This course aims at looking into modes of representing urban space as well as locating identity in different attempts of articulating urban experience and the city. On the one hand, we will take a look at how poets like William Wordsworth, Amy Levy, Isaac Rosenberg, T.S. Eliot, Linton Kwesi Johnson or Bernardine Evaristo depict the relationship of the self and urbanity. We will discuss which sociological and historical layers come into play and how this can be related to the question whether or not there is something like urban poetics. On the other hand, this seminar wants to introduce students to spatial theory and the different approaches which have been developed by scholars like Jurij M. Lotman, Michel Foucault, Ernst Cassirer or Michel de Certeau. In a further step this course will try to connect their works to questions of the poetic representation of urbanity.

Herein we will analyse how different concepts of urbanity and various approaches to articulate the city relate to an understanding of space that stresses dynamics and ambivalence rather than seeing the city as a simple stage for the speaking self. We will analyse poetic figurations of the city from different points of view in which we will foreground the various semantic implications employed by authors in their poetic design of urbanity.

Required texts will be available at AGORA.

### **Course requirements:**

Regular attendance and active participation in seminar discussions; an oral presentation and a term paper.