

Veranstalter	Prof. Dr. Stephan Karschay
Thema	This green and pleasant land? The Pastoral Tradition in British Cultural History [ENG-6/a, AA-V3a/b, ENG-12, AA7, AA-10, LAA9, LAA12, AA-MA3, AA-MA4, AA-W, AA-WB]
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar II
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-549
Zeit	Di 16-18
Raum	Phil 701
Beginn	5. April 2016

Course Description:

The term ‘pastoral’ derives from classical literature and is commonly used to describe literary texts that deal with the beauties of the natural world and frequently focus on the lives of shepherds (*pastor* in Latin) and nymphs. Originating in the Hellenistic period with Theocritus’s *Idylls* (third century BC) and popularised by the Roman poet Virgil, this mode of writing spread throughout Europe in the High Middle Ages and the Renaissance and came to be almost synonymous with the notions of prelapsarian peace and escapism. Yet pastoral representations of nature have always implicitly gestured beyond themselves to reflect human and natural predicaments and express social, political and religious criticism. In other words, pastoral always has an ulterior motive. Often, pastoral’s nostalgic perspective on a lost ‘Golden Age’ reveals itself to be a cry for radical change that still lies in the future. Thus, pastoral literature and art can reveal several, apparently contradictory, orientations in terms of time: it can hanker after a glorious past (elegiac mode), rejoice at a bountiful present (idyllic mode) or anticipate an improved future (utopian mode).

Even though the genre has somewhat declined in popularity since the beginning of the twentieth century, pastoral as a cultural and literary strategy has proved to be remarkably resilient and malleable. In this seminar we will look at a broad range of different genres and media – from the pastoral’s origins in Graeco-Roman literature and its heyday in Renaissance poetry and drama, to the ingenious uses of pastoral in contemporary British art, literature and advertising. We will specifically look at the pastoral’s inherent spatial opposition (town versus country) and its triple distinction of time (past versus present versus future) to appreciate the modifications the genre has undergone over the centuries. In seminar discussions and group presentations, students will engage with a large variety of literary and non-literary texts, paintings, films, photographs and musical pieces. Writers and artists included in this seminar may comprise but are not limited to Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, John Milton, Robert Herrick, Peter Lely, Henry Lawes, John Blow, George Handel, Alexander Pope, Paul Sandby, Thomas Gainsborough, John Constable, William Wordsworth, John Clare, Thomas Love Peacock, William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Dylan Thomas, W. H. Auden, Jim Crace, Ian McEwan and Ingrid Pollard.

Set Texts:

Our set texts will be announced in the first session of term.

Workload:

Regular contributions to discussions in class, lively participation in teamwork, an oral group presentation, a reading journal, and written course work.

Introductory Reading:

Garrard, Greg. "Pastoral." *Ecocriticism*. Ed. Greg Garrard. London: Routledge, 2004. 33-58. Print.

Gifford, Terry. "Pastoral, Anti-Pastoral, and Post-Pastoral." *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment*. Ed. Louise Westling. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2014. 17-30. Print.

Further Reading:

Alpers, Paul. *What Is Pastoral?* Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1996. Print.

Gifford, Terry. *Pastoral*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Sprechstunde während der Vorlesungszeit:	Donnerstag, 12-13
Sprechstunden während der Semesterferien:	Siehe Homepage.