



Instructor: **Jolene Mathieson**
Title: **“May his be a wolf’s head”: Loving and Killing the Outlaw in Anglo-American Literature**
Course: **Seminar II [ENG-7, ENG-7a, AA-V4ab, ENG-13, AA7, AA11, LAA10, LAA13, AA-MA3, AA-MA4, AA-W, AA-WB]**
Number: **53–568**
Time: **Tuesdays, 12–14h**
Room: **Phil 1263**
Starts: **04.04.2017**

Course description:



The Man in Black, *Westworld*, 2016



Robin Hood, Cover illustration, ca. 1970s



Rob Roy MacGregor, by W.H. Worthington, ca. 1820s



Image from Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns*, 1986

While the phrase “Wanted Dead or Alive” may be more commonly known today, the legal pronouncement of *caput gerat lupinum* (“may his be a wolf’s head”) was the traditional English means to designate the casting of a citizen from inside the protective sphere of the law to a perilously unknown and anonymous state outside of it. To be declared a ‘wolfish head’ was to become an outlaw, to be denied personhood, to be stripped of all legal and civil rights, to be treated and hunted like a mere animal. Although the outlaw may no longer exist in a statutory sense in Anglo-American legal systems, the unabated appeal of this paradigmatic figure, often portrayed in popular culture as a charismatic yet violent anti-hero, is an important marker of its social function as a means to question and test the efficacy and validity of a society’s legal institutions. The outlaw serves as an emotive tool via which we can both be repulsed and fascinated, feel compassion and fear, voice disdain and agreement, and engage in a complex critique of the relationship between nature and society, between the individual and the state, between crime and justice. With a view to the changing legal landscape of the Five Eyes, once described by Edward Snowden as “a supra-national intelligence organization that doesn’t answer to the known laws of its own countries” as well as the emergence of ambivalent legal categories like ‘whistleblowers’ and ‘enemy combatants’, this course argues for the ongoing relevance of the outlaw figure as represented both diachronically and synchronically in Anglo-American literature and culture. It will thus examine representations of outlaws and outlawry in a cogent arc of critical texts that include social history (Eric Hobsbawm’s *Bandits*), an Icelandic saga (“The Saga of Grettir the Strong”), a medieval tale (“A Gest of Robyn Hode”), two historical novels (Sir Walter Scott’s *Rob Roy* and Tom Franklin’s *Hell at The Breach*), a film (Jim Jarmusch’s *Dead Man*), ballads (of Jesse James, for example), a graphic novel (Frank Miller’s *The Dark Knight Returns*), philosophy (Giorgio Agamben’s *Homer Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*) and television (Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy’s *Westworld*).

Requirements: The *Studienleistung* will consist of thorough preparation of all reading material, completion of weekly homework assignments, and active participation. The *Prüfungsleistung* consists of a 16–20 page research paper. Each of you must purchase the ‘Seminar 53–568’ Reader at Cobra Copy (Von-Melle-Park 5, 20146 HH) as well as Tom Franklin’s *Hell at The Breach* and Frank Miller’s *The Dark Knight Returns*.