53-555 **Fiction and Genre Fiction: Where are We Now?**
Di, 15. Okt. 2019 - Di, 28. Jan. 2020 Hamburg **10-12 Uhr**
Prof. Dr. Ute Berns

Course description

What was once the material of science fiction only – artificial intelligence and robots – has long become part and parcel of everyday life in devices like Siri, Alexa, and Echo; in digital personal assistants and a fully industrialized robotic workforce. Since the year 2000 a similar trend can be observed in literature and, to a lesser extent, film and TV series. What was once a well-defined genre – 'science fiction' – has increasingly invaded other genres.

In this seminar we will critically address this recent development of science fiction. On the one hand, we will discuss theories of *genre* that highlight the constructedness of all genre categories and shed light on the work they do. On the other hand, we will investigate the recent development of science fiction by way of a specific focus: How does this genre negotiate developments in the digital age? More particularly, we will analyse how (genre) fiction has helped to shape our understanding of the impact of Artificial Intelligence and robotics on questions of identity, society and our vision of the future. We will draw, among other things, on Alex Garland's film *ExMachina* (2014), on material from the British TV series *Black Mirror* (2011) and *Humans* (2015)*,* as well as on this year's novel *Machines Like Me* (2019) by the booker-prize winner author Ian McEwan. The syllabus and reading material will be made available in the first session and on Agora.

Course requirements:

Regular attendance and excellent knowledge of the set texts/films; course assignments (e.g. reading responses or participation in expert groups) during the semester and (to receive the maximum credit points) a term paper.

Note: Students who are registered but who do not show up for the first session will automatically be set "inactive."