

Veranstalter	Julia Lange
Thema	Trending Toxisms: American Postmillennial Fiction and the Merits and Limits of (Post-)Critique [ENG-7, ENG-7a, ENG-13, AA7, AA11, LAA10, LAA13, AA-MA01, AA-MA02, AA-MA05]
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar II
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-566
Zeit	Fr 12-14
Raum	Ü35-01047
Beginn	18. Oktober 2019

In 2018, “toxic” was declared Oxford Dictionary’s Word of the Year. Ranging from toxic chemicals and toxic air to more metaphorical uses of the term as in toxic masculinity, toxic relationships, toxic culture and toxic (workplace) environments, the adjective “toxic” undoubtedly has attained a preeminent status in Anglo-American public discourse. Tracing the trending term’s (literary) genealogy, we will use a corpus of five recently released U.S.-American (graphic) novels and one short story collection so as to explore how above named toxic states have been negotiated in U.S.-American literature over the past two years. Besides providing some insight into the state of the art of U.S.-American fiction, the seminar also aims to deepen students’ knowledge of recent shifts in literary scholarship that have come to prominence under the banner of “post-critique“.

The following books will form the basis of our discussion:

1. Gary Shteyngart, *Lake Success* (2019)
2. Kristen Roupenian, *You Know You Want This* (2019)
3. Colson Whitehead, *The Nickel Boys* (2019)
4. Nora Krug, *Belonging: A German Reckons with History and Home* (2018)
5. Richard Powers, *The Overstory* (2018)
6. Siri Hustvedt, *Memories of the Future* (2019)

Please ensure that you thoroughly prepare these texts (and bring them to class!) in time for the respective seminar sessions. The books will be discussed in the order stated above. If you prefer working with printed books as opposed to ebooks, you will thus need to order (at least some of) your copies (well) in advance. Additional secondary reading – both obligatory and facultative – will be made available via AGORA.

Course requirements:

1. Regular attendance and active participation.
2. You will be asked to sign up for an expert group at the first session of the seminar. This means that you will commit yourself to thoroughly prepare one text from the syllabus (incl. secondary reading). In the group discussion, you will play an active role and enrich the conversation with your extra knowledge.
3. Depending on your module and the credit points you would like to gain for this course, you may also have to write a term paper (length depending on your module).