

Veranstalter:	<b>Dr. Jens Elze</b>
Modul:	<b>Naturalism and the English Novel</b> [ENG-6, ENG-6a, ENG-12, AA7, AA10, LAA9, LAA12, AA-MA01, AA-MA02, AA-MA04, AA-MA06, IAA21, IAA23, IAA24, IAA25]
Art der Veranstaltung:	<b>Seminar II</b>
Veranstaltungsnummer:	<b>53-547</b>
Zeit:	<b>2st., Di 16-18</b>
Raum:	<b>Ü35 - 01047</b>
Beginn:	<b>18.10.2020</b>

### **Course description:**

Naturalism is one of the most important concerns in French, American, and German literature of the late nineteenth century. Each of these national literatures has left us with a distinct naturalist canon and with programmatic commentaries outlining the importance of naturalism to a modern conception of literature. English literature, on the other hand, offers little in terms of naturalist manifestos and in literary-historical reappraisals of the period naturalism is often conspicuously absent. Does that mean that there is no English naturalism to speak of? In this seminar we will closely read three novels of the 1880s and 1890s by George Gissing, Thomas Hardy, and George Moore to discuss the question of (their) naturalism. To do so, we have to engage with the scientific discourses – like sociology, Darwinism, medicine – that have informed naturalism, but also with late nineteenth-century debates about naturalism and “new realism” in England, as well as with various theories and criticisms of literary naturalism from Émile Zola over Georg Lukacs to Fredric Jameson. Our discussions of naturalism will consistently lead us back to basic questions of literary studies – such as literature’s vexed relation to the imitation and critique of social life, the tension between the narrative voice and the implied ethics of a text, the status of literary character between abstraction and individual, or the relation between socio-economic determinism and political and historical transformation. At the end of the class, I hope we will be able to assess how English literature can be positioned within the wider debates and practices of literary naturalism and in how far these “naturalist” novels can be seen as transitional nodes between Victorian realism and 20th century modernism.

Please obtain the following texts in the noted editions:

George Gissing, *The Nether World* (Oxford Classics)

Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (Penguin Classics)

George Moore, *Esther Waters* (Oxford Classics)

### **Course requirements:**

Regular and active participation in the seminar (no more than two missed classes), excellent knowledge of the texts assigned, oral presentation or preparation of discussion questions, term paper.

Sprechstunden im Semester:	<b>s. Sprechstundenliste</b>
Sprechstunden in der vorlesungsfreien Zeit:	<b>s. Sprechstundenliste</b>

