

Veranstalter	Dr. Jan D. Kucharzewski
Thema	American Realism and Naturalism [AA-V4a/b, ENG-13, AA-M7, AA-M15, AA-W]
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar II
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-568
Zeit	2st, Montag 14-16 Uhr
Raum	Phil 1269
Beginn	17.10.2011

Kursbeschreibung:

Broadly defined as "the faithful representation of reality" or "verisimilitude," realism is a literary technique practiced by many schools of writing. Although strictly speaking, realism is a technique, it also denotes a particular kind of subject matter, especially the representation of middle-class life. A reaction against romanticism, an interest in scientific method, the systematizing of the study of documentary history, and the influence of rational philosophy all affected the rise of realism. In American literature, the term "realism" encompasses the period of time from the Civil War to the turn of the century during which William Dean Howells, Rebecca Harding Davis, Henry James, Mark Twain, and others wrote fiction devoted to accurate representation and an exploration of American lives in various contexts. As the United States grew rapidly after the Civil War, the increasing rates of democracy and literacy, the rapid growth in industrialism and urbanization, an expanding population base due to immigration, and a relative rise in middle-class affluence provided a fertile literary environment for readers interested in understanding these rapid shifts in culture. In drawing attention to this connection, Amy Kaplan has called realism a "strategy for imagining and managing the threats of social change" (*Social Construction of American Realism* ix). Despite its contemporary manifestation as a rather conventional mode of storytelling, realism began as a radical and often controversial form of literature. American naturalism extended realism further but focused on the lower-classes and on marginalized individuals. The naturalists maintained the realist attention to detail, merging it with a belief in social determinism rather than free will.

In this seminar we will read, interpret, and discuss literature from various authors whose works reflect the literary movements of realism and naturalism. Each student will learn to identify the major characteristics of this literary period by analyzing and describing the works of selected authors. We will study the effects of new urban environments and consumer culture on human life and explore the extent to which "reality" is socially constructed and shifts historically dependent upon the writer's class, gender, and race. Authors to be discussed include: **Mark Twain, Kate Chopin, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry James, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Stephen Crane, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser** and others. Students are required to purchase a copy of James Nagel and Tom Quirk (eds.), *The Portable American Realism Reader*. Additional texts will be made available in the first session.

Teilnahmevoraussetzungen:

Neben den formalen Voraussetzungen die nachgewiesene Bereitschaft zur regelmäßigen aktiven Teilnahme am Seminar (anstelle von Referaten wird der Lesefortschritt der einzelnen Studierenden regelmäßig überprüft; der Nachweis von Textkenntnissen ist eine Grundvoraussetzung für eine erfolgreiche Seminarteilnahme). Die Anwesenheitsliste wird ab der ersten Sitzung geführt.

Sprechstunde während der Vorlesungszeit:	Dienstags 15-16 Uhr (o. n. V.)
Sprechstunden während der vorlesungsfreien Zeit:	Siehe Webseite des IAA