

Bettina Schötz

1220

Tracing a Cult: Nick Hornby

Wed (6)

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2 KP (regular and active participation, 15-minute presentation or written assignment)

PS

6 KP (regular and active participation, 15-minute presentation or written assignment, term paper)

"Hornby is a writer who dares to be witty, intelligent and emotionally generous all at once." (*The New York Times*)

Nick Hornby (*1957) is one of the most famous contemporary British writers. While novels such as *High Fidelity*, *About a Boy*, *How to Be Good*, or *A Long Way Down* have been international best-sellers, his non-fictional tribute to Arsenal Football Club, *Fever Pitch*, and his account on pop music, *31 Songs*, have achieved cult status. Not only has he been hailed as a highly gifted comic writer with a unique, "Hornbyesque" humour, but he has also been considered instrumental in the on-going process of the democratisation of British literature, deliberately blurring the boundaries between high- and low-brow fiction.

In the course of this seminar, we will discuss both Hornby's widely acclaimed novels *High Fidelity* (1995), *About a Boy* (1998) and *A Long Way Down* (2005) as well as the hugely successful film adaptations *High Fidelity* (2000, Stephen Frears) and *About a Boy* (2002, Chris & Paul Weitz). However, we will also direct our attention at Hornby's collection of short stories *Otherwise Pandemonium* (2005) and his screenplays *Fever Pitch* (1997) and *An Education* (2009).

In studying the award-winning writer's oeuvre, we pursue 3 goals: (1) We will practise the precise application of the categories and methods necessary for any analysis and interpretation of narrative texts (in the medium of book and film). (2) Adopting a Masculinity Studies perspective, we will scrutinise how Hornby's works construct masculinity in the contemporary era and discuss the role the writer has played in the emergence of 'Lad Lit'. (3) We intend to identify reasons for Nick Hornby's immense popularity.

Please note: This course is also aimed at students who have not yet attended the introductory lecture to Literary Studies.

Preparatory reading:

Hornby, Nick. *High Fidelity*. London: Penguin, 2010.

You will be able to access all the films we discuss through an *Audiovisueller Semesterapparat* in the SLUB. Please register for this *Semesterapparat* by sending an email to Bettina Schötz (bettina.schoetz@tu-dresden.de) that states your name and your SLUB account number.