Bettina Schötz

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The Art of Brevity, or The Short Story in Britain

Thu (2) ZEU 118

Ü	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)

Fascinating and challenging to readers and writers alike, the short story tends to be underestimated in terms of its importance and potential by literary critics. Therefore, the seminar focuses on the development of this highly innovative genre in the course of British literary history.
Since the short story has been described as a "chameleon" with regard to its various themes and forms, we will first attempt to arrive at a satisfactory definition of the literary subgenre by taking into account the theoretical work of the American writer and literary critic Edgar Allan Poe. Then we will turn our attention towards famous examples of British short story writing, studying texts by Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, Virginia Woolf, Angela Carter, Ian McEwan, Salman Rushdie, and others. Finally, we will discuss the short story's enormous popularity with contemporary writers from former British colonies.
Since this course is also aimed at students who have not yet attended the introductory lecture to Literary Studies, we will start off with a session on how to analyse narrative texts. Throughout the seminar, students will be asked to employ the (newly) acquired categories and methods in their analyses and interpretations of short stories within their respective cultural and historical contexts.

Students are expected to read and prepare one or two short stories on a weekly basis as well as occasional chapters from the relevant secondary literature.

All material will be made available on the web.