University of Gdańsk

Subject card

Subject name and code	Experimental American Short Stories, PG_00205051		
Field of study	American Studies		
Date of commencement of studies	October 2025	Academic year of realisation of subject	2026/2027
Education level	Bachelor's studies	Subject group	Obligatory subject group in the field of study Optional subject group
Mode of study	full-time studies	Mode of delivery	at the university
Year of study	2	Language of instruction	English
Semester of study	3	ECTS credits	2.0
Learning profile	academic	Assessment form	credit
Conducting unit			
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor	dr Maja Wojdyło	
	Teachers	dr Maja Wojdyło	

Lesson types	Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
	Number of study hours	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30
	E-learning hours included: 0.0						

Learning activity and number of study hours	Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan	Participation in consultation hours	Self-study	SUM
	Number of study hours	30	2.0	18.0	50

Subject objectives	The course integrates unnatural narratology with close readings of selected twentieth- and twenty-first-century short stories that feature transgressions of narrative logic, impossible narrators and paradoxical storyworlds. The term "American" in the course title is used in a geographical sense, encompassing both North and South America; however, the primary emphasis will be on North American texts.

Learning outcomes

Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
[AMERL3_U06] Able to communicate orally and in writing on issues related to American and British culture and literature, using specialized terminology in cultural and religious studies and literary studies.	Is able to communicate, both orally and in writing, on issues related to American culture and literature, using specialist terminology from the field of unnatural narratology.	[SU2] presentation/project/paper/ report [SU4] test/exam - oral or written
[AMERL3_W06] Has advanced knowledge of the basic conceptual and terminological apparatus of literary studies applicable to the study of American literature.	Has advanced knowledge of the basic conceptual and terminological framework of literary studies as applied to research on contemporary experimental American short fiction.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW2] presentation/project/paper/ report
[AMERL3_W08] Has advanced detailed knowledge of selected issues in American and British literature.	Has advanced, detailed knowledge of contemporary experimental American short fiction.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW2] presentation/project/paper/ report
[AMERL3_K01] is ready to critically evaluate his knowledge and skills, especially in American cultural and literary studies, as well as the basic contextual knowledge of American studies concerning history, social sciences, geography, linguistics and art and English.	Is prepared to critically evaluate their own knowledge and skills, particularly in the field of American literary studies and in relation to the basic contextual knowledge relevant to the primary texts discussed.	[SK2] presentation/project/paper/ report [SK4] test/exam - oral or written
[AMERL3_U04] is able to analyze and interpret works of American literature, taking into account their cultural contexts, using concepts and methods from literary studies.	Is able to analyse and interpret contemporary experimental American short fiction, taking into account its cultural contexts and drawing on concepts and methods from literary studies.	[SU2] presentation/project/paper/ report [SU4] test/exam - oral or written

Subject contents

Narratological analysis of selected contemporary American experimental short stories, including:

- “The Garden of Forking Paths” by J. L. Borges;
- “Here and There” by David Foster Wallace;
- “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid;

and other stories selected by the instructor, drawing on selected excerpts and chapters from relevant scholarly literature.

Prerequisites and co-requisites

Assessment methods and criteria

Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold	Percentage of the final grade
Presentation	50.0%	30.0%
Test	50.0%	70.0%

Recommended reading

Basic literature

J. L. Borges - "The Garden of Forking Paths";
Donald Barthelme - "Paraguay";
David Foster Wallace - "Here and There", "*Datum Centurio"*;
Jamaica Kincaid - "Girl";
Leslie Marmon Silko - selections from *Storyteller*;
Ursula K. Le Guin – “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”, “Mazes”;
Louise Erdrich – “Fleur”;

Also included are selected scholarly articles on the primary texts discussed in class and excerpts from Brian McHale’s *Postmodernist Fiction* and other secondary sources. Detailed, regularly updated reading information is available on the Moodle course page.

	Supplementary literature	Brian McHale - *Postmodernist Fiction*; Jan Alber - *Unnatural Narrative*; Jan Alber and Henrik Skov Nielsen, eds. - *A Poetics of Unnatural Narrative*; Jan Alber and Brian Richardson, eds. - *Unnatural Narratology: Extensions, Revisions, and Challenges.*
	eResources addresses	Basic https://mdl.ug.edu.pl/course/view.php?id=13840 - Moodle course: materials and activities.
Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed	1. Explain what a labyrinthine narrative is, using "The Garden of Forking Paths" as an example. M. C. Escher: Up and Down https://escherinhetpaleis.nl/en/about-escher/masterpieces/up-and-down 2. What's the relation between this linocut and the "The Garden of Forking Paths?" 3. What is a *strange loop* and how is this technique used in "Here and There"?	
Work placement	Not applicable	

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