

NYU Paris

V45.9868.003

Studies in Prose Genres

Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Dr Claire de Obaldia
- **Contact hours:** Tues/Thurs 10:30-11:00 + by appointment
- **Email address:** cd89@nyu.edu

Course Information

- **Course number:** Undergraduate Program V45.9868.003
- **Course title:** Studies in Prose Genres: Postcolonial Readings of Classic Texts
- **Course description:**

In this course we focus on a selection of fairy tales, three contemporary novels, a novella, and a biographical essay in which the world of the character, the narrator, or the author, is read through the lens of a literary classic. In each case, the reading and rewriting of the primary text involves temporal and spatial displacements that generate shifting perspectives and a constant reshuffling of centre and periphery. Between a reverential affiliation to the past and a creative misreading and rewriting of it, these intertextual encounters with “great” Western literary works insistently raise the questions of identity, originality, and “writing back”. Exploring these questions will therefore also involve drawing on comparative, translation, gender and postcolonial studies.
- **Class meeting days and times:** Tues-Thurs 9-10:30
- **Classroom number:** TBA

Course Overview and Goals

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- Manage a broad range of issues and topics
- Situate 17th-20th texts within their historical contexts
- Formulate relevant questions and hold multiple perspectives
- Be familiar with a variety of modes and styles of writing
- Apply their analytical skills to any type of text, fictional and nonfictional, through the practice of close reading
- Develop or refine standard methods of comparative literature

Course Requirements

None.

Class Participation

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation includes abiding by NYU Attendance Policy (see below), being up to date with the assigned reading, preparing each class in advance, and catching up in case of a missed class.

It involves engaging in class discussions through direct participation and/or by submitting written responses to an excerpt or a question discussed in class. The student's command of the material will be evaluated, and also his or her ability to distinguish between personal feeling and intellectual grasp. The quality of the student's contribution to the group's continuing dialogue will also be assessed: making points that build on what has preceded them, being willing to consider new evidence, being willing to consider points of view other than one's own, modifying an earlier position when warranted, distinguishing between main and tangential points or digressions...

Assignment 1

2-3 single-spaced pages prepared at home in a standard font, involving a response to a prompt, comparing and contrasting texts discussed in class, or the close reading of an excerpt or excerpts.

Assignment 2

2-3 single-spaced pages prepared at home in a standard font, involving a response to a prompt, comparing and contrasting texts discussed in class, or the close reading of an excerpt or excerpts.

Assignment 3

2-3 single-spaced pages prepared at home in a standard font, involving a response to a prompt, comparing and contrasting texts discussed in class, or the close reading of an excerpt or excerpts.

Assignment 4 (Final paper)

3-4 single-spaced pages in a standard font + an in-class assignment (no required length).

Tests

Short in-class assignments involving a summary, an outline, an introduction, making up a prompt, etc. , and which count towards the Preparation and Participation grade.

Revisions and extra credit

The first paper will be graded for feedback and can therefore be revised, either partially (e.g. introduction, conclusion, transitions, etc.) or completely. The deadline for this revision is the due date of the following paper, and only the grade of the revised paper counts (unless the paper has not been revised, in which case the feedback grade becomes the final grade).

Students can also choose to write another paper to improve their preparation and participation grade, and submit it in the last week of the semester at the latest. The prompt

must be chosen from the texts read for this course and should not repeat material already discussed in other papers. It is subject to the instructor's approval.

Assigned Readings

The 4 pairs of fictional texts that are assigned for this course are by Charles Perrault and Angela Carter; Daniel Defoe and Michel Tournier; Charles Dickens and Lloyd Jones; Gustave Flaubert and Julian Barnes. Reading a substantial number of essays, articles, and reviews is also required (see "Required Non-Fiction" below).

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Preparation and class participation	30%
Take-home papers = 15% each	45%
Short in-class assignments	5%
Final take-home paper	20%
(including final in-class assignment =5%)	

Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Points	Description
A	16-20	Outstanding
A-	15	Excellent
B+	14	Very Good
B	13	Good
B-	12	Satisfactory
C+	11	Above Average
C	10	Average
C-	9	Below Average
D+	8	Unsatisfactory
D	7	Low Pass

Letter Grade	Points	Description
D-	6	Low Pass
F	5	Fail

Grading Criteria

A range: applies to work that is very well argued and structured; that gives evidence both of close reading and of extensive knowledge; that shows imaginative flair and originality.

B range: Applies to work which demonstrates an ability to conceptualize the key issues and debates and to formulate relevant points or questions, but which may need to be more thorough, better structured, and/or show more independent thinking and originality.

C range: Applies to work which, though it may raise a couple of interesting points or questions, remains too superficial, or undeveloped, or poorly structured, and/or shows insufficient grasp of the subject or material.

D range: Presents incorrect or confused information, misunderstandings of the subject or text, lack of coherence, lack of editing and structure or absence of development, an inability to make proper use of references and quotations, serious inadequacies of expression (syntax, grammar, vocabulary).

F grade: For non- or late submission of work without a valid medical excuse, or for work which is unintelligible, illegible, or wholly irrelevant; for plagiarism or work which uses unattributed material.

Course Schedule

Topics and Assignments

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
1) Tues 5 Feb 2) Thurs 7 Feb	1) Introduction to the course & to the fairy tale as a genre 2) Charles Perrault LRRH (comparing 2 translations)	1) Syllabus 2) Charles Perrault, <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> transl Christopher Betts, and transl Angela Carter	
1) Tues 12 Feb 2) Thurs 14 Feb	1) Angela Carter rewritings of <i>LRRH</i> 2) Charles Perrault, <i>Bluebeard</i> (comparing 2 translations)	1) Carter, <i>The Werewolf</i> and <i>The Company of Wolves</i> . 2) Perrault, <i>Bluebeard</i> : compare Christopher Betts and Angela Carter translations	

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
1)Tues 19 Feb 2)Thurs 21 Feb	1)Carter rewriting of <i>Bluebeard</i> 2)Comparative session	1)Angela Carter rewriting: <i>The Bloody Chamber</i> 2)Christopher Betts' Intro to Perrault; Bettelheim on <i>LRRH</i> ; Carter, "The Better to Eat You With + "Notes From the Front Line". And Seifert Intro.	Choose and submit one prompt for debate
1)Tues 26 Feb 2)Thurs 28 Feb	1)Introduction to 18 th century British literature and to Defoe. 2)Defoe, <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	1) Paper #1 due 2) <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> (I)	Paper #1 due (26Feb). Graded for feedback.
1)Tues 5 March 2)Thurs 7 March	<i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	1) <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> (II) 2) <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> (III)	
1)Tues 12 March 2)Thurs 14 March	Michel Tournier, <i>Friday</i>	1) <i>Friday</i> (I) 2) <i>Friday</i> (II)	
1)Tues 19 March 2)Thurs 21 March	1) <i>Friday</i> (End) 2)Comparative session	1) <i>Friday</i> (III) 2)Read and prepare Susan Sontag, "Questions of travel"; + Norton Essays on <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> listed in bibliography.	Choose and submit one prompt for debate.
Tues 26 March Thurs 28 March	Mid-Semester Break		
1)Tues 2 April 2)Thurs 4 April	1)Introduction to Victorian literature and to Charles Dickens 2)Dickens, <i>Great Expectations</i>	2) <i>Great Expectations</i> (I)	Paper #2 due (2 April) + Revisions for Paper #1.
1)Tues 9 April 2)Thurs 11 April	<i>Great Expectations</i>	1) <i>Great Expectations</i> (II) 2) <i>Great Expectations</i> (III)	
1)Tues 16 April 2)Thurs 18 April	Lloyd Jones, <i>Mister Pip</i>	1) <i>Mister Pip</i> (I) 2) <i>Mister Pip</i> (II)	
1)Tues 23 April 2)Thurs 25 April	1) <i>Mister Pip</i> (End)	1) <i>Mister Pip</i> , (III), + Sontag and Steiner	1)Written summaries (to be submitted) of

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
	2)Comparative Session	2) Read Norton Essays on <i>Great Expectations</i> (see my Bibliography), reviews of Lloyd Jones; and Ashcroft, et al, Introduction to <i>The Empire Writes Back</i> ; and Slemon, "Post-Colonial Critical Theories" (Reader)	Sontag, "On Being Translated" and of Steiner, "Understanding as Translation". 2) Choose and submit one prompt for debate.
1)Tues 30 April 2)Thurs 2 May	1)Introduction to 19 th -century French literature and to Gustave Flaubert. 2)Flaubert, <i>A Simple Heart</i>	2)Flaubert, <i>A Simple Heart</i> (read whole novella)	Paper #3 due (30 April)
1)Tues 7 May 2)Thurs 9 May	Julian Barnes, <i>Flaubert's Parrot</i>	1) <i>Flaubert's Parrot</i> (I) 2) <i>Flaubert's Parrot</i> (II)	
1)Tues 14 May 2)Thurs 16 May	<i>Flaubert's Parrot</i> (End), + Prompts for Final Paper. 2)Conclusions.	1) <i>Flaubert's Parrot</i> (III)	Final Paper due on the following Tuesday.

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials (read in this order)

The books are to be purchased independently by each student (see required editions, and check what is available at the NYU Library), **except for Tournier's *Friday* which has been ordered for you at the Librairie Eyrolles.**

- **Perrault**, Charles, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Bluebeard* in: *The Complete Fairy Tales* (**Oxford World Classics** 2009, trans. Christopher Betts) **Reader**
- **Carter**, Angela, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Bluebeard* in: *Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and Other Classic Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* (Penguin Classics 1977); **Reader**
The Bloody Chamber; The Werewolf; The Company of Wolves* in: *The Bloody Chamber And Other Stories* (Penguin Classics, 1979) **Reader
- **Defoe**, Daniel, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (any edition)
- **Tournier**, **Michel**, *Friday*, (Johns Hopkins UP, 1997, transl. Norman Denny [*Vendredi ou Les Limbes du Pacifique/1967*]) **Librairie Eyrolles**
- **Dickens**, Charles, *Great Expectations* (any edition)
- **Lloyd Jones**, *Mister Pip* (any edition)
- **Flaubert**, Gustave, *A Simple Heart* in *Three Tales* [*Un Coeur simple* in *Trois Contes*], translated by AJ Krailsheimer (**Oxford World's Classics**)
- **Barnes**, Julian, *Flaubert's Parrot* (any edition)

Required Non-Fiction: Articles, chapters and essays from my NYU library reserve, and in your Reader:

Norton Essays on *Robinson Crusoe* (see the Norton Critical Edition of *Robinson Crusoe* in my NYU library reserve): Daniel **Defoe**, Prefaces to Volume II and III of *Robinson Crusoe*; J. Paul **Hunter**, "The Puritan Emblematic Tradition" (incl. "The 'Guide' Tradition"; "The 'Providence' Tradition"; "Spiritual Biography"); "The 'Occasion' of *Robinson Crusoe*"; Jean-Jacques **Rousseau**, "A Treatise on Natural Education"; Charles **Lamb**, "On Defoe's novels"; Edgar Allan **Poe**, "Defoe's Faculty of Identification"; Charles **Dickens**, "The Want of Emotion in Defoe"; Leslie **Stephen**, "Defoe's Discovery of a New Art Form"; Virginia **Woolf**, "Robinson Crusoe"; Ian **Watt**, "Robinson Crusoe as a Myth".

Norton Essays on *Great Expectations* (see the Norton Critical Edition of *Great Expectations* in my NYU library reserve): Humphry **House**, "Pip's Upward Mobility"; Robin **Gilmour**, "The Pursuit of Gentility"; George **Gissing**, "Dickens's Shrews"; Bernard **Shaw**, "Introduction to *Great Expectations*"; George **Orwell**, "Charles Dickens"; Dorothy **Van Ghent**, "On *Great Expectations*"; Julian **Moynahan**, "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of *Great Expectations*".

Ashcroft, Bill, **Griffiths**, Gareth, **Tiffin**, Helen, Introduction to *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in post-colonial literatures* (1989); **Bernheim**, Charles, « The Bernheimer Report (1993) : Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century » in: *Comparative Literature In The Age Of Multiculturalism* ; **Bettelheim**, Bruno, "Little Red Riding Hood" in: *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (Penguin, 1991); **Carter**, Angela, "Notes From the Front Line" in: Michelle Wandor ed., *On gender and writing* (Pandora Press, 1983); "All the Better to Eat you With", in: *Shaking a Leg: Collected Journalism and Writings* (Vintage, 1997); **Cixous**, Hélène, « The Laugh of the Medusa »?/ *Le Rire de la méduse et autres ironies* (Editions Galilée, 2010); **Pratt**, Marie-Louise, « Comparative Literature and Global Citizenship » in: *Comparative Literature In The Age Of Multiculturalism*; **Riffaterre**, Michael, « On the Complementarity of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies » (ibid); **Seifert**, Lewis C., Introduction to *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France* (1996); **Slemon**, Stephen, « Post-Colonial Critical Theories » in *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures : An Introduction* », ed. Bruce King; **Sontag**, Susan, « Questions of Travel » and « On Being Translated » in *Where The Stress Falls* ; **Steiner**, George, « Understanding as Translation » in *After Babel : Aspects of Language and Translation* and « What is Comparative Literature ? » in: *No Passion Spent : Essays 1978-1996*.

Optional Textbooks & Materials

- **Ashcroft**, **Griffiths**, and **Tiffin**, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (Routledge 1989)
- **Bhabha**, Homi, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994)
- **Bakhtin**, Mikhail, *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays*. M. Holquist ed., University Press of Texas, 1982
- **Barthes**, Roland, *Mythologies: The Complete Edition, in a New Translation* (Hill and Wang, 2013)/*Mythologies* (Points Seuil, 1970)
- **The Rustle of Language* (Blackwell, 1986)/ *Le Plaisir du texte* (Seuil, 1973)

- **Bassnett, Susan, and Trivedi, Harish, *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 1999)**
- **Bassnett, Susan, *Translation* (Routledge, 2013)**
- **Beauvoir, Simone de, "Myths" in: *The Second Sex/Le Deuxième sexe* (1949), Vol I, and « Childhood » in Vol II.**
- **Bloom, Harold, *The Anxiety of Influence* (Oxford University Press, 1976)**
- ****The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (Papermac, 1995)**
- **Chamoiseau, Patrick, *L'Empreinte à Crusoé* (Gallimard, 2012)**
- **Coetzee, J.M., *Foe* (Secker and Warburg, 1987)**
- **Currie, Mark, *Metafiction* (Longman, 1995)**
- **Deleuze, Gilles, *Différence et répétition* (PUF, 1968)**
- **Derrida, Jacques, *Writing and Difference* (Routledge, 2001)**
- **Freud, "The Uncanny" in: *The Uncanny*, transl. David McLintock (Penguin Classics, 2003)**
- **Genette, Gérard, *Figures I, II, III* (Seuil, 1966, 1969, 1972)/*Narrative Discourse : An Essay in Method* (Cornell University Press, 1980)/*Figures of Literary Discourse* (Columbia University Press, 1982); **Palimpsestes* (Seuil, 1982)/*Palimpsests : Literature in the Second Degree* (University of Nebraska Press, 1997)**
- **Gilbert, Sandra, and Gubar, Susan, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Yale UP, 1979)**
- **Graham, Allen, *Intertextuality* (Routledge, 2000)**
- **Hillis Miller, Joseph, *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (Harvard UP, 1982)**
- **Hutcheon, Linda, *A Theory of Parody* (Methuen, 1985)**
- ****A Poetics of Postmodernism* (Routledge, 1988)**
- **Jackson, Rosemary, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (Routledge 1981)**
- **Meyer Spacks, Patricia, *The Female Imagination: A Literary and Psychological Investigation of Women's Writing* (Allen & Unwin, 1976)**
- **Propp, Vladimir, *Morphology of the Folktale* (Martin Fine Books, 2015)**
- **Rushdie, Salman, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays in Criticism 1981-1991* (Granta, 1991)**
- **Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (Routledge, 1978)**
- ****The World, The Text, and The Critic* (Harvard UP, 1993)**
- ****Culture and Imperialism* (Chatto and Windus, 1993)**
- ****Beginnings : Intention and Method* (Columbia University Press, 1995)**
- **Showalter, Elaine, *A Literature of their Own: British Women Writers, from Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing* (Virago, 2014)**
- **Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorti, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (Routledge, 1987)**
- ****The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (Routledge, 1990)**
- ****A Critique of Postcolonial Reason : Toward A History of the Vanishing Present* (Harvard UP, 1999)**
- **Todorov, Tzvetan, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to A Literary Genre* (trans Richard Howard, 1975)**
- **Warner, Marina, *Once Upon A Time: A Short History of Fairy Tale* (Oxford University Press, 2014)**
- **Zipes, Jack, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (Heinemann, 1983)**

- **The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (Princeton University Press, 2012)

Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](https://nyu.edu/its/classes) (nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](https://library.nyu.edu) (library.nyu.edu)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](https://nyu.mywconline.com) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](https://nyu.edu/it/servicedesk) (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

- Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in harsher penalties including failure.
- Unexcused absences affect students' grades: unexcused absences will be penalized with a 2% deduction from the students' final course grade.
- Absences are excused only for illness, religious observance, and emergencies.

Illness: For a single absence, students may be required to provide a doctor's note, at the discretion of the Associate Director of Academics. In the case of two consecutive absences, students must provide a doctor's note. Exams, quizzes, and presentations will not be made up without a doctor's note.

Religious Observance: Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their instructor and the Academic Office in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose. If exams, quizzes, and presentations are scheduled on a holiday a student will observe, the Associate Director, in coordination with the instructor, will reschedule them.

Please note: if you are unable to attend class, you are required to email your professors directly to notify them.

Late Assignment

Late submission or work will be accepted **only** with justifiable reasons of health or family emergency. Any written work turned in after due dates can count only as a contribution to the "Class participation" grade.

Handwritten papers are OK in case of a computer/printer failure!

Internet: Students using critical material not included in the Reader will be expected to provide exact references (in footnotes, endnotes, or brackets), and any internet material (background information, reviews, article) must be printed out and turned in with the paper.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community.

Plagiarism: *presenting others' work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one's own. Plagiarism is a form of fraud. We all stand on the shoulders of others, and we must give credit to the creators of the works that we incorporate into products that we call our own. Some examples of plagiarism:*

- *a sequence of words incorporated without quotation marks*
- *an unacknowledged passage paraphrased from another's work*
- *the use of ideas, sound recordings, computer data or images created by others as though it were one's own*
- *submitting evaluations of group members' work for an assigned group project which misrepresent the work that was performed by another group member*
- *altering or forging academic documents, including but not limited to admissions materials, academic records, grade reports, add/drop forms, course registration forms, etc.*

For further information, students are encouraged to check www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Instructor Bio

With 2 degrees in German and Hispanic studies from the Sorbonne (Paris IV), and a Masters and Doctorate in Comparative Literature from Oxford (English, French, German, Spanish), Claire de Obaldia has taught comparative literature at Oxford, Geneva, the Sorbonne, and different American universities in Paris and London since the 1990s. In 2000 she also became a certified teacher of the FM Alexander Technique (somatic education), combining her academic activity with that of teaching Alexander's work both privately and on teacher training courses in Paris and London.

Her publications include *The Essayistic Spirit* (Oxford University Press, 1995); *L'Esprit de l'essai, de Montaigne à Borges* (Coll. Poétique, Seuil, 2005); «*Floating Islands* », an essay on philosophies of education in : *Alexander in Context* (Hite, London 2014) ; « *Emerging Selves* », in : *Alexander Life Stories* (Alexander Trust, London, 2016) .

