

EN963-30 Resource Fictions: Studies in World Literature

22/23

Department

English and Comparative Literary Studies

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Graeme Macdonald

Credit value

30

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

For students taking the World Literature pathway of the MA in English Literature. It will build upon the knowledge gained from other modules in World Literature. For all other students, the module will be a free-standing introduction to the study of Global literature and Eco-literature.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module examines the world literature of energy: oil, water, coal, gas, wind, nuclear, etc. It is platformed by recent theories of world literature that explore how literary studies can be reconceived on a global scale. It takes its cue from the suggestion that 'world' literary connections can be realised by identifying nodal relations in form and space between texts and their local and international contexts. Two central corresponding factors underpin the way energy resources - can be perceived as genuinely global cultural phenomena: their multinational connection to economic and political modes of imperialism and their prominence under the rise of environmentalism. 'Worlding' these 'resource fictions' springs them from their immediate national environment and internationalises their outlook. The course will analyse and compare texts from a variety of places

where such resources are marked by abundance and scarcity. It will reveal connecting patterns in form and content; patterns that confirm the usefulness of world literature as a method to map and critique the way in which global resources are unevenly produced, refined, extracted and powerfully exploited on a world scale. It also demonstrates the manner in which local populations affected by these resources can realise a sense of resistance and global solidarity with those in similar situations. In tracking the development of cultural responses to energy production throughout the twentieth century, the course will maintain a focus on the speculative forms of energy futures.

A typical year will concentrate on one or two of these resources and investigate their cultural and literary registrations.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Core Syllabus

Each year, the convenor will compile a syllabus of nine two-hour sessions designed to provide an introduction to the world literature methodology and subsequent coverage of specific texts. The course has a generic topic to allow for a specific resource topic or a mixture to be taught each year. The sessions for 'oil' are listed below. These sessions are open to all postgraduate students in the faculty whether auditing or taking the course as part of their degree.

Week One: Introduction to 'world' literary approach:

Franco Moretti, 'Conjectures on World Literature', Selections from various sources, including Roberto Schwarz, Lucia Boldrini, Pascale Casanova, Nicholas Brown.

Week Two: Introduction to Oil/Wind/Gas/Nuclear as a global resource. Selections from various secondary reading texts (listed below)

Week Three: 'Drainage!' American Naturalism, American Oil: Upton Sinclair, *Oil!*, USA, 1927 (followed by showing of Paul Thomas Anderson's 2007 film adaptation, *There Will Be Blood*)

Week Four: Social Realism, Oil, and Island Revolts: Ralph de Boissiere, *Crown Jewel*, Trinidad, 1957

Week Five: 'It's (not and never was) Scotland's Oil!' The UK Oil Shock in Realism and Myth: George Mackay Brown, *Greenvoe*, Scotland, 1972.

Week Six: Documentary Showing and Discussion (3-4 hrs): *Lessons From Darkness*, Germany/Kuwait, Werner Herzog, 1992; *A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash* Ray McCormack, Switzerland, 2006 (<http://www.oilcrashmovie.com>)

Week Seven: Shell Shocks and Ogoni Resistance: Ken Saro-Wiwa, Selections from stories and essays, Nigeria, 1985-

Week Eight: *Storage: Fantastic Realism and Island heritage*, Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, Martinique, 1992

Week Nine: *Oil is our desert God*: Abdalrahman Munif, *Cities of Salt* (vol 1.), Saudi Arabia, 1985

Week Ten: *Peaks and Posts: Speculative Oil fictions*, Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*, USA, 2006

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Reflect, across a broad international range, on the cultural, political and economic

registration of natural and refined resources in fiction, from the early twentieth century to the present.

- Relate specific literary and other texts to the material conditions governing the control, distribution and use of energy resources nationally and globally.
- Reflect upon methodological questions of comparative, global and 'green' textual study, in relation to issues such as canon formation, new interpretive reading strategies and cultural reception at different times.
- Address insightfully the critical and political opportunities available in the use of both a world literary methodology and an ecocritical context.
- Develop an essay theme designed to cover one aspect of the course in greater depth, but also, to convey a comparative awareness of some of the wider literary and historical issues raised.
- Develop an introductory research topic on a related area of the course for a qualificatory writing project.

Indicative reading list

Each week, tutors will supply a subject-specific bibliography relevant to the theme and chosen primary text. General books to be held on reserve in the library are:

OIL: Primary Texts:

Upton Sinclair, *Oil* (USA, 1927)

Ralph de Boissiere, *Crown Jewel* (Trinidad, 1952)

George Mackay Brown, *Greenvoe* (Scotland, 1972)

Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco* (Martinique, 1992)

Ken Saro-Wiwa, *Selections from Stories and Essays* (Nigeria 1985-)

Abdulahman Munif, *Cities of Salt* (Saudi Arabia, 1987)

Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (USA, 2007)

Suggested Secondary Reading: OIL

World Literature Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (2004)

David Damrosch, *How to Read World Literature* (2009)

F. Jameson & M. Miyoshi, M. *The Cultures of Globalization* (1998)

Franco Moretti, 'Conjectures on World Literature', *New Left Review* (2000) (ed) *The Novel: Vol I: History, Geography and Culture* (2006)

- *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History* (2005)
- Christopher Prendergast (ed) *Debating World Literature* (2004)
- Han Saussy (ed) *Comparative literature in an age of globalization* (2006)
- M. Valdez Moses, *The Novel and the Globalization of Culture* (1995)
- Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (2005)
- L. Coupe, ed., *The Green Studies Reader* (2000)
- Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (2004)

Oil in History, Politics, Culture

A Apter, *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (2005)

Duncan Clarke, *Empires of Oil: Corporate Oil in Barbarian Worlds* (2007)

- Crude Continent: The Struggle for Africa's Oil Prize: The Struggle for Africa's Oil Prize (2008)
Kenneth S. Deffeyes, Beyond Oil: The View from Hubbert's Peak (2006)
Toyin Falola and Ann Genova, The Politics of the Global Oil Industry: An Introduction (2005)
Catherine Gautier, Oil, Water, and Climate: An Introduction (2008)
John Ghazvinian, Untapped: The Scramble for Africa's Oil (2008)
Christopher Harvie, Fool's Gold: the story of North Sea oil (1994)
- 'North Sea Oil and Scottish Culture' in Susanne Hagemann (ed), Studies in Scottish Fiction: 1945 to the Present (1996)
Richard Heinberg, Party's Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies (2007)
Leonardo Maugeri, The Age of Oil: What They Don't Want You to Know About the World's Most Controversial Resource (2008)
Mary Kaldor; Terry Lynn Karl and Yahia Said, Oil Wars (2007)
TL Karl, The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States (1997)
Jeremy Leggett, Half Gone: Oil, Gas, Hot Air and the Global Energy Crisis (2006)
Valerie Marcel, Oil Titans: National Oil Companies in the Middle East, John V. Mitchell (2005) Leonardo Maugeri The Age of Oil: The Mythology, History, and Future of the World's Most Controversial Resource (2006)
Oystein Noreng, Crude Power (2008)
Ike Okonta, Where Vultures Feast: Shell, Human Rights and Oil (2003)
Daniel Omoweh, Shell: The Petroleum Development Company, the State and Underdevelopment of Nigeria's Niger Delta - A Study in Environmental Degradation (2007)
Sonia Shah, Crude: The Story of Oil (2006)
Paul Roberts The End of Oil: The Decline of the Petroleum Economy and the Rise of a New Energy Order (2005)
Toby Shelley, Oil: Politics, Poverty and the Planet (Global Issues) (2005)
Andrew Rowell, James Marriott, Lorne Stockman, The Next Gulf: London, Washington and Oil Conflict in Nigeria (2005)
Matthew R. Simmons, Twilight in the Desert: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy
Michael C Ruppert, Crossing the Rubicon : the decline of the American empire at the end of the age of oil (2004)
Vaclav Smil, Oil: A Beginner's Guide (2006)
- Energy at the Crossroads: Global Perspectives and Uncertainties (2005)
- Energy: an introduction (2006)
- Energy in World History (Essays on World History) (1994)

Subject specific skills

Subject-Specific/Professional Skills For example: laboratory skills; scientific support writing; research skills and methods.

Transferable skills

No transferable skills defined for this module.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (7%)
Private study	280 hours (93%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

Reading & research

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time
Assessed essay	100%	
6000 word essay		

Feedback on assessment

Tabula & face to face

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 2 of TENA-Q3PD Postgraduate Taught Critical and Cultural Theory

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of TENS-Q2PE MA World Literature
- Year 1 of TENA-Q3PD Postgraduate Taught Critical and Cultural Theory
- Year 1 of TENA-Q3P1 Postgraduate Taught English Literature
- TENA-Q3PE Postgraduate Taught English and Drama
 - Year 1 of Q3PE English and Drama
 - Year 1 of Q3PE English and Drama
 - Year 2 of Q3PE English and Drama

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 1 of TGDA-L801 Postgraduate Taught Global Sustainable Development
- Year 1 of TPHA-V7PN Postgraduate Taught Philosophy and the Arts