

EN2M2-30 Global Literary Radicalisms: Proletarian Literature from the Russian Revolution to Anti-colonial Resistance - 2nd year

26/27

Department

English and Comparative Literary Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Myka Tucker-Abramson

Credit value

30

Module duration

18 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module introduces students to the world literary form of "proletarian literature," which emerged in the early-20th century and became a major literary, intellectual, and political movement across the 20th century. It explores how literary texts from across the globe responded to the formation of the socialist world across Russia, Asia, and Africa, as well as the explosion of anticapitalist and anticolonial movements within the US and Western Europe. It aims to help students develop an understanding of how overlapping and inter-related social struggles get taken up at the level of form and content in literary works.

Module aims

To introduce students to the world literary form of "proletarian literature," which emerged in the early-20th century and became a major literary, intellectual, and political movement across the

20th century. To explore how literary texts from across the globe responded to the formation of the socialist world across Russia, Asia, and Africa, as well as the explosion of anticapitalist and anticolonial movements within the US and Western Europe. To develop an understanding of how overlapping and inter-related social struggles get taken up at the level of form and content in literary works.

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.

Term 1

Week 1 Introduction: Michael Denning "Novelists' International" Culture in the Age of Three Worlds (2004)

David Featherstone and Christian Høgsbjerg "Introduction" Red October and the Black Atlantic (2021)

Amelia Glaser and Steven Lee "Introduction" Comintern Aesthetics (2020)

Week 2 Gladkov Cement (1925)

Selected secondary reading: Granville Hicks "Revolution and the Novel" New Masses (April 1934) and John E. Bowlt and Olga Matich, "Laboratory of dreams : the Russian avant-garde and cultural experiment" (1996)

Week 3 Sembene Ousmane's God's Bits of Wood (1960)

Selected secondary reading: Rossen Djagalov From Internationalism to Postcolonialism: Literature and Cinema between the Second and the Third Worlds (2020), Monica Popescu At Penpoint: African Literatures, Postcolonial Studies, and the Cold War (2022), Georg M. Gugelberger Marxism and African Literature (1986)

Unit 1: Ports

Week 4 Claude McKay Banjo (1929)

Selected Secondary Reading: Joel Nickels World Literature and the Geographies of Resistance (esp ch 2 "Nonstate Internationalism") (2018), Steven Lee The Ethnic Avant-Garde: Minority Cultures and World Revolution (2016), Winston James "To the East Turn: The Russian Revolution and the Black. Radical Imagination in the United States, 1917–1924" (2021), Kate Baldwin, Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain: Reading Encounters Between Black and Red, 1922–1963 (2002), William Maxwell, New Negro, Old Left: African-American Writing and Communism Between the Wars (1999),

Week 5 Selection of short stories by James Hanley, George Garrett, and Eric Walrond

Selected Secondary Reading: Holger Weiss A Global Radical Waterfront

The International Propaganda Committee of Transport Workers and the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers, 1921–1937 (2021), Deb Cowan The Deadly Life of Logistics (2014), Liam Campling and Alejandro Colás Capitalism and the Sea: The Maritime Factor in the Making of the Modern World (2021)

Week 7 Takiji Kobayashi Crab Cannery Ship (1929)

Selected Secondary Reading: Heather Bowen-Struyk, "Why a Boom in Proletarian Literature in Japan? The Kobayashi Takiji Memorial and The Factory Ship" (2009), Samuel Perry, Recasting Red Culture in Proletarian Japan: Childhood, Korea, and the Historical Avant-garde (2014)

Unit 2: Strikes

Week 8 Mary Heaton Vorse Strike! (1930)

Selected Secondary reading: Paula Rabinowitz, Labor and Desire: Women's Revolutionary Fiction in Depression America, "Gastonia Law" New Masses (October 2029), pp 5, and Lenin "On Working Class Literature" New Masses (October 1929), pp 7, Barbara Foley "The Collective Novel," Radical Representations, Urgo, Joseph R. "Proletarian Literature and Feminism: The Gastonia Novels and Feminist Protest" (1985)

Week 9 Lewis Jones Cwmardy (1937)

Selected secondary reading: Anon. "The Miner's Next Step" (1912), Elinor Taylor, The Popular Front Novel in Britain, 1934-1940 (2017), Dai Smith, Aneurin Bevan and the World of South Wales (1993)

Week 10 Patricia Galvao Industrial Park (1933)

Selected Secondary Reading: Joel Wolfe Working Women, Working Men: Sao Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class (1993), Sarah Ann Wells, "Mass Culture and the Laboratory of Late Modernism in Patrícia Galvão's Parque industrial" (2016), Sarah Ann Wells "The Panorama and the Pilgrimage: Brazilian Modernism, the Masses, and the Soviet Union in the 1930s" in Comintern Aesthetics (2020).

TERM 2

Unit 3: The City

Week 1 Sylvia Townsend Warner Summer Will Show

Selected Secondary Reading: Glyn Salton-Cox Queer Communism and the Ministry of Love (2018), Jack Lindsay "The Historical Novel" New Masses (1937), Chris Hopkins "Sylvia Townsend Warner and the Marxist Historical Novel" Literature & History (1995).

Week 2 Victor Serge Birth of our Power (1931)

Selected Secondary Reading: Susie Weissman Victor Serge The Course is Set on Hope (2001), Greeman, Richard. "Literary and Revolutionary Realism in Victor Serge" (1967), Adam David Morton "The Urban Revolution in Victor Serge" (2018).

Week 3 Mulk Raj Anand Untouchable (1935)

Selected Secondary Reading: Mulk Raj Anand "The Sources of Protest in My Novels" and "On the Genesis of Untouchable: A Note by Mulk Raj Anand" (2011), Katerina Clark "Mulk Raj Anand and the London Literary Left" Eurasia Without Borders (2022), Kris Manjapra, "Communist Internationalism and Transcolonial Recognition," in Cosmopolitan Thought Zones: South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas, ed. Sugata Bose and Kris Manjapra (2010), "Manifesto of the

Progressive Writer's Association" (1936), Ali Raza, Franziska Roy, Benjamin Zachariah, *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views, 1917–39* (2014)

Unit 4: Home/Social Reproduction

Week 4 Selection of poetry by Una Marson "The Stone Breakers" and "At the Prison Gates, Jamaica, 1937," Louise Bennett "Strike Day," Jean Rhys "Temps Perdi," and Claudia Jones, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!"

Selected Secondary Readings: "Revolts" in *Matera and Kent The Global 1930s* (2017), Delia Jarrett-Macauley *The Life of Una Marson* (1998), Mary Lou Emery "The Poetics of Labour in Jean Rhys's Caribbean Modernism" (2012), Carole Boyce Davies *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (2007)

Week 5 Alexandra Kollontai *Red Love* (1927)

Selected Secondary Readings: Eds. Paula Rabinowitz, Ruth Barraclough, and Heather Bowen-Struyk *Red Love Across the Pacific: Political and Sexual Revolutions of the Twentieth Century* (2015), Kristen Ghodsee *Why Women Have Better Sex Under Socialism* (2018), *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai* (1977), Soma Marik "Bolsheviks and Feminists: In Cooperation and Conflict" *Historical Materialism* (2021)

Unit 5: Land

Week 7 Mariano Azuela *The Underdogs* (1915)

Selected Secondary Reading: Mariátegui, José Carlos "The Indigenous Question in Latin America." in *Marxism in Latin America from 1909 to the Present: An Anthology*, ed. Michael Löwy. Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press.; Christina Heatherton, *Arise! Global Radicalism in the Era of the Mexican Revolution* (2022)

Week 8 Mao Dun "Spring Silkworms," "Autumn Harvest," "Winter Ruin" (1933); Kang Kyeong-ae "Salt"

Selected Secondary Reading: Karl Marx "Marx-Zasulich Correspondence February/March 1881", Peter Button, *Configurations of the Real in Chinese Literary and Aesthetic Modernity* (2009), Liu Kang and Xiaobing Tang (eds) *Politics, Ideology, and Literary Discourse in Modern China* (1993), Mao "On Contradiction" (1937)

Unit 6: Contemporary

Week 9 Boots Riley *Sorry to Bother You* (2018)

Selected Secondary Reading: Martin, Michael T. and Yalie Kamara. "Boots Riley on Sorry to Bother You and the Matter of the "Good Fight" (2020)

Week 10 Heike Geissler *Seasonal Associate* (2018) and visit by Amazon workers from Coventry Amazon fulfillment Centre

Selected Secondary Reading: Hans J. Rindisbacher "Work in the Age of Amazon: Heike Geissler's "Seasonal Associate" and Other Low-Paid Toilers," *LA Review of Books*, 2021.

Learning outcomes

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

- The module is designed to enhance students' understanding of recent developments in the fields of world literature that have drawn attention to the often forgotten literatures of the socialist world.
- The module introduces students to the social and political movements of the 20th century, such as the communist revolution, Maoism, anti-colonial Third Worldism, and the new kinds of literary institutions and literary traditions they created..
- The module will enable students to develop an understanding of literary responses to processes of social and political change in specific geopolitical contexts (e.g. the US, China, Africa, Russia)
- It will allow them to track similarities in the representation or registration of political and social ruptures.
- Make appropriate use of scholarly reviews and primary sources, including literary texts from the multiple locations covered on the course.
- Apply their knowledge and understanding in order to initiate and carry out an extended written project.

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

Subject specific skills

The module is designed to enhance students' understanding of recent developments in the fields of world and comparative literature, postcolonial studies, working-class literature, and socialist studies. It will introduce students to new ways of reading early to mid-20th century texts in light of the social and political revolutions of the era, allowing them to develop differently-centred models of world and comparative literature. It will help them understand the interrelationship between cultural production and struggles around class, colonial, racial, and sexual exploitation in the context of the leftist internationalisms and 'red'/'black' alliances of the period. Students will become familiar with recent debates around the ongoing relevance and significance of early 20th-century proletarian literature to our current, analogous moment of deep socioeconomic and political crisis.

Transferable skills

Students will learn to make appropriate use of scholarly reviews and primary sources, including literary texts from the multiple locations covered on the course. They will further enhance techniques of research, including of archival material. They will be able to apply their knowledge and understanding in order to initiate and carry out an extended written project.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	18 sessions of 1 hour (7%)
Seminars	18 sessions of 1 hour (7%)
Private study	214 hours (86%)
Total	250 hours

Private study description

Reading for module

Costs

Category	Description	Funded by	Cost to student
Books and learning materials		Student	£200.00

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
First essay 1 x 2500 word research essay	40%	20 hours	Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component			
Final essay 1 x 4000 word essay	60%	30 hours	Yes (extension)

Weighting

Study time

Eligible for self-certification

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback on all coursework essays; individual discussion with students as requested.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 2 of UCXA-QQ39 Undergraduate English and Classical Civilisation

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-Q300 Undergraduate English Literature
- Year 2 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing
- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 2 of UENA-VQ34 Undergraduate English and History (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature
- Year 4 of UFIA-QW26 Undergraduate Film and Literature (with Study Abroad)
- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ52 Undergraduate Philosophy, Literature and Classics

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 2 of UCXA-QQ37 Undergraduate Classics and English

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature