



**Elective course: Contemporary literary studies, linguistics, and cultural studies  
2017/2018**

Each course lasts 20 class hours (usually 10 session but that depends).

You choose TWO out of four (ideally one in each semester, although this needn't be so) so that your class workload amounts to 40 hours. Please make your choices before the academic year starts. These choices are not binding but even so they will help us plan better.

Of the two, you choose ONE to take an exam in (the other is the so-called graded verification). You should notify your teacher within the first few weeks of the academic year, say, after the first two sessions.

**SEMESTER 1**

Dr Ewa Antoszek, **Contemporary U.S. in American Literature**

The course is going to focus on the issues that are of importance for contemporary American authors. During the classes we will analyze the main developments in American fiction, with the focus on recent texts. Emphasis will be put both on the innovative character of those developments and on their roots in American literary tradition. The texts will be analyzed in the context of political, social, and cultural transformations of the USA in order to examine not only HOW contemporary authors write but also WHY they choose particular themes to write about. This way the course will present and analyze key problems of contemporary American society as reflected in literature. The authors include DeLillo, Eagan, Foer, Díaz, to name just a few. Literary texts will be complemented by a brief lead-in part and/or a film/clip depicting a particular problem.

Prof. UMCS Paweł Frelik, **Anthropocene Now: Cultural Responses to the End of the World  
(As We Know It)**

When I am writing this, Harvey has just dissipated, Irma is bearing upon the Caribbean and Florida, and a scientific study has demonstrated that practically all of 3% of research denying climate change was falsified and/or manipulated. These, and many other signals, force us to rethink our hierarchies of danger and our expectations of the future. The course will examine cultural responses to violent weather, dramatic climate change within our lifetimes, and uncertain energy futures across a range of media: literature, film, graphic novel, and visual texts. Primary texts including, among others, Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2009), Jeff VanderMeer *Annihilation* (2014), and Warren Ellis and Jason Howard's graphic novel *Trees* (2014) will be accompanied by secondary readings situating the Anthropocene within the philosophical and political context. Some of the latter include, among others, Timothy Morton's *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (2013), Steven Shaviro's *The Universe of Things: On Speculative Realism* (2014), and Donna Haraway's "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin" (2015).

No prior experience of reading fantastic narratives is required. All texts will be provided in electronic format.

## SEMESTER 2

### Prof. Joanna Durczak, **Ecocriticism in theory and practice**

The course is intended to be an introduction to the theory and practice of the ecocritical approach to reading and interpreting literature and the arts. By reading a few seminal texts by the classics of ecocriticism (Lawrence Buell, Greg Garrard, Ursula Heise) we'll try to come to the understanding of the posthumanist turn which underlies ecocritical thinking, and define the principal questions the ecocritic asks when exploring a literary text. Contrary to the popular belief, the texts of ecocritical interest do not have to be about "nature" (birds and sunsets) at all; just the opposite, they are often about the city, oil fields, wars, or the colonies on Mars. It is what they say about human relationships with the nonhuman life, with matter and the natural processes, the values they express, and the new forms they test to articulate their original insights that are of interest to the ecocritic. A few such texts (literary, photographic, cinematic) will serve as material for the course participants to engage in ecocritical analysis.

### Prof. Jolanta Szpyra-Kozłowska, **The phenomenon of foreign accent and its perception**

Foreign accent is a characteristic and inevitable feature of learners' speech acquired outside the country in which it is not a native language. We will look into possible causes of this phenomenon and its various important consequences for international communication and the speakers' perception and assessment by the listeners, focusing on Polish accent in English and foreign accents in Polish. The course will be based mainly on the results of my experimental studies.