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Musil and His Age

Robert Musil's monumental, yet unfinished novel *The Man without Qualities* (1930/1932) is considered one of the most complex and influential books in German literature. Focusing on the first three volumes of the book, "A Sort of Introduction", "Pseudo Reality Prevails" and "The Criminals" ("Into the Millennium") ("Eine Art Einleitung," "Seinesgleichen geschieht," "Die Verbrecher" ["Ins Tausendjährige Reich"]), we will start with examining the novel's genesis, structure, characters and narrative construction. Special emphasis is then put on discussing the book in the context of contemporary debates such as: the crisis of the modern novel (Adorno, Benjamin), the discussion on utopia and utopian thinking (Bloch, Mannheim), the role of the intellectual in society („Intellektuellendebatte“, Benda, Kracauer), gender (Weininger), as well as the problem of urbanity (Simmel). In order to enable a more differentiated discussion we recommend that students familiarize themselves with the book before the semester starts. First-readers are equally welcome!

Course grade:

Teaching exercise:	40%
Participation:	10%
Project:	50%

The project may take various forms: it may be a conference abstract plus a conference paper; a short article (15-20 pp.), or a syllabus with an annotated bibliography for a course that draws on material we have studied (e.g. Vienna 1900, The Modern Novel, etc.)

Please purchase:

R. Musil: Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. I. und II. Buch. Rowohlt 2007 (= rororo 13462); 22. Aufl. ISBN 978 3 499 13462 3; 15 Euro

---: Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß. Rowohlt 2008; 54. Aufl.

ISBN-13: 978-3499103001; 6, 95 Euro

Reserves (Handapparat) **

Scans on Sakai *

20. Januar

Session 1

Introduction, Requirements

Close reading of Chapter 1, 8, 52

Information on the genesis and structure of *The Man Without Qualities*

27. Januar

Session 2

The Intellectual as Hero: How to Represent a Thinking Man

Chapters: 1-19, 28, 62, 82, 116, 120, 121.

Contexts („Intellektuellendebatte“):

Julien Benda: *Rede am Schriftstellerkongress, Paris* [1935]*

Robert Musil: *Vortrag in Paris* [1935]*

3. Februar (kurzes Seminar, Beginn: 6 Uhr)

Session 3

„Sense of possibility“ and the Discourse on Utopia and Utopian Thinking in the 1920s/30s

Chapters: 4, 39, 40, 61, 62, 114; III, 11.

Contexts:

Karl Mannheim: *Ideologie und Utopie* [1929], 134-143.**

10. Februar

Session 4

Urbanity

Chapters: 1, 8, 41, 81; III, 20, 34, 35, 36.

Contexts:

Georg Simmel: *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben* [1903]**

17. Februar

Session 5

The Man Without Qualities and the debate on the modern novel

Chapters: 35, 36, 37, 122.

Contexts („Die Krise des Erzählens“):

Theodor Adorno: *Standort des Erzählers im zeitgenössischen Roman* [1954]**

Dorrit Cohn: *Transparent Minds***

Walter Benjamin: *Der Erzähler* [1936]**

24. Februar

Session 6

Film Aesthetics

Musil, „Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik“

Béla Balász, *Der unsichtbare Mensch***

Clip from *Metropolis*, *Geheimnisse einer Seele*

3. März

Session 7

The Case of Moosbrugger

Chapters: 18, 20, 30, 38, 53, 54, 56, 59, 60, 63, 74, 87, 110, 111

Context:

Maria Tatar, *Lustmord***

Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity***

Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter***

10. März

Session 8

Enterprising Soul – Paul Arnheim

Chapters: 23, 25, 27, 42, 43, 46-48, 65, 66, 67,69, 86, 95, 96, 106, 114, 116, 121

Context:

Georg Simmel, *Philosophie des Geldes***

24. März

Session 9

Guest Lecture, Salvatore Pappalardo: The Transnational in Musil

Chapters: I. 5, 35, 36, 102, 108 II.20, 37

Context:

Angelo Ara, Claudio Magris, *Triest. Eine literarische Hauptstadt in Mitteleuropa, 25-57, 58-89***

Claudio Magris. *Der habsburgische Mythos in der österreichischen Literatur.*

Einleitung und Kapitel zu Musil **

Pamela Ballinger, “Imperial Nostalgia: Mythologizing Habsburg Trieste”**

31. März

Session 10

War in Peace

Chapters: 44, 80, 85, 100, 108, 118, 120; III: 16, 17, 33, 36

Context: *Klaus Amann: Robert Musil – Literatur und Politik***

7. April

„The Other Condition“ – „Gottlose Mystik“

Chapters: 32; III, 5, 10, 12, 15, 18, 24.

Contexts:

Martin Buber: *Ekstatische Konfessionen* [1909]**

14. April

Musil, *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*

Volker Schlöndorff, *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*

21. April

Session 12

Musil's Reception among Authors

Ingeborg Bachmann: „Ins tausendjährige Reich“. In: Christine Koschel, *Ingeborg Bachmann*. Vol. 4, 24-28.*

Milan Kundera: *Die Kunst des Romans*. ** (FfM: Fischer, 1989)

Peter Handke: *Leben ohne Poesie*. In: *Als das Wünschen noch geholfen hat*. ** (FfM: Suhrkamp, 1974)

Presentation of Projects

28. April

Reading Week

Project due 5 May via email