

Hana Ulmanová (1967) is a senior lecturer in American literature at Charles University, Prague. She is a regular contributor to the book section of the most widely read serious Czech newspaper Dnes and the prestigious political and cultural weekly Respekt. She conducted interviews with leading American literary figures (e.g. Arthur Miller, William Styron, Edward Albee or Gore Vidal), and she is a translator, too: her main works include short stories by Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams and Eudora Welty, but she has done also poetry (Emily Dickinson) and drama (David Ives). Next to Czech and English, she speaks Russian, German, French, Spanish and elementary Yiddish and Hebrew.

Textbook:

Norton Anthology, volume 2, third or fifth edition. While there is a limited supply of books the students can have for the duration of the course, they are encouraged to have their own books (so that they can read more, underline certain passages, make a few notes in the text, etc.).

Description:

The theme of childhood will be considered in a broader sense: adolescence versus maturity is also occasionally included, as well as childhood of a nation. This class is devoted not only to „close reading“ of the selected texts, but also to relevant social issues. While the approach and methods are interdisciplinary, the main emphasis is on literary theory (explaining and applying basic literary terms), literary history (both American and European), and literary criticism (analyzing different responses to given works). Every class starts with the oral presentation delivered by a student, then there is a minilecture by the teacher, and a discussion follows.

The objective of this class is to study canonical works of American literature, stressing European perspectives. We shall see how the individual works were translated and received in the Czech cultural context. The students must be willing to read, analyze and discuss all the assigned texts for every single class.

Syllabus:

1. Henry James: Daisy Miller, The Turn of the Screw
2. William Faulkner: As I Lay Dying, Barn Burning
3. W.D.Howells: Editha, Charlotte Perkins Gilman: The Yellow Wall-paper
4. Bret Harte: The Outcasts of Poker Flat, Stephen Crane: The Blue Hotel
5. Ambrose Bierce: Chickamauga, Flannery O'Connor: Good Country People
6. Bernard Malamud: The Magic Barrel, Philip Roth: Defender of the Faith
7. Toni Morrison: Recitatif, Amiri Baraka: Dutchman
8. Leslie Marmon Silko: Lullaby, Sandra Cisneros: My Lucy Friend Who Smells Like Corn, Eleven, Salvador Late or Early, Barbie-Q, Mericans, Tepeyac