



One day, one novel: Zadie Smith

Date	3 rd February 2018	Time	10:00 – 16:45
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Dr Jenny Bavidge	Course code	1718NDX014

Director of Programmes

Emma Jennings

For further information on this course, please contact

Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr
clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237

To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Jenny Bavidge is University Senior Lecturer in English Literature, Academic Director in English Literature for the Institute of Continuing Education and a Fellow in English at Murray Edwards College, Cambridge. She is a Fellow of the English Academy. Jenny is Past-President of the Literary London Society and conference coordinator for the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment. Her publications have included work on London in literature, children's literature, ecocriticism, and rats.

Course programme

09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	<p>Introduction: Zadie Smith in Cambridge and London</p> <p>In our first session, we'll survey Smith's work to date and discuss the major concerns of the later novels, with reference to Smith's discussion of the development of her voice.</p> <p>Preparation: As well as reading the novels You may wish to read or listen to Smith's lecture 'Speaking in Tongues' which you can find here: http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2009/02/26/speaking-in-tongues-2/.</p>
11.15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	<p><i>N-W</i>(here?): Place and Location</p> <p>This session will focus particularly on Smith as a London writer.</p> <p>Preparation: Please look closely at Chapters 9 and 10 of <i>NW</i>.</p>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	<p>Authors and readers in Smith</p> <p>Smith blends multiple influences in her work, from varying cultural styles and sources. In this session we'll think about the effect of these different voices and registers in her writing.</p> <p>Preparation: Please make a note of places in either novel where Smith makes use of cultural reference points (music, books, film etc).</p>
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	<p>Form, style and identity</p> <p>The final session of the day will look at the way Smith experiments with form and narratives in order to explore her characters and their worlds.</p> <p>Preparation: Please make a note of any stylistic or formal features of Smith's writing that you find interesting, baffling or particular effective.</p>
16:45	Day-school ends

Course syllabus

Aims:

- to introduce students to the work of Zadie Smith, encouraging depth of reading and critical attention to the novel and to encourage an enjoyable atmosphere in which to discuss and debate
- to investigate questions about literary style, form and content
- to place students' own reading and knowledge of the novels in a broad context of literary, historical and critical contexts

Content:

This day school will explore the work of contemporary novelist and literary critic Zadie Smith. Born in London in 1975, Zadie Smith studied English at Cambridge before going on to publish her first novel, *White Teeth*, in 2000, to immediate critical acclaim. Since then, she has produced a series of well-received novels and exerts a notable influence on current debates about the novel and the place of literature and literary criticism in contemporary culture. This day school will focus on her two most recent novels *Swing Time* (2016) and *NW* (2012), their exploration of identity and their London settings.

We will consider Smith's work from a number of perspectives. Her novels have attracted many different labels, from 'picaresque' to 'hysterical realism', and we will begin by thinking about Smith's style and experiments in narrative form, as well as the nature of her subject matter and her exploration of multicultural metropolitan life. Throughout her novels, Smith questions notions of selfhood in all contexts, and she often addresses the formation of her characters' racial and national identity. Her novels are packed with examples of the mingling and cultural juxtapositions brought about by migration and we will discuss the politics of this aspect of her work.

Alongside her fiction writing, Smith is a literary critic and essayist, so we will also use her lively commentaries and critical writing as cues for discussions of the contemporary novel, the nature of authorship and the experience of reading. We will tackle the difficult question of how contemporaneity can be represented in the novel form and how Smith responds to what David Foster Wallace refers to as 'the frivolous Now'.

Preparation for the course:

Please read *NW* and *Swing Time* in their entirety before the course and bring copies with you. Talks during the day will touch on Smith's other novels and critical work, including *White Teeth* (2000), *The Autograph Man* (2002), *On Beauty* (2005) and *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays* (2009).

Presentation of the course:

Each session will begin with a short informal talk followed by structured class discussion.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- understand Zadie Smith's work in its literary and historical context
- be able to employ appropriate critical vocabulary to describe the novels' style and form
- feel confident in their discussions of the themes and ideas explored Zadie Smith's work

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Childs, Peter and Storry, Mike, eds.	<i>British Cultural Identities</i>	Routledge, 1997
Lane, R.,	<i>Contemporary British Fiction Post-1979: A Critical Introduction.</i>	Polity Press, 2003
McLeod, John	<i>Postcolonial London: Rewriting the Metropolis</i>	Routledge, 1994
Moretti, Franco	<i>The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture</i>	Verso, 2000
Rushdie, Salman	<i>Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991</i>	Granta, 1991
Squires, Claire	<i>Zadie Smith's White Teeth: A Reader's Guide</i>	Continuum, 2002.
Tew, Philip	<i>The Contemporary British Novel</i>	Continuum, 2004.
Tew, Philip	<i>Zadie Smith</i>	Palgrave Macmillan, 2010
Walters, Tracey L., ed.	<i>Zadie Smith: Critical Essays</i>	Peter Lang, 2008.

Website addresses and resources

Zadie Smith on Desert Island Discs: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/desert-island-discs/castaway/598210b7#b03bq4v7>

'A Brexit Diary' <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/08/18/fences-brexit-diary/>

'Speaking in Tongues' <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2009/02/26/speaking-in-tongues-2/>

You can hear Smith reading the original lecture here: <https://soundcloud.com/nybooks/zadie-smith-speaking-in-tongues>

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 12 January 2018