British Literature (Master Year 1 / Spring)

Master in English and American Language, Literature and History / Faculty of Liberal Arts

Introduction

This course will explore how representations of opium have evolved from the 19th century to the present day. Opium's powerful presence in our collective imagination conjures up images of opium dens in port cities like London, Shanghai, or New York, and usually go hand in hand with fantastic visions conjured up the opiated imagination. This key scene was brought to life by the writing of Charles Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Oscar Wilde, and has carried on travelling through the popular imagination ever since. It has never ceased to be reconstructed by the technologies of the different eras it passed through – from mass-produced novels to engravings, photographs, films, amusement machines and video games. However, the production and reproduction of this key scene means that the smoke of the opium
den has long obfuscated the complex and multi-layered history of opium. As Amitav Ghosh's recent historical novels demonstrate, opium was also a flower harvested in the poppy fields of India, a product being transformed in the Ghazipur opium factory, a merchandise being
smuggled into Chinese ports, an intoxicant creating millions of addicts, and a commodity associated with British imperial expansionism. We will study poems, engravings, paintings, photographs, films, and a variety of other media to uncover the fascinating journey of this seed which has changed the course of world history.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:
- Understand the history of cultural studies, the material turns and things studies
- Know and understand the history of opium and its representation
- Produce a structured critical discourse about the representation of an artefact through different media

Admission

Prerequisite

Prerequisites training

B2/C1 level of English.

Duration

1 semester

Teaching languages

- English

Conditions of submission

If you need more information about this course, kindly send an email to: incomingdri@icp.fr

Program

Methods of Instruction

Seminar with in-class participation

Assessment and Final Grade

- in-class participation mark (20%)
- in-class oral presentation or 12-page term paper with full bibliography (80%)

Course Requirements

Attendance is compulsory. The students will be given reading assignments throughout the course of the semester.