



FROM NIETZSCHE TO SUPERMAN

LITERATURE AND POPULAR CULTURE



What distinguishes "high" and "low" culture? How do they inform each other? In what way can pop culture alter and challenge the established canon? This seminar explores canonical works of (mostly German writers, in English) literature and film in regard to popular culture. We will investigate Nietzsche's *Übermensch* (Overman) and its gradual translation into the American *Superman* hero. We will explore the role of dreams in Kafka short prose as well as in Kubrick's movie *Eyes Wide Shut*, and we will compare 1920s cabaret culture and gender performance with the "material girl" of contemporary culture. We will study the influence of Hermann Hesse's famous novel *Steppenwolf* on American rock music, and listen to the ways in which revolution is presented in the lyrics of Bertolt Brecht and Bob Dylan. Lastly, we are going to discuss the boundary between illusion and reality as shown in the science fiction movie *The Matrix* and the difficult distinction between human and non-human in the movie *Blade Runner*.

Taught in English.

semester

FALL 2014

course

01:470:388:01

time

**M/W
2:50-4:10PM**

Taught by Professor Nicola Behrmann. For more information and a complete syllabus, please visit: <http://german.rutgers.edu/>