

## Guidelines on Writing the BM2 Module Paper in British and American Studies

These guidelines are supposed to answer your most immediate questions; but you can also always approach your BM2 lecturers and ask them!

### THE BRIEF VERSION

- You have to do **ONE BM2.3 course** (“GAP: Genres, Authors Periods”, or “Lit and Culture in the Primary EFL Classroom”, if you’re Primary School.)
- Come up with one, two or three **potential texts/topics** you might potentially want to write 3,600 words on. (That’s about 8-9 pages of text, excluding the covering sheet, list of contents, bibliography, etc.)
- Your texts/topics/research questions should somehow be connected to one or more of your BM2 classes (‘veranstaltungsübergreifend’). This means the topic can be related to one of the AILT lectures and/or to your GAP/EFL Classroom course. **You should be able to answer the question, ‘What does your topic for the paper have to do with what we did in class?’**
- Approach one of your BM2 lecturers (via email and/or in their office hour) and ask him or her whether they have time to supervise and read your paper. They will help you narrow down your topic and find the best focus and scope for it.
- If the lecturer you ask first doesn’t have time to read any more papers at the moment, ask one of your other BM2 lecturers, or ask another person who teaches in the field you want to write in (British/Anglophone/American lit).
- **You do NOT have to repeat the GAP course if your own lecturer can’t read your paper.** Ask around; find another lecturer.
- There is **no deadline** for the BM2 paper, unless your lecturer and you agree on one.
- Follow the instructions on academic writing you received in your BM1 Writing course, in ACCR and in GAP, but also the specific advice you get from your supervisor.

## THE LONGER VERSION

### How do I know what to do in a module exam?

Your first port of call for questions to do with *Studienleistungen* (i.e. the tasks you do in a course to earn the credit points) and *Prüfungsleistungen* (i.e. the exam you sit or paper you write to complete a module) is the *Fächerspezifischen Bestimmungen* (FsB) and the module handbook, which you find in the top right-hand corner of 'your' ekvv:

The screenshot shows the website interface for the University of Bielefeld's eKVV system. The main content area displays the following information:

- Anglistik: British and American Studies / Bachelor of Arts: Kernfach (fw)**
- FsB vom 10.01.2017 (Einschreibung ab SoSe 2017)
- Vorlesungsverzeichnis für das SoSe 2021**
- Semesterauswahl: **SoSe 2021** WiSe 2020/2021 Frühere...
- Alle Überschriften schließen
- Modul 23-ANG-AngBM1 Basismodul 1: Language
- 1.1 Argumentation, Communication and Critical Reading (S)

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230087	Fulger	Argumentation, Communication and Critical Reading <b>Begrenzte Teilnahmezahl: 35</b> ekVV Teilnehmermanagement	S	Fr 14-16 ONLINE	
230137	Skorge	Argumentation, Communication and Critical Reading <b>Begrenzte Teilnahmezahl: 35</b> ekVV Teilnehmermanagement	S	Mi 12-14 ONLINE	
230424	Antrios	Argumentation, Communication, Critical	S	Di 14-16 ONLINE	

The right-hand sidebar contains the following links:

- Studiengangswahl
- Variante wechseln
- Studieninformationsseite
- Modulliste (Studieninhalte)
- Infos zum Individuellen Ergänzungsbereich
- Fakultät für Linguistik und Literaturwissenschaft
- Ansprechpersonen
- Prüfungsamt
- Akademische Studienberatung
- Studentische Studienberatung
- Anlaufstelle Anerkennung

### For the BM2 module exam, it says:

#### Veranstaltungsübergreifend

Die Modulprüfung kann im Rahmen eines der Modulelemente nach Wahl erbracht werden. Die Prüfungsform wird von der Seminarleiterin / dem Seminarleiter festgelegt, i. d. R. Klausur (90 Min.) oder Hausarbeit (ca. 3.600 Wörter exkl. Bibliographie, in englischer Sprache zu verfassen).

Generally, the lecturers in BM2 choose to make you write a paper. You get one credit point for the paper, which is supposed to equal about 30 hours of work. BUT: this does NOT mean you should spend only 30 hours on the paper, from thinking up a topic to sending it to your lecturer. Rather, the module paper is based on and extends or elaborates material that you already discussed or touched on in one of the BM2 classes.

### What is the purpose of the BM2 module paper?

The purpose of the paper is to allow you to practice the central analytical techniques necessary to develop literary interpretations based on textual evidence ('the nuts and bolts of our craft'). In other words, you are supposed to show that you have understood what you were taught in your BM2 classes and can apply it to a literary text in the English language. The operative words here are 'analysis', 'interpretation',

'literary' and 'textual evidence'. (The latter term means that in order to support your interpretation, you are supposed to quote mainly from your primary text, not from a large number of secondary texts.)

### How can I find a topic for my module paper?

The idea is that you prepare your module paper in the courses, and that in your paper, simply put, you choose either a different primary text or a different approach, concept, method than the ones you discussed in class.

This can take a variety of different forms. For example:

- you write an essay in your GAP<sup>1</sup> [1]course about a play, short story, or novel you discussed in class, but approach this primary text from another angle, with a (slightly) different research question (e.g. your essay was about Henry V's different roles or 'faces' in 5.2, where he woos the French princess, so your module paper could be an application of the concept of The King's Two Bodies to the play *Henry V*; or you could analyse the functions of the Chorus in the play, or Henry's interactions with his soldiers; or your essay was about the role of the narrative perspective and situations in "The Arrangements: A Work of Fiction" by Chimamanda Adichie, so your module paper could be on the ways in which gender roles are depicted in the story through the shifting of narrative focalization)
- you write an essay in your GAP course about a theme (e.g. domestic violence; inter-generational conflicts; the suffering lover-sonneteer; the depiction of racial and/or gender hierarchies ) or with a theoretical framework (e.g. postcolonialism, critical race theory, or feminist criticism) or a certain historical context (e.g. staging practices in the Elizabethan theatre; slavery and abolitionism and its legacy in the Reconstruction Era, political and protest literature in the United States) that you then, in your module paper, transfer to a similar primary text (e.g. another novel; other scenes of the play; other poems/sonnets)
- you contrast and compare a theme or scene from your AILT lectures or GAP course with a similar one from a similar literary text (e.g. Henry V's soliloquy about kingship compared with Henry VI's similar soliloquy, or Richard II's; representations of African American female childhood in the short stories of Zora Neale Hurston and Toni Morrison; reproduction of the idea and practice of slavery in novels, plays, and theatrical performances that 'imitated' *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the 20th century)
- you read a literary text that was touched on in one of the AILT lectures and develop a question that was suggested in the lecture, or you apply terminology, concepts, or methods (e.g. narratology; the analysis of a play's or novel's exposition; the functions of metaphors and metonymies in a text; the role of music(ality) in a poem like "The Raven;" the study of binary constructions in novels; employment of humor, pun, or satire in fictional depiction of minorities)

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<sup>1</sup> GAP includes Lit and Cult in the Primary EFL Classroom.

Basically, your research question for your module paper should somehow be connected to one or more of your BM2 classes ('veranstaltungsübergreifend'). **You should be able to answer the question, 'What does your topic for the paper have to do with what we did in class?'**

### **What texts am I allowed to write on?**

Your primary text(s) should be one(s) that was/were discussed or touched on in one of your BM2 classes or *texts similar to those*. Stick with the author but choose another novel or short story by them. Or stick with the genre and choose other poems/sonnets, or another post-war short story. Or stick with the analytical tool (e.g. narratology) and apply it to another text.

As a rule, since you are supposed to write about *literary* texts, popular fiction (Harry Potter, fantasy fiction, romance fiction) is not suitable as primary material for the BM2 paper. But you should discuss this with your supervisor.

### **How many secondary texts should I use?**

A frequent question and difficult to answer. More than none; fewer than ten. See above: **What is the purpose of the BM2 module paper?** What you are required to show in the BM2 paper is that YOU can analyse and interpret a literary text with a certain analytical toolset. If you integrate too many quotations or paraphrases from other scholars or critics in your paper, there is a danger it will turn into a summary of others' interpretations, instead of your own interpretation. So make sure that the main text you quote from is your primary text (i.e. the literary text you analyse and interpret).

For the question which kinds of secondary text you are allowed to use for academic work, go back to what you were taught in your BM1 classes, especially Writing and PRS, and your GAP class.

### **Who will supervise my paper?**

Ideally, you write your module paper with one of the lecturers whose class you attended in BM2. You simply send them an email with your idea (or potential ideas) and ask whether they can read your BM2 module paper. Or you make an appointment for their office hour. If none of these currently have any capacity for marking module papers, you can also approach someone else who has previously taught in that module.

The British Studies lecturers at the department are Prof. Dr Ellen Grünkemeier, Jun.-Prof. Dr Gigi Adair, PD Dr Marcus Hartner, Dr Angela Stock and Dr Jessica Koch; as of SuSe 2021 also Frauke Harms, MA. (As a rule, they don't accept topics from American Studies, although you could *compare and contrast* a British and an American text.)

If you want to write a module paper about an American text, please ask one of the lecturers from American Studies: Prof. Dr Wilfried Raussert, Prof. Dr Julia Roth, Dr Julia Andres, Dr. Diana Fulger, Dr Mahshid Mayar, Susana Rocha Teixeira MA.

BM2.3\_G “Literature and Culture in the Primary EFL Classroom” has so far only been taught by Dr Pat Skorge, so you should approach her.

**What form should my paper have?**

You should observe the (modified) MLA style conventions you were taught in BM1 and the other guidelines on academic writing you were taught in your Writing class and your GAP classes. Your supervisor may give you a specific style sheet with instructions; in this case, follow those.