

The Organisers of the Conference 40 YEARS OF PHILOLOGICAL STUDIES IN SIBIU to be held between 19 and 21 November 2009 would like to invite you to participate in a ROUNDTABLE discussion:

Teaching English for Town or/and Gown?

What should the English Studies curriculum in Higher Education cover?

Organised by Suman Gupta (Chair), Adriana Neagu, Ana-Karina Schneider, and Milena Katsarska

This roundtable will address the title-question, with the presumption that English Studies comprises the teaching and learning both of English language/linguistics and of literature/culture studies. The focus of the round table will be on the undergraduate (BA) curriculum for English majors' programmes. With the global consolidation of English Studies in Higher Education, the area that the discipline extends to has grown enormously in several directions over the past four decades. It now incorporates varieties of English and interfaces with other languages, draws in a range of Anglophone cultures in addition to the traditional British and North American centres, and extends to the place of English beyond those. It has also acquired theoretical and cross-disciplinary nuances which were not within the remit of the institutional practice of the discipline prior to the 1970s. For those designing and engaging with the English Studies curriculum at BA level now, these pose considerable challenges. It is evident that the entire field cannot be conveyed comprehensively within the limited structure of a programme, and reasonable choices and delimitations have to be imposed. The rationales for doing so have been the subject of intensive and unresolved debates of late. This roundtable seeks to provide a forum for a stocktaking of the situation as it obtains now, and for seeking a consensual way forward. The title question is deliberately open-ended as to location and context; it is hoped that the discussion would be more productive if the question is considered from a variety of institutional and geographical contexts.

As well as debating specific issues pertaining to curricular content and structure, the round table is envisaged as an occasion for an assessment of the metamorphoses undergone by the discipline in the post-Bologna context. It is hoped that a significant body of enquiries will thus approach developments in the destination of ES and the kind of changes and adaptations an extremely versatile economic market effects on language training. We thus encourage interventions that set out to tackle the ways in which modern language policies, locally and internationally, respond to the rapidly changing and increasingly dynamic professional environment interrogating the professed democratic nature of the Bologna model. We find this would be particularly best addressed if circumscribed to the wider framework of what articulate themselves as two opposite conceptions and orientations in twentieth century HE humanities: the 'Humboldtian', research- and performance-oriented versus the 'technocratic', results- and market-oriented model of education. In addition to the immediate comparative perspective on ES in the continental-European, British and American experience, the polarisation can be further explored in the most concrete terms along the lines of the two distinct concepts of language training, the traditional, philologic versus modern, applied one. Any contribution that concerns aspects of direct or tangential bearing on the future of ES in the 'knowledge society' is warmly welcomed.

The organisers are seeking contributions from colleagues, graduates and students of ES along the lines specified below.

1. How do the following factors impinge upon designing the English Studies curriculum?: (a) academic coherence, i.e. in terms of what is considered academically seminal in the discipline, such as critical thinking, sense of historical development, language skills, etc.; (b) market needs, i.e. in terms of the fact that the curriculum has to provide for careers and opportunities; (c) local context, i.e. in terms of local provisions, governmental and institutional policy (such as implementing the Bologna process), registering local cultures/realities/histories where the curriculum is delivered; (d) issues related to massification of HE and quality standards vis-a-vis curricula provisions.

2. What are the desirable structural practices that should be borne in mind when designing the English Studies curriculum? -- for instance, with regard to: (a) offering compulsory and optional components, and thereby providing reasonable pathways through the programme; (b) teaching and learning practices and strategies; (c) assessment strategies and practices.

Please indicate your interest by email to milena.katsarska@gmail.com by 5 October 2009. The contributors will be contacted by the roundtable organisers upon indication of interest.

Indication of Interest

Name..... Affiliation.....

Email.....

Please check one of the following:

1. I would like to take part in the roundtable discussion without a formally registered presentation

2. I would like to take part in the roundtable addressing the following question

.....

Outline briefly, in no more than 100 words, the issue you would like to pursue in a 5-10 minute response.

The proceedings of the Roundtable will be published on the website of the project “English Studies in Non-Anglophone Contexts East Europe: Higher Education in Bulgaria and Romania” (<http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/he-englishes/>) and contributions selected for a journal publication.