

## *Literary Urban Studies Series*

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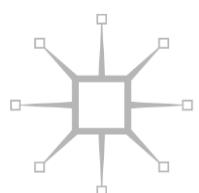
### **Series outline**

Recent decades have seen an increasing interest in the study of the city in literature, and a continued move towards multidisciplinary approaches to literary urban studies, with individual scholars, research networks, and institutions fostering research and teaching cooperation between approaches from the humanities, social sciences and urban studies, (cultural) geography, architecture and planning. These advances have kept pace with global developments: the present century has already become the urban century, in which the majority of the world's population lives in urban environments. Challenges such as the threat of economic disruptions and environmental change have only added to the urgency inherent in studying how the city and the urban condition are narrated.

In the wake of these developments, it has become possible to speak of literary urban studies as a distinctive field of study, in dialogue with a wide range of existing approaches to the city in literature. These include genre and period studies of literature and cultural geography, amongst others. There are regular conferences and seminars touching on subjects in literary urban studies in a variety of geographical contexts. There has also long been a substantial output of scholarly publishing, with edited volumes, monographs and articles coming out on a steady basis. However, this scholarly output has, so far, lacked a clear focus. There is no established journal or scholarly series with a clear, thematic and methodological focus on literary urban studies.

The *Literary Urban Studies Series* constitutes an important focal point for developing this innovative, global, and multi-disciplinary scholarly field. It will also have an important function as a provider of handbook-type books for graduate and undergraduate teaching.

The *Literary Urban Studies Series* will have a strong thematic focus on the literary city and on aspects of urban conditions and urban representation, and a specific interest in developing interdisciplinary methodological approaches to the study of literary cities. Echoing the



Russian formalist interest in *literaturnost* or literariness, the *Literary Urban Studies Series* will emphasize the “citiness” of its study object – the elements that are specific to the city and the urban condition, and an awareness of what this “citiness” brings to the source material and what it implies in terms of methodological avenues of inquiry. Such elements include but are not confined to the simultaneity, contingency and palimpsestic nature often associated with city experiences in modernist literature. A focus on “citiness” in literature takes into account the density, diversity, and size dimensions of the urban condition that are foregrounded in classical urban studies, but also the more recent interest in function, scale, and the interrelationality of cities. City literature is seen as relating to actual cities on a range of different levels. City literature can function, for example, as a response to material cities, as a semi-autonomous aesthetic construct, and as an active shaper of how we think and talk of cities, their everyday life, their problematics, planning and development.

Titles in the series will include both monographs and collections of essays devoted to literary criticism and theory of the city and literature. The books’ primary focus on cities and fiction will allow the inclusion of perspectives from related fields such as urban history, urban planning, and cultural geography. All titles will be written in English.

The series does not set a limit in time or space on the source material. Interdisciplinary in approach and global in range, the series will be actively commissioning and soliciting works that can speak to an international and cross-disciplinary audience.

### **Methodology, with a specific focus on interdisciplinarity**

A key area for the publications in this series is the development of methodologies of literary urban studies. The focus is on interdisciplinary approaches and the applicability of research and analytical methods from a range of academic disciplines to diverse research contexts.

Some titles in the series will apply approaches from sociological or cultural geographical research to literary narratives of the city. In others, the move will be in the opposite direction, with the application of literary and narratological methods to narrative sources from urban planning or urban studies. Developing methodologies for a critical use of literary sources in the field of urban history and geography will be an important focal point for the series.

The series sees its focus on developing interdisciplinary methodologies not in terms of an exclusive set of methods – instead, it wants to foster an open and critical dialogue about the methods and sources used to examine literary cities in a wide range of existing academic fields. The series welcomes approaches from various disciplines such as urban studies, sociology, cultural geography, urban history, and the history of architecture and design, while keeping a topical focus on cities and the urban experience, and on the investigation of the “citiness” of city

literature. As such, the series aims to be a catalyst for developing interdisciplinary methodologies by providing a publishing forum where different methodological avenues of inquiry from a variety of disciplines challenge and question each other.

## **New research**

The series aims to provide the leading publishing outlet for cutting-edge new research into the city in literature. This includes also new readings of classical city texts (by the likes of Balzac, Baudelaire, Dickens, Dostoevsky, Woolf, Fitzgerald, Joyce, Döblin, Kafka and more recent writers who have entered the canon of urban literature), and critical reassessments of city writing produced in particular national and/or period contexts. The latter could, for example, include the city in American naturalism, in Victorian literature and in high modernist literature. While such research is important for positioning the developing field of literary urban studies, at least as important is new research that questions and shifts the existing canon of important literary cities. The series aims to fuel such developments by actively soliciting new research on peripheral cities, second cities, and cities from geographical and cultural contexts that have remained under-examined in Western academic studies, with specific attention to African, Latin American and Asian Cities.

## **Teaching**

A separate area for publishing is edited collections or monographs that specifically address the current need for academic handbooks for teaching literary urban studies. From Milan to Helsinki, from Berlin to New York, regular courses on the city in literature are taught, often within a multidisciplinary context, but the need for handbooks useful in teaching and the existing expertise have so far met with a meagre response in terms of published volumes.

All titles are subject to rigorous peer review and evaluation, including an initial review by the editors, external reader report from a recognized authority in the field of literary urban studies, continued guidance by the editors of the series throughout the process, and a final clearance report. All proposals will be examined from the perspective of methodological innovation (with focus on interdisciplinarity) and research novelty (specifically in terms of reassessment of the established canon of major literary cities).