

Summer 2024

English Graduate

Course Descriptions

SESSION I (4 Weeks, June)

English 719: Medieval Literature

INSTRUCTOR	Professor Edward Currie
DAY/ TIME	ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS
COURSE CODE	1363
DESCRIPTION	<p>Medieval literature is often thought to reflect an era of massive bloodshed. But what did 'violence' mean in the literature of the period? As we read representations of conflict in Old English, Middle English and Old Norse texts, we shall analyze and interpret how medieval authors represent violent words and deeds that have deep historical, literary, and cultural meanings. Was violence always thought of in moralistic terms? How was violence tied to the representation of individualistic heroes and heroines? How can violence promote group identity and ideology? Our investigations of depictions of quarrels will shed light on the divergent ways authors imagined violence, which can be wholly alien to modern views of violence. Our readings will likely include the anonymous <i>Dream of the Rood</i>, <i>The Battle of Maldon</i>, <i>Beowulf</i>, Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale," "The Miller's Tale," "The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale", and texts from the Norse <i>Elder Edda</i>, such as "Atlakviða" and "Lokasenna."</p> <p>The literature will be read in translation. Students will participate in daily discussions and write two papers: the first will require close readings of a text; the second will be a research paper that involves engagement with scholarship. This online course will be asynchronous. Class discussions will occur on our Blackboard site, on which required lectures and other course materials will also be available.</p> <p><i>Satisfies the pre-1900 requirement for MEd and MAT students.</i></p>

English 781: Visions of Tragedy in Modern American Drama

INSTRUCTOR	Professor Rhoda Sirlin
DAY/ TIME	MTWTh, 6:45 pm to 8:25 pm ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS
COURSE CODE	1758
DESCRIPTION	This graduate-level course will focus on the changing definitions and approaches to tragedy as seen in some classic American dramas. To

understand America's unique expression of the tragic vision, we will connect these plays to Greek tragedy and to the social drama of 19th-century playwrights like Ibsen and Strindberg, discovering in the process the use of realism, naturalism, and expressionism in American theater. Is it true that America likes its tragedies to have happy endings? What do these plays reveal about American culture specifically and the human condition more generally? Some of the playwrights we will explore are Lillian Hellman, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Marsha Norman, August Wilson, Paula Vogel, Rebecca Gilman, Ayad Akhtar, Lynn Nottage, Qiara Alegría Hudes, and Martyna Majok.

SESSION II (6 Weeks, July-August)

English 721: Milton's *Paradise Lost*

INSTRUCTOR	Professor Richard Marotta
DAY/ TIME	MW, 6:00 pm to 8:05 pm HYBRID SYNCHRONOUS
COURSE CODE	1360
DESCRIPTION	<p>This course will focus on Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i> as a major example of the visionary epic. We will examine the intellectual, theological and mythical contexts of the poem and then move on to such issues as sexual politics, the emergence of gender identity, the authority of the Divine voice, the rhetoric of the Satanic voice, the birth of the Human voice, the "contradictory energy" (Smith) between paganism and Christianity and the various configurations of Adam and Eve. Milton made a number of poetic choices in the context of an epic poem that have endeared him to some readers and alienated him from others. We will look at these choices in the context of an epic poem that is very much heir to a non-Christian classical epic tradition and, at the same time, the recipient of various Christian theological positions. Examining this poetic dynamic will bring us to an examination of the theology of uncertainty, which seems to permeate Milton's poetry. These conflicted imaginative moments engender some of the more problematical and visionary elements in <i>Paradise Lost</i>.</p> <p><i>Satisfies the pre-1900 requirement for MSED and MAT students.</i></p>

English 728: American Poetry, 1820 to 1920

INSTRUCTOR	Professor James Richie
DAY/ TIME	TTh, 6:00 pm to 8:05 pm ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS
COURSE CODE	1760

DESCRIPTION

Through much of the 20th century the standard critical line was that the two most exemplary American poets of the previous century were Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. That assessment would have been bizarre and baffling to a critic or scholar writing in the 19th century and not just given the relative obscurity of both of those writers. Shifts in culture, aesthetics, expectations for poetry and the nature of publication helped shape the appreciation and elevation of these two writers. So what was American poetry before it was Whitman and Dickinson? And how did we go from whatever that was to 20th (and to a large degree 21st) century expectations for verse? This course will work towards developing an answer to those questions. We will be exploring the wide range of versification throughout the 19th century paying special attention to the various ways Americans used verse as an aesthetic balm, a nation-building exercise, an evasion of current events, a method of making money, an expression of political outrage with the hope of change, a personal examination of existential angst, or some combination of all of these. We will also be thinking about the ways and places in which people read poetry, both figuratively and literally, charting the move from small press distribution to industrial mass production. Authors studied include William Cullen Bryant, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Edgar Allan Poe, John Greenleaf Whittier, Lydia Huntley Sigourney, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Helen Hunt Jackson, Emma Lazarus, George Santayana, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Stephen Crane, and Trumbull Stickney. And of course, Whitman and Dickinson.

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