

## **Graduate English Courses**

### **Spring 2015**

#### **Course      Title & Course Description**

ENG 636 (56809)

Mon 6.30pm-

8.20pm, KY-325

Cassvan

#### **History of Literary Criticism and Theory**

This course provides a thorough introduction to the main concerns and developments of literary criticism and literary theory. We will begin with a careful reading of a few texts by Plato and Aristotle and then turn to a consideration of the diverse perspectives on literature (including Marxism, Psychoanalysis, Formalism, Structuralism, Semiotics, Poststructuralism, Deconstruction, New Historicism, Gender Studies and Queer Theory) that have emerged during the twentieth century. The most stimulating and far reaching theoretical insights very often arise out of reading encounters: Derrida's careful readings of Plato and Rousseau, Lacan's reading of Freud, Freud's own reading of literature and of the German language, Althusser's reading of Marx, Butler's reading of Derrida's reading of Austin, to cite a number of important examples. Accordingly, we will treat the texts of critics and theorists as primary and will attend throughout the semester to the fallout of what Paul de Man has described as literary theory's "necessarily pragmatic moment...that adds a subversive element of unpredictability and makes it something of a wild card in the serious game of the theoretical disciplines." While we will make use of the introductory materials and organizational format provided in the second edition of *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, we will resist and question the tendency to produce or rely upon simple summaries and paraphrases of difficult arguments and points of view and our class sessions will be devoted to reading encounters with very specific pages and paragraphs in the assigned works. These primary critical and theoretical texts will be supplemented with a wide range of literary materials (poems, short stories, essays, translations) made available on Blackboard.

ENG 638 (56811)

Fri 4.30pm-6.20pm,

KY-416 Sirlin

#### **Modern Drama**

This special section of English 638 will focus on post-World War II American theater, examining the plays of classic and recent Pulitzer Prize-winning dramatists. We will explore themes and approaches of contemporary playwrights and what their plays reveal about American culture. We will discuss the plays of both male and female playwrights, discovering any similarities and differences. The course will explore how contemporary theater has its roots in Greek tragedy and in Ibsen's realistic social dramas of the 19th century. Some of the dramatists we will cover are Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Lorraine Hansberry, Marsha Norman, John Patrick

Shanley, Tracy Letts, Paula Vogel, August Wilson, Quiara Alegria Hudes, and Ayad Akhtar.

ENG 701 (56814)

Wed 6.30pm-

8.20pm, KY-173

Schaffer

### **Graduate Methodology**

When you sit down to write a thesis, what does that mean and how can you do it? This course will tell you. We'll investigate which websites are reliable, discuss how to find useful on-line resources, and explore how to find the best printed articles and books. Not only will we learn how to find the right sources, we will also study how to read and use them properly. We'll figure out what makes an article good (and how to tell if it's good at a glance), and we'll discuss how criticism has changed over the last few decades. You'll work on your own research project, and also do some shorter assignments to learn how to use various research techniques. This course is designed to help you get ready to write your thesis.

ENG 702 (56816)

Th. 6:30pm-8:20pm,

KY-246

Nysenholc

### **Graduate Methodology for English/Education Students**

This course provides current and future secondary-school teachers with an opportunity to study literary criticism from a pedagogical perspective. Besides reflecting on the selection process of a text appropriate for a secondary-school curriculum, we will examine research methods and theoretical perspectives currently used in the field of literature. We will focus on *Macbeth*, examine that text through a variety of critical approaches, and discuss how these reading strategies could be incorporated in a high school literature classroom.

Independently, you will also research and synthesize existing interpretations of a novel or play of your choice. The ultimate goal of the course is to enrich and deepen your understanding of literary study, as well as to broaden your pedagogical content knowledge. The shift to the Common Core Standards, with its renewed emphasis on complex texts, is meant to develop students' higher order thinking.

ENG 724 (56819)

Tue 4.30pm-

6.20pm, KP-708

Drury

### **Victorian Poetry and Poetics**

We examine poetry of the period from 1830 to around 1910, considering especially its spectacular formal diversity and innovation. We give particular attention to Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, and Matthew Arnold. And we spend time with George Meredith, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward FitzGerald, Michael Field, and Thomas Hardy.

The sense many Victorian poets had that they were writing too late, after the great age of poetry, during a time when the poet was increasingly irrelevant in society, created complex meditations on the role and meaning of poetry in the

world. We will look at writers on this question, including Arthur Henry Hallam and Thomas Carlyle, and think about how Victorian notions of what a poet should be and do connected to and, sometimes, conflicted with the choices Victorian poets make in their poems. We will ask how Victorian poetry influenced the modernist writers of the twentieth century; we'll devote attention to the role of literary translation as a source of poetic innovation; we'll consider the relationship between poetry and visual art (including book illustrations and the paintings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti); and we'll see whether it's possible to define "poetic voice."

ENG 727 (56828)  
Mon 6.30pm-  
8.20pm, KY-173  
Weidman

#### **Hawthorne, Jewett and Cather: History, Place, Narrative.**

Willa Cather drew a line from the antebellum work of Nathaniel Hawthorne to the post-Civil War work of Sarah Orne Jewett and by implication, on to her own 20th century practice in short fiction and the novel. We will read stories and novels by all three writers, looking for lines of influence and innovations in literary form.

ENG 736 (56833)  
Wed 4.30pm-  
6.20pm, KY- 416  
Weingarten

#### **What Can A Body Do?: Reading at the Intersections of Feminist Theory and Disability Studies**

This course will focus on how disability studies and feminist theory intersect to teach us new ways of understanding the body and mind, especially when it comes to constructions of sex and identity, and the ways in which we move through different environments. The two fields of study, however, have also come into conflict, historically and presently, around such issues as eugenics, prenatal testing, and reproductive justice, and this tension will be another focus of the course. We'll read critical theory in both fields, and then look at how that theory has shaped literary criticism. We'll also read some short works of fiction to see how the theoretical arguments we've studied unfold in literature. Possible readings include literary criticism and theory by Rosemarie Garland Thomson, Alison Kafer, Kim Q. Hall, Tobin Siebers, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze, and Rachel Adams. Our literary examples will come mostly from American literature, and may include novellas and short stories by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Djuna Barnes, Edith Wharton, and Rebecca Harding Davis.

ENG 742 (56836)

Tue 6.30pm-

8.20pm, KY-325

Grier

### **Thankless Children?: Shakespeare and His Literary Offspring**

When King Lear's daughters insist their aged father reduce his entourage of drunken soldiers, he says he would rather live outdoors and curses both of them. He wishes sterility on Reagan, but he relishes the curse he devises for Goneril: that she bear a child who will torment her so "that she may feel / How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is / To have a thankless child."

It would be easy for us to imagine those writing in Shakespeare's shadow as his thankless progeny, inheriting an English literary foundation he secured and turning to mock him as an uptight, outdated Brit and a proponent of racism, sexism, and colonial occupation. However, the relationships US-American, Caribbean, and African artists have forged with their literary forefather is far more complex, as it is about artistic techniques, the struggle for power, and the relationship between the two.

This semester, we will focus on the conversation about social relationships and literary aesthetics engaged in Shakespeare plays such as *Othello*, *Coriolanus*, *Twelfth Night*, *Henry V*, and *The Tempest* and novels by Herman Melville, Angela Carter, Gloria Naylor, Jane Smiley, and Toni Morrison. This list may change slightly. In addition to fiction, students will also read some literary criticism and artistic manifestos, such as Marjorie Garber's "Shakespeare as Fetish" and Herman Melville's "Hawthorne and His Mosses." Oral presentations, interpretive and research essays will be required. This course fills the pre-1900 requirement.

Ideally, in completing this course, students will learn to think of Shakespeare's successors not only as partisans for their sex, nation, or religion, but also as philosophical and aesthetically experimental precisely because they are political. In addition, they will be able to sense the advantages of continually returning to Shakespeare's work, while also not giving him the last word on artistic strategies or human relationships.

ENG 781 (56860)

Thur 6.30pm-

8.20pm, KP-708

Chu

### **Science Fiction**

In this web-enhanced course, we will explore some of the ways in which works of science fiction (SF) have dealt with themes such as gender, war, ethnicity, and the near future. We will also explore the many identities of science fiction itself—as a genre, a subculture, a marketing tag, as a state of mind, a set of reading protocols, as the opposite of realism, as a type of realism, and as a growing presence in everyday reality. Weekly units are arranged by theme. Texts encompass film (e.g., *Blade Runner*, *Aliens*, *The Matrix*, *District 9*), prose fiction long and short (possible authors include Isaac Asimov, Margaret Atwood, Octavia Butler, Suzanne Collins, and William Gibson), lyric poetry (Emily Dickinson, Jean Toomer, and W.B. Yeats, among others), music (from György Ligeti to Radiohead), and visual artwork (e.g., concept art). Specific topics may include nostalgia, animal sentience, the uncanny valley, robot rights,

xenophobia, terraforming, slavery, techno-orientalism, the gothic, linguistics, globalization, medicine, and climate change.

ENG 781 (56861)  
Mon 4.30pm-  
6.20pm, KP-708  
Cooley

**Sylvia Plath and Her Literary and Cultural Afterlife: Reading Plath With and Against Contemporary Poets**

In this course, we will investigate Sylvia Plath's work and think about how to productively read her poems with and against current poets. In the fifty years since her death, Plath continues to be a complicated figure for contemporary poets. Her invocation of a per formative speaking subject, her representations of mothering, gender, and the female body, and her revolutionary use of language have all had a profound effect on current poetry and poetics. The class will begin with a focus on Plath's poems, fiction and recently published unabridged journals as well as on the recent excellent critical work about her work and her archive. We will then consider a range of contemporary poets, both women and men, whose work is inflected by or engaged with Plath's writing. But we will also talk about those poets who write against Plath, as a way to rethink influence and resist an easy genealogy. Contemporary poets we will read will include Sharon Olds, Louise Gluck, Kimiko Hahn, Wayne Koestenbaum, Rachel Zucker, Toi Derricote, and Matthea Harvey, among others.

ENG 791 (56869)      **Thesis Workshop**  
Hong

ENG 795 (57492)      **Independent Study**  
Hong