

## English MA Course Descriptions SPRING 2019

### **ENGL 636: History of Literary Criticism**

Seo-Young Chu

Class no. 1321

MON 6:40 to 8:30 PM

In “History of Literary Criticism,” we will explore topics including aesthetics, authorship, culture, epistemology, ethnicity, gender, genre, metaphors for reading, metaphors for writing, mimesis, narrative, postcolonialism, postmodernism, taxonomy, translation, units of literary analysis, and the unconscious. We will also address the following kinds of questions. What does it mean to encounter a text? What makes a given text “literary”? What counts as an object of literary study? What counts as literary knowledge? To what extent can language accommodate representations of reality?

### **ENGL 681: Special Studies**

#### **British Children's Fantasy Literature 1863-present**

Veronica Schanoes

Class no. 1362

TUES 4:40 to 6:30 PM

The Harry Potter books are a popular example of an important, much-loved genre, children's fantasy. In this course, we'll trace the development of British children's fantasy from the 1860s to the present day, studying the genre's innovations, experiments, and influence. Most importantly, we'll consider children's literature as children's literature, and take it seriously on its own terms, paying special attention to the attraction fantasies of magical powers might hold for people who are so often without any power of their own. What does it mean to be a child? How do we define the genre of fantasy? Authors we read will include Lewis Carroll, J.M. Barrie, E. Nesbit, P.L. Travers, Diana Wynne Jones, J.K. Rowling, and Frances Hardinge.

### **ENGL 701: Seminar in Graduate Methodology**

William Orchard

Class no. 1359

TUES 6:40 to 8:30 PM

What differentiates the kinds of reading and writing you did as undergraduate from the sorts of reading and writing you will do as a graduate student in English? When your graduate instructors ask you to write a research paper, what do they mean? This course will answer these questions by introducing students to the writing and research skills

needed to succeed in graduate-level coursework in English. We will begin by considering the history of the discipline, with an eye toward understanding the kinds of questions that animate contemporary criticism. We will then explore the interpretive choices that help define the structure, shape, and plausibility of our research projects. To this end, we will focus on how we read in English, exploring not only close reading (the type of reading most practiced in undergraduate literary study) but also symptomatic reading, ideology critique, reflection theory, models of containment and transgression, among other approaches to interpretation. We will familiarize ourselves with the research tools at our disposal to execute our projects, including academic databases, scholarly journals, scholarly reference guides, digital tools, and archives. Finally, we will devote considerable time to examining, evaluating, and practicing academic writing at the graduate level.

**ENGL 729: Modern Literature**  
**Love and Literature of the Global South**

Natalie Leger

Class no. 1344

THU 4:40 to 6:30 PM

In this course, we will look closely at how writers from the Global South address the complexity and intricacies of *the* sentiment that never ceases to inspire the world at large: love. We will examine the various kinds of love that can exist (sexually driven, maternal, romantic, brotherly/sisterly, and revolutionary, among others) and the intensity of emotion embodied in each. We will pay particular attention to the way in which histories of colonialism, slavery, social inequality and sustained political unrest shapes the possibilities writers afford love. In our exploration of love in this course, we will also critically discuss questions of race, sex, and gender. Our discussions of love will reflect the sentiment itself, impassioned and heartfelt, ensuring an all-round invigorating experience.

**ENGL 742: Shakespeare's Plays**  
**Shakespeare by the Book**

Miles Grier

Class no. 1336

MON 4:40 to 6:30 PM

Prospero's books are famously the source of his supernatural powers; Juliet accuses Romeo of kissing by the book. In Othello, the Duke offers Brabantio the opportunity to read "the bloody book of law" against the unidentified young man who stole Desdemona. Conquest, magic, desire, and state power: these are among the stars in the social constellation of Shakespeare and the book. In this class, students will learn to

place Shakespearean text in the history of manuscript and print cultures, to interpret literal and figurative reading material in Shakespeare's plays, and to assess the place of Shakespeare in the work of subsequent novelists. Requirements include one presentation, a short paper, and a research project.

**ENGL 781-01: Special Seminar**  
**Multiethnic Graphic Narratives**

Caroline Hong

Class no. 1340

TUES 4:40–6:30pm

This course focuses on multiethnic graphic narrative as a literary and popular form. Through in-depth analyses of a wide range of texts, we will develop a vocabulary for talking about comics as a medium and examine how that vocabulary is used in different contexts, to tell different kinds of stories. We will read both independent and mainstream comics, and texts may include works by artists/writers such as Jessica Abel, Kyle Baker, Lynda Barry, Thi Bui, Will Eisner, Kate Gavino, the Hernandez brothers, John Jennings, Mat Johnson, Derek Kirk Kim, Henry (Yoshitaka) Kiyama, Marjorie Liu and Sana Takeda, Scott McCloud, Aaron McGruder, Tony Medina, Miné Okubo, Kwanza Osajyefo, Greg Pak, Arigon Starr, Jillian Tamaki, Mariko Tamaki, Whit Taylor, Tak Toyoshima, Adrian Tomine, GB Tran, Wendy Xu, and Gene Luen Yang. We will study these works alongside theoretical and critical readings that deal with comics and visual cultures. We will think about how these diverse texts engage literary and critical traditions, bridge the literary and the popular, and challenge fixed notions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, ability, etc. And, hopefully, we will discover how the hybrid visual-verbal form of comics is uniquely equipped to engage intersectionality and the politics of representation.

**ENGL 781-02: Special Seminar**  
**Queer Drama**

Hillary Miller

Class no. 1355

THURS 6:40 to 8:30 PM

The drag representations of ancient Greece, Shakespeare's comedies of cross-dressing, and the kabuki theatre of Japan: the theatricality of gender and sexuality has been explored on stage for centuries. Yet today we use "queer" as a category to describe a kind of performance. What *is* queer drama? In this seminar, we will analyze dramatic texts and a variety of historical documents to consider queer theatrical practice and production in American drama. While our readings will consider some of the precursors to contemporary queer theatre, our focus will be on the development of a discrete

category of “queer theatre” in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries on the U.S. stage. We will analyze its historical and aesthetic dimensions, from the scandalous “dirt plays” of the 1920s to the success of “gay plays” on Broadway to the convergence of LGBT politics and the Civil Rights movement. Where is queer drama staged and how is it received? Are queer-identified theatre experiences necessarily political or radical? Can queer theory aid in our understanding of the aesthetics of queer drama, including drag and camp?

As we pursue the defining characteristics of the category of “queer theatre,” we will pay close attention to the economic and socio-political context in which these plays were created. Through these works, we will explore the ways in which different queer communities have shaped and produced their expressions of identity through drama, responded to censorship and crisis, and shifted the relationship between queer performance and “mainstream” entertainment. Playwrights may include Amiri Baraka, Lillian Hellman, the Five Lesbian Brothers, Charles Ludlam, Taylor Mac, Cherrie Moraga, Robert O’Hara, Alina Troyano, Paula Vogel, Mae West, Tennessee Williams, and others. Multidisciplinary scholarship and theory in queer studies may include Sue-Ellen Case, E. Patrick Johnson, José Esteban Muñoz, David Román, David Savran, Susan Sontag, Sara Warner, and others.

**ENGL 781-03: Special Seminar**  
**The Amazons from Homer to Wonder Woman**  
Class no. 1361  
THURS 6:40 to 8:30 PM

In this course, we will explore the literary and artistic tradition of the Amazons. We will begin with the brief mentions in Homer and Herodotus and the stories of Herakles and Theseus, with a look at the depiction of the Amazons in classical artistic presentations of the triumph in battle of the civilized (and civilizing) gods and men over the powers of chaos and barbarism: the “Titanomachy”, the “Centauromachy” and the “Amazonomachy”. We will also look at the late medieval versions of the Amazons in books of the stories of famous women like Petrarch’s *De Claribus Mulieribus* and Christine de Pizan’s *Book of the City of Ladies*, at the use of the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta as a framing device in Chaucer’s “Knight’s Tale” and Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, and at Edmund Spenser’s exploration of gender and faith in the opposition of Christian and pagan warrior women in “The Tale of Britomart” in *The Faerie Queene*. We will end, of course, with the varying feminisms of William Moulton Marston’s *Wonder Woman* in its several comic book, television and film incarnations—and on the cover of the first regular issue of *Ms* magazine. “Wonder Woman for President!”

**ENGL 781-04: Special Seminar****Adaptation Studies**

Cliff Mak

Class no. 40055

MON 6:40 to 8:30 PM

Integral to the history of aesthetic production in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is the relationship between literature and other media. In this seminar, we will examine the affordances of different media as they relate to adaptation to and from the domain of the literary. We will study texts across media (including fiction, poetry, film, television, music, musicals, music videos, and memes) and explore the intricacies, advantages, and difficulties of taking the ideas, issues, and stories of one medium and re-shaping them in another. We will sample genres and decades widely and, along the way, grapple with key questions central not only to literary theory, film theory, and adaptation studies but also to historical and contemporary matters of gender, sexuality, and race as they are brought to the fore in the act of adaptation. Finally, we will consider where the contemporary state of adaptation across media has left the cultural landscape today and what aesthetic possibilities it opens for the future. // Novels, short stories, and excerpts may range from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* to Franz Kafka's *The Trial* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. Films and television shows may range from *Clueless* and *The X-Files* to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Vertigo* to *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Brokeback Mountain*.

**ENGL 791: Thesis Course**

Class no. 1341

*Department consent required. Please email Bill Orchard, the Assistant Director of Graduate Studies, at [worchard@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:worchard@qc.cuny.edu) if you wish to enroll in this course.*

**ENGL 795: Independent Study**

Class no. 1360

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