

GRADUATE ENGLISH COURSE DESCRIPTIONS - FALL 2014

ENGL 600

Seminar in Verse Composition
Nikky Finney T 6:00 - 8:30

ENGL 602

Fiction Workshop: Short Story
David Bajo M 6:00 - 8:30

Admission to the MFA program is required. This course is a workshop for analyzing and critiquing student fiction. The stories, chapters, and excerpts submitted should be works intended for the MFA thesis, a collection or novel manuscript that is ready or near-ready for submission to publishers

ENGL 603

Nonfiction Prose Workshop
Nicola Waldron Th 5:00 – 7:30

This is a course in creative nonfiction designed for graduate students in the MFA program. It will function primarily as a workshop, culminating in a portfolio of written work. We will punctuate discussions of student work with readings of published work in the field.

ENGL 650

Ireland, Gender, and Nation
Ed Madden TR 1:15 – 2:30

In this seminar, we will examine literature and culture of Ireland of the last century, focusing especially on works suggesting the complex relations of national and sexual politics. Our learning objectives for this course will include: to gain familiarity with the themes, issues, and socio-historical contexts of Irish literature, and in particular to become aware of some of the social and political issues that animate Irish culture of the last century (especially the role and status of women, the influence of the Catholic Church, the history of divorce and reproductive issues, the history of sexuality, the social impact of the Celtic Tiger economy); to develop an understanding of some of the traditional representations of gender and sexuality in Irish literature; to examine some of the major controversies around sex/gender issues in Ireland in the last century (such as the divorce referendum, the representation of family and gender in the 1937 Constitution, the 1992 x case, the 1993 legalization of homosexuality); and finally, to apply basic insights of feminist, queer, and postcolonial theory to Irish literary culture.

Among the questions we will ask: How is gender (gender difference, gender roles, masculinity, femininity) represented in the text, and to what ends? What relations are suggested between figures of gender or family and the representation of community or nation? What connections are suggested between sexuality and community or nation?

ENGL 691

Teaching of Literature in College
Cynthia Davis TR 10:05 - 11:20

This two-hour course provides supervision of graduate students teaching First-Year English. It introduces students to various methods of teaching composition, with an emphasis on current pedagogical practice and theory. A portion of each class period will be devoted to practical concerns and pedagogical challenges. Experienced professionals in composition and rhetoric will join the class to discuss approaches that have proven successful for them with an eye toward helping students adapt these strategies to their own classrooms. The goal of the course is to provide students with a solid academic background in writing pedagogy as well as an assortment of practical teaching strategies that should make teaching composition both more effective and more enjoyable.

ENGL 700

Introduction to Graduate Studies

Anne Gulick TR 10:05 - 11:20

This course is designed for graduate students in their first year (or even beyond!) who want a formal opportunity to think through three distinct types of key questions about graduate studies in English. The first set of questions is **personal**: What am I doing in an English graduate program? How can I best set myself up to get what I came for? How do I need to adjust the rhythms and assumptions that worked for me as an undergraduate in order to be successful at the graduate level? The second set is **practical and intellectual**: What skills and genres of writing do I need to get comfortable with in order to do my coursework, develop mastery in a field, and prepare to do scholarly research? How do I engage with criticism and theory? How can I start “professionalizing” early along in my program (and what does that even mean)? The third set of questions is **contextual**: What is this world of higher education in which I’ve chosen to immerse myself beyond the BA? What scholarly trends and institutional pressures shape the kind of work that comes out of an English department in the twenty-first century?

You’ll work independently *and* collaboratively to develop answers to these questions through reflective and critical writing assignments (including journal entries, a conference paper abstract, an annotated bibliography and a book review); readings in the history of higher education, the humanities and the English Department; discussions and group work designed to foster the kind of collegiality and intellectual generosity that makes graduate study a pleasure; and visits from a fabulous line-up of faculty guest speakers.

ENGL 726

Victorian Poetry

Rebecca Stern W 2:20 – 4:50

Back by popular demand! In this class, we’ll explore the works of Tennyson, both Brownings, Arnold, Michael Field, both Rossettis, Hopkins, Wilde, and many others. Students will learn the intricacies of major Victorian forms, including the verse novel, the dramatic monologue, the epic, the sonnet series and more. We’ll begin with a quick look at the Romantics, to explore how and why their successors maintained and departed from their traditions. We’ll branch out into the poem’s generic cousins (melodrama, the novel, the essay) to consider how Victorian poetry worked with popular tropes and conventions of the period. Secondary readings (including chapters and essays by Isobel Armstrong, Catherine Robson, Herbert Tucker, and Christopher Craft) situate the poems within their cultural contexts. Why, for example, did Tennyson find the Arthurian legends so inspiring? How might one read the dramatic monologue as a response to contemporary debates about psychology, criminality, and solipsism? How did rhythmic innovations correspond with new ideas about bodily health and corruption? We’ll have fun, we’ll learn a lot, and we may even indulge in afternoon tea. Assignments include weekly responses to the reading, an annotated bibliography, a final research paper, and occasional baking.

ENGL 733 (=CPLT 701)

Classics of Western Literary Theory

Andrew Shifflett W 5:30 – 8:00

Twenty-two hundred years of argument concerning the nature and functions of fiction, from Plato to the *philosophes*. Requirements are likely to include short reviews of scholarship, a class presentation, and a research paper.

ENGL 738

Black Women Writers of the Long 19th Century

Kate Adams M 2:20 - 4:50

This course will focus on writing by black U.S. women from the long nineteenth century. Our approach will emphasize the variety of black women’s cultural production in terms of genre (poetry, fiction, drama, autobiography, journalism, sermons, lectures, and travel writing) and cultural context (activism, religion, entrepreneurship, and obscurity), and by considering the diverse practices of gendered and raced identification it manifests. We will also give significant attention to current research on African American print culture, periodical studies, and feminist criticism. Readings will include works by writers such as Nancy Prince, Maria Stewart, Hannah Crafts, Harriet Jacobs, Julia Foote, Pauline Hopkins, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Angelina Weld Grimké. Required work will include two essays, a class presentation, and informal weekly writing assignments.

ENGL 752**The Modern American Novel
Qiana Whitted MW 12:45 - 2:00**

Our literary travels in this course take us from Peyton Place and the Liberty Paints factory to a dystopian Earth by targeting the fiction of the 1950s. We will study the intersections of the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the rise of the American suburbs (and UFO sightings) in texts that grapple with anxieties about difference, social identity, censorship, and futurity. Our analysis will place special emphasis on the development of genre fiction during this decade, highlighting experiments with language and narrative form through a cultural studies approach. Works by J.D. Salinger, Ralph Ellison, Flannery O'Connor, Chester Himes, John Updike, and the Beat Generation will be coupled with dime novels, romance and science fiction pulps, and comic books of the period. We will maintain a class blog for students to take turns posting critical and contextual reading responses each week. A class presentation and a final research paper (15-20 pages) are also required.

ENGL 759**Southern Literature After 1900
Tara Powell MW 11:10 - 12:25**

This course draws on works of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction by southern writers to illustrate the twentieth century's evolution of ideas about the study of southern literature as a distinct category. Though I have chosen several mini-themes, including Appalachian literature and literature of the working class, our primary purpose is to develop a critical framework for understanding contemporary scholarship on southern literature by exploring some of the ways scholars have talked about this region's literature since 1900, including but not limited to the Southern Renaissance, the New South, the postmodern South, and the New Southern Studies. Students will read the equivalent of approximately one book and one essay per week, prepare two presentations with accompanying handouts, participate in class discussion, and write one short essay in lieu of a midterm and one substantial research paper in lieu of a final exam. The syllabus includes imaginative writing by Erskine Caldwell, W. J. Cash, Fred Chappell, Kate Daniels, James Dickey, Percival Everett, William Faulkner, Randall Kenan, Flannery O'Connor, Natasha Trethewey, James Still, and Thomas Wolfe, as well as selections from relevant secondary sources. By the course's conclusion, successful students will be familiar with important twentieth-century trends in the field of southern literature; be able to discuss the form and content of course texts in the context of the field; be comfortable doing the same with future southern texts they may encounter; and improve critical reading, writing, and research skills to engage a variety of kinds of regional texts.

ENGL 790**Survey of Composition Studies
Byron Hawk R 6:00 - 8:30**

This course will examine some historical and theoretical grounds for composition as a field and work to develop connections among historical contexts, theories or concepts, and pedagogical practices. The seminar will begin by examining various historical perspectives and key issue areas in the field, turn to looking at the ways histories form conversations rather than objective accounts, and close with the development of students' own "brief histories" around an issue, practice, or sub-field of composition studies. Students will write responses to the readings, three short papers, and a final project that connects a current book in composition to a historical conversation in the field.

ENGL 792 (=SPCH 792)**Classical Rhetoric
Megan Foley M 6:00-8:30**

This course considers the relationship between justice, violence, and speech in Greek antiquity. Does rhetoric offer a more just alternative to violence? Or might rhetoric also exercise a form of force, unjust in its own right? Course readings will include the rhetorical works of Gorgias, Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle, as well as selections from Thucydides, Euripides, Aeschylus, and Aristophanes. (Knowledge of ancient Greek is not required, although students with background in the language are especially encouraged.)

ENGL 810 (=CPLT 750)**Virgil, Ovid, Spenser, Shakespeare
David Miller MW 9:40 - 11:55**

In this class we will read five major literary texts: Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* Books 2 and 3, and two plays by Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*. Additional critical readings will include two chapters from Leonard Barkan's *The Gods Made Flesh* (on Ovid and on the Renaissance) and two chapters from the instructor's *Dreams of the Burning Child* (on Virgil and on English Renaissance drama).

Our purpose in reading these texts together will be to explore what it means to read literary works as belonging to a tradition. We will see how Virgil makes use of Homeric epic, how Ovid makes use of Virgil, how Spenser plays Ovid and Virgil off against each other (and against the Bible), and how Shakespeare teases his elder and more established contemporary Spenser while playing off very different versions of Virgil and Ovid.

We will read Virgil and Ovid in translation, with occasional recourse to the Latin. Preferred translations will be Robert Fitzgerald's *Aeneid* and A. D. Melville's *Metamorphoses*. Preferred texts for the Shakespeare plays will be the Arden editions, chosen for their extensive editorial apparatus.

Requirements for the course will include some combination of class presentations, take-home essay exams, journal entries, and critical essays, to be negotiated individually with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

ENGL 830 (=CPLT 703)

“Cherchez la femme!” Reading Patriarchy like a Woman Federica Clementi R 6:00 - 8:30

This class will ask us to step into the shoes of women (not known to be comfortable) and from that standpoint to interrogate and analyze the canon of Western thought, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and art (always male, always exclusive of women). Particular emphasis will be put on the Hebrew Bible, the usual Greek suspects, and *papa* Freud. Lots of theory and plenty of beautiful literature.

ENGL 840 (=LING 805)

African American English Tracy Weldon T 4:25-7:10

In this course, we will examine linguistic features and expressive speech events associated with African American English (AAE). We will explore theories about its origins and development. We will consider representations of the variety in literature, music, and the media. And we will discuss language attitudes and the role of AAE in education.

ENGL 850

Literature and the Atlantic World: Early Modern to Almost Modern Leon Jackson TR 2:50 - 4:05

In our networked, globalized world, we take for granted that people across the planet are connected by webs of commerce, culture, commodification, and communication. It feels like an essentially modern phenomenon. As it turns out, the phenomenon of hemispheric connectedness is centuries old. Atlantic World studies is an exciting new field that traces the emergence of transnational commerce, culture, and communication between the Americas, Europe, and Africa from the sixteenth century onward. Its operating premise is that oceans do not separate continents; they connect them. Developed initially by historians, Atlantic World studies has inspired a dynamic new literary field that explores how networks of Atlantic commerce, conquest, and communication shaped literary culture on and all around the Atlantic. Atlantic World literature was produced by abducted Africans, transported felons, indentured servants, merchant seamen, pirates, tobacco traders, itinerant evangelicals, travelling theatrical troupes, cosmopolitan revolutionaries, exiles, and émigrés. The impact of an Atlantic World economy -- especially the slave trade -- also shaped and influenced the literature of those who had little direct contact with its operations. Using Anglophone non-canonical, as well as classic, works of literature, together with a few works in translation, and deploying social theory and history as well as literary analysis, this class offers an introduction to the new field of Atlantic literary studies. Its two goals are to look at a diverse range of Atlantic texts, but more importantly still, to help you think and write through transnational frames of reference. Assessment will be by several short assignments and a research paper.

Despite the claims one often hears that Po-Mo theory challenges received notions of the subject, of agency, of truth, etc. I would claim that the more important lesson one can learn from this work concerns the nexus of style and thinking. This nexus draws upon a distinctly Nietzschean complication of the concept of style – the introduction of style into the substance of life: *how* one encounters the world is inextricably a symptom of one's orientation to it (and within it) – and this stylistic orientation matters (literally). This sense of style is something much different than an outward manifestation of content; instead, it is the condition of possibility for any particular content. This seminar will likely do nothing more than repeat these sentences for 15 weeks. Readings will include texts by Nietzsche, Derrida, Deleuze, Levinas, Jameson, Hebdidge, Butler, and others...