

Department of English

Graduate Courses

Fall 2009

6000 Colloquium for Entering Students
2 credits.

M 4:30-6:25

Galloway, A.
3761

An introduction to practical and theoretical aspects of graduate English studies, conducted with the help of weekly visitors from the English department. There will be regular short readings and brief presentations, but no formal papers. The colloquium is required for all entering PhD students; MFA students are welcome to attend any sessions that interest them.

6110 Old English
4 credits.

TR 11:40-12:55
(also ENGL 3110)

Zacher, S.
11839

The course is intended as an introduction for graduate and undergraduate students to the Old English language; graduate students may also opt to use it for somewhat more advanced work, if they wish. We will begin with simple prose texts and proceed to poetic texts such as *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *The Dream of the Rood*, and *The Wife's Lament*. The course will address language and literature as a pairing. There will be regular translations and discussions, a mid-term, a short paper, and a final exam.

6151 Visionaries and Vision Literature in the Middle Ages
4 credits.

W 3:35-5:30

Galloway, A.
25643

This seminar will sample the enormous range of ways of conceiving and writing visions in the Middle Ages, and something of the ways that visionaries could find a way to reshape or fit into their worlds. On many fronts visionaries and vision literature are a profound and constant challenge to the settled institutions of medieval culture, yet few other kinds of writing and experience are more distinctive parts of pre-modern literature and life. We'll try to set aside the modern urge to dismiss any "otherworldly" contact as delusion or more cynically calculated window-dressing, but we'll also seek to understand how gender, literature, politics, and social networks are framed in and by such materials. About half the course will focus on writings from Antiquity through the thirteenth century—works originally in Latin, Old English, German, Dutch, and French, but read and discussed here mostly in English: I will schedule an extra slot of time for those who want to go over the original languages more closely. Works in that span will include selections from Ovid, Jerome, pseudo-Gregory, the English chronicler Bede, *Dream of the Rood*, *Elene*, Hildegard of Bingen, Alan of Lille, Hadewijk, Angela da Foligno, and the *Roman de la Rose*. The second half will focus on late-medieval English and French dream-visions and visionaries, especially Guillaume de Machaut's *Fontaine Amoreuse*, Chaucer's dream-poetry, *Piers Plowman*, and Julian of Norwich. The Middle English works will be read in the original, but the editions should allow most students to handle that without significant linguistic difficulty (some earlier knowledge of Middle English would be helpful). There will be regular small informal writings (alternating weeks), an 8-10 page midterm paper, and a final longer paper (20-25 pp.). S/U option is available.

6207 Black Feminist Theories
4 credits.

W 2:00-4:25
(Also ASRC 6207)

Boyce Davies, C.
25577

This course examines black feminist theories, paying particular emphasis on the cross-cultural experiences of women as expressed both theoretically and creatively. It follows the chronologies and variations of modern black feminisms, beginning with the U.S. articulations and moving towards how particular feminist positions are constructed and theorized in other locations across the African diaspora such as Black British feminism, Caribbean feminism, African feminism. Thus we will explore the various theories and texts within their socio-political and geographical frames and locations, analyzing these as appropriate against or in relation to a range of feminist activisms and movements.

6281 Elizabethan & Jacobean Drama & Criticism
4 credits.

T 10:10-12:05

Mann, J.
25572

This course will study a range of playwrights active during the heyday of English popular drama, reading examples of domestic tragedy, revenge tragedy, closet drama, city comedy, history, and tragicomedy. Over the course of the semester, you will learn about the conventions of writing and performance in a variety of theatrical spaces, as well as the social and political effects of the theater in early modern England. Each week we will read one play in concert with a representative essay from a major critical movement, including New Criticism, New Bibliography, New Historicism, Feminism, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Psychoanalysis, Postcolonial Studies, and Performance Criticism. Playwrights will likely include Kyd, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Cary, Beaumont, Fletcher, Middleton, Rowley, Dekker, and Webster.

6330 Satire, Sensibility, Imitation, & Mechanism in 18th Century Literature
T 1:25-3:20

Bogel, F.

4 credits.

25248

A fairly wide-ranging survey of eighteenth-century poetry, fiction, and drama, with some attention to philosophy, aesthetics, and theories of stage acting. The main thematic focus will be on the way materialist and mechanistic thinking (and language) inflects a wide variety of discourses in the period: originality, imitation, and replication; parody and satire; sentiment and sensibility; and gender, sexuality, and pornography. In the course of the seminar, we will regularly explore the problematic relationship between the spontaneous, the original, and the authentic, on one hand, and the mechanical, the replicated, and the performative. We will also devote some time to the rhetoric of eighteenth-century couplet poetry. Writers may include: Rochester, Finch, Egerton, Dryden, Wycherley, Swift, Pope, Fielding, Cleland, Mackenzie, Sterne, Hume, La Mettrie, Johnson, Voltaire, Kant, Boswell, and Burke. Readings in such modern critics and theorists as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, Ernst Cassirer, Walter Benjamin, Hugh Kenner, Michel Foucault, Joseph Roach, Homi Bhabha, and others.

This seminar is designed to be useful to students who wish to explore thematic and theoretical approaches to the period as well as those who wish to prepare for teaching undergraduate courses in eighteenth-century literature.

6390 Studies in Romantic Literature: Writers of the Revolution R 10:10-12:05
4 credits.

Parker, R.
11979

This seminar will explore works of the 1790's and 1800's in various genres—poetry, drama, fiction, and political essays—with an interest in the relation of literary expression to public reception in the context of the evolving course of the French Revolution and related political issues, such as slavery and empire. Readings will comprise texts by a broad range of British writers (such as Edmund Burke, William Blake, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Wordsworth, Helena Maria Williams, Samuel Coleridge, Joanna Baillie, Elizabeth Inchbald, William Godwin, Anne Plumptre) and a few works, in historically contemporary translation and adaptation, by German and French writers. One strand of interest will be in tracing Wordsworth's career as a literary artist during the course of his evolution from radical support of French (and English) liberties in the early and mid-1790s to defense of British ministerial policies in the Napoleonic era. Another will be in the role of literary drama and theatrical performance, partly in the contexts of emerging nationalist culture and political censorship, involving adaptations of Shakespeare, Schiller, and Kotzebue. In addition to close critical consideration of canonical works, there will be some attention to resources and methods for archival research. Students taking the course for letter grade will present one or two oral reports and write a 15 page term paper. The S/U option is available.

6401 African Thought
4 credits.

M 2:00-4:25
(also ASRC 6400)

Farred, G.
25581

What kind of thinking is being and has been produced, historically by figures in Africana philosophy? The intention of course is not — though that may a collateral effect — to argue against those who naysay the existence of Africana philosophy nor is it to “define” the field, as if such a project were even possible. “Africana Thought” will, instead, seek to engage those thinkers who produce this philosophy. The readings will run from the *Confessions* of St. Augustine through Alexander Crummell's musings to Valetin Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa*, from intense reflections on the condition of black subjugation that is Frantz Fanon's writing to locating Jacques Derrida as a philosopher of the Maghreb. This is a course about Africana philosophy as a project that persistently questions itself.

6515 Ariosto, Rabelais, Spenser
4 credits.

M 2:30-4:25
(also ENGL 4515, COML 4515/6515)

Kennedy, W.
25870

A study of competing claims between narrative forms and national ideologies in Ariosto's epic romance, *Orlando Furioso* (Italy, 1516-32); Rabelais's prose fiction, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (France, 1532-52); and Spenser's allegorical epic, *The Faerie Queene* (England, 1590-96).

6613 Faulkner and the American South
4 credits.

R 10:10-12:05

Cobb, M.
26319

Quite famously, William Faulkner had a formal desire: "I'm trying to say it all in one sentence, between one Cap and one period." Certainly he tried, although his punctuation feels more often like an exclamation point than a period. And it's this emphatic, furious formalism that will be our focus as we distinguish Faulkner's modernism from the more typically Southern Gothic features of other writers of Southern U.S. Literature. We will start with four of William Faulkner's novels—*The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, and *Absalom!* And then we'll read four other pieces of literature about the American South: Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood*; Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*;

and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. We'll also watch two films: *Gone with the Wind* and *No Country for Old Men*. Of course we'll be concerned with the dominant themes that animate professional and amateur readings of Southern literature: slavery; race; class; gender; violence; regionalism; agrarian economics; the shadow effects of Northern industrialization; the Great Migration; incest; sexuality; religion; the legacies of the Civil war; and so forth. But we're going to be especially attentive to the manner in which Faulkner created a vivid modernist poetics to articulate these themes, and how these expressive strategies relate to, or contrast with, other major writings and representations of the South. Our secondary readings will include some influential Faulkner critics: Eric Sundquist, James Snead, Hortense Spillers, John T. Matthews, and Édouard Glissant. And we'll also draw on some theorists: Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault, Barbara Johnson, and Giorgio Agamben.

6621 Jefferson's America, From the Underside
4 credits.

W 1:25-3:20

Donaldson, L.
27387

This interdisciplinary graduate seminar will examine the political, literary, and historical dynamics of early US nation building during the last decades of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. It will particularly stress the perspectives of those ordinarily excluded from accounts of the American Revolution and its aftermath: women, Native Americans, slaves and free black citizens, the poor and working classes, and those professing faiths other than Christianity. It will also have sections on the writing and practice of colonial botany (William Bartram and John James Audobon) and the Barbary wars, which represent the United States' first official dealings with Islamic countries. Readings include Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, as well as Abigail and John Adams; the Declaration of Independence, edited by Michael Hardt; Gary Nash's *The Unknown American Revolution*; the history of the revolution by Mercy Otis Warren; the autobiography of John Marrant; the narrative of Olaudah Equiano; writings and petitions from American Indians impacted by the Revolution, with an emphasis on Native women's petitions; and the cultural production of Phillis Wheatley, Benjamin Banneker, Lucy Terry and other late eighteenth and early nineteenth century intellectuals of color. Students from all disciplines welcome. One shorter and one longer research paper will be required.

6760 Theory and Poetics of the Novel
4 credits.

R 1:25-3:20

Shaw, H.
24947

Henry James, while theorizing about the novel, remarked that in life, connections are "really" endless, but the art of the novelist is to draw a circle around a work so that this endlessness recedes from view. Theorizing about the novel has not been infinite, but there has been a lot of it. This course will draw its circle by concentrating on a handful of basic concerns central to the poetics of the novel. We will want to learn what twentieth-century thinkers about the novel have to tell us about such issues as point of view (that is, as we'll see, "focalization"), the representation of speech and thought in fiction, and voice, including narrative voices but also the issue of what it means to give voice to a written text. We will explore feminist narratology and touch as time permits on other currently lively sites of critical endeavor, though we'll avoid impinging on areas covered more thoroughly and knowledgeably in other courses. Readings in fiction will be drawn largely, though not exclusively, from nineteenth-century British works.

My own work has for a long time centered on what history has to do with novels (especially realist novels) and how we think about them. Lately I have become increasingly occupied with the formal and ethical implications of viewing narrative as human dialogue. These are things I'll want to explore further in dialogue with you.

6792 Theory of the Lyric
4 credits.

T 10:10-12:05

Culler, J.
25274

This course will explore how to think of the Western lyric tradition, broadly conceived, from Sappho to Ashbery, looking at poems by Horace, Catullus, Petrarch, Shakespeare, Keats, Baudelaire, Hopkins, Valery, Auden, Ammons, and others. Each week we will discuss a number of poems along with some theoretical essays (work by John Stuart Mill, Northrop Frye, Kate Hamburger, Paul de Man, Barbara Johnson, Virginia Jackson, Giorgio Agamben, Marjorie Perloff, and others).

Lyric is an ancient form but recently there have been two challenges to the notion: (1) contemporary poets have broken with the tradition because of its association with voice, and (2) what is now being called "the new lyric studies" (see PMLA, January 2008) sees the notion of lyric as a construction of twentieth century criticism which imposes a certain idea of literature on diverse historical practices of the past. I will need the help of students in the class in exploring (1); Virginia Jackson, author of *Dickinson's Misery* and the

leading proponent of “new lyric studies” will join us on September 29th for a discussion of (2). Though I feel committed to maintaining the idea of a lyric tradition, in part as a corrective to certain historically limited conceptions of the lyric (today, for instance, American pedagogy treats lyrics as dramatic monologues, to be read novelistically), I am interested in these controversies.

There will be opportunities for students to lead discussions of poems and poets that particularly interest them (MFA students are welcome) and particularly to help us explore the links between the literary tradition of lyric and other modern forms of rhythmical language, such as song lyrics and rap.

6830 Contemporary Global Fiction
4 credits.

W 3:35-5:30
(also COML 6050)

Cohen, W.
25618

Contemporary—mainly post-1945—fiction, understood as the first full instance of world literature. Emphasis on global transformations of a primarily European genre. Issues of form—realism, modernism, postmodernism—and of relations among languages, nations, social systems, and continents in the modern world system. Most of the readings will be from relatively brief works—short stories, novellas, short novels, excerpts. The purpose is to develop a basis for generalization by gaining at least passing familiarity with fiction composed in many countries, on many continents, in many languages. Probable syllabus: Andrey Platonov, *The Foundation Pit* (1930, pub. 1987, Russian); Sadeq Hedayat, *The Blind Owl* (1937, Persian); Jorge Luis Borges, *The Garden of Forking Paths* (1941, Spanish); Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (1948, Polish); Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies* (1951, French); Saadat Hasan Manto, *Bitter Fruit* (by 1955, Urdu); Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958, English); Clarice Lispector, *Family Ties* (1960, Portuguese); Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire* (1962, English); Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (1966, Arabic); Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (1972, Italian); Danilo Kiš, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (1976, Serbo-Croatian); Mahasweta Devi, *Breast Stories* (1980, Bengali); Haruki Murakami, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, excerpts (1995, Japanese); Han Shaogong, *A Dictionary of Maqiao* (1995, Chinese); and Toni Morrison, *A Mercy* (2008, English). Secondary readings, designed not to provide interpretations of the texts but to address the thematic concerns of the course, will be chosen from Perry Anderson, Zygmunt Baumann, Pascale Casanova, Anthony Giddens, Jürgen Habermas, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Fredric Jameson, Franco Moretti, Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Immanuel Wallerstein, among others. Writing: 15-20 pages, in a single term paper or two-to-three shorter essays; probably an oral presentation as well, which can then be turned into a paper. If there is sufficient interest, the class could continue in the Spring as an independent study in which we might read a few of the longer works of the period—by these or other writers in these or other languages—or, alternately, concentrate on a shorter time-frame, such as the past 10-15 years. *Please prepare the assignment listed on the course’s Blackboard site for the first meeting of the class, Wednesday, September 2.*

6865 Contemporary Poetry and Poetics
4 credits.

W 12:20-2:15
(also COML 4860/6865, SPAN 4880)

Monroe, J.
26253

What gives contemporary poetry and poetics its resonance and value? What are its dominant features, audiences, and purposes? What does 21st-century poetry’s textual environment look like, and how does it situate itself among other genres and kinds of discourse? How would we describe its ambient noise and how does that noise shape, inform, inflect its particular concerns and motivated forms? How does it resist, engage, respond to, negotiate with the challenges of an increasingly globalized, media-saturated society? How are we to understand its relation to the central cultural, historical, philosophical, scientific, technological, economic developments of our time? This seminar will explore these and related questions in a range of works that open onto the rich interplay of contemporary poetry and poetics with questions of personal and collective identity, language, and culture. Authors include Bolano, Brathwaite, Collins, Fulton, Gander, Hejinian, Howe, Moss, Rich, Swenson, Waldrop, and Wright.

6931 Human Rights
4 credits.

M 1:25-3:20

Anker, E.
24948

This seminar will explore the multiple intersections between literature, theory, and human rights. Human rights have become a topic of heated debate within literary and cultural studies in recent years, inspiring some theorists to venture scathing critiques of rights (Zizek, Badiou) and others to celebrate them (Butler, the late Derrida). By charting both the limitations and the opportunities of human rights—whether rights are viewed as a descriptive-analytic lens or as a vehicle for pursuing social justice—this course seeks to make sense out of this growing preoccupation. Our readings will investigate objections to rights derived from a range of methodological approaches – Marxism, psychoanalysis, gender studies, deconstruction, disability theory, and postcolonial studies—and will

include both historical and contemporary thinkers—Arendt, Cheah, Ong, Spivak, Bhabha, Agamben, and Benhabib, among others. Along the way, the readings will further compel us to contemplate broader currents and trends in literary criticism and theory. Does the focus on human rights, in addition to notions such as secularism, sovereignty, and citizenship, mark an emergent “political turn” within theory? Are we witnessing a re-evaluation of the claims of liberal humanism within a discipline that has conventionally been suspicious of the inheritance of the Enlightenment?

At the same time as we entertain such expansive theoretical questions, we will apply them to literature, investigating the relevance of genre, aesthetics, and form for representing human rights. In turn, while most of our readings will be critical-theoretical, they will include select dramatic and fictional narratives, allowing us to test the recognitions obtained from theory and to evaluate their merits. In the process, we will consider the available frameworks that critics have proposed for deciphering the intimate relationship between literature and human rights, specifically the purchase of trauma studies, poststructuralist ethics, phenomenology, and performance studies for explaining literature’s many contributions to social justice.

6941 Twenty-First Century African American Literature T 1:25-3:20
4 credits.

Crawford, M.
27068

This seminar will examine novels, drama, and poetry that invite questions about twenty-first century African American aesthetics. At the turn of the century, how might African American literature begin to sprout in new, old, and strangely familiar directions? As this new layer of African American literature emerges, we can now trace the first steps of the turns and twists that might differentiate twenty-first century African American literature from 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s African American literature. These turns and twists become inseparable from issues of black postmodernism, black experimental traditions, metanarrative, revisionist history, travel narrative, and black queer theory. Our texts may include Percival Everett's *Erasure*, Harryette Mullen's *Sleeping with the Dictionary*, Colson Whitehead's *John Henry Days* and *Apex Hides the Hurt*, Suzan-Lori Parks' *365 Days/ 365 Plays* and *Topdog/ Underdog*, John Edgar Wideman's *Fanon*, Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*, and John Keene and Christopher Stackhouse's *Seismosis*. Groundbreaking journal essays and book chapters will frame our analysis of the literature.

6995 Race and Time
4 credits.

R 10:10-12:05

Wong, S.
15065

This course will turn on three key terms: race, comparison, and time. What do these terms have to do with each other? What does it mean to be in time, or out of time? What are some other ways of inhabiting time, or of being inhabited by time? What is the time of the racialized subject? How might such a temporality be represented in literature? We’ll take up these questions by drawing on a range of writings: literary, anthropological, philosophical, linguistic, psychoanalytical and sociological. These may include (but not be limited to) selections from Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other*; Joy Kogawa, *Obasan*; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*; Thomas Bender and David Wellbery, *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time*; Langston Hughes, *I Wonder As I Wander*; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*; Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*; and Carlos Bulosan, *America Is In the Heart*.

7020 Decolonization and Culture: Key Issues in Contemporary Theory W 1:25-3:20
4 credits.

Mohanty, S.
24945

An introduction to some of the central issues in contemporary cultural theory, with a special focus on two themes: decolonization and culture. Exploring various theoretical approaches and schools of criticism (e.g., Marxism, feminism, deconstruction, hermeneutics, structuralism, psychoanalysis, postcolonial theory, minority studies, queer studies), we will explore these and other themes and examine some of the underlying (and often competing) epistemological and political claims made about them.

Our approach will be interdisciplinary, focusing on such influential books as Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *Decolonizing the Mind*, Dipesh Chakravarty’s *Provincializing Europe*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* and Kenji Yoshino’s *Covering*. We will also read two unusual and important memoirs, *Dreams of Trespass* and *Soldier* (by Fatema Mernissi and June Jordan respectively), and the classic anticolonial Indian novel *Six Acres and a Third* (Oriya original published in 1897-99) by Fakir Mohan Senapati.

Other readings will include essays by (among others) Althusser, Bhabha, Butler, Cabral, Cesaire, Derrida, Fanon, Glissant, Lorde, Mignolo, (Toni) Morrison, Spivak, and Raymond Williams.

(No previous knowledge of literary and cultural theory is assumed.)

7800 MFA Seminar: Poetry
5 credits.

T 3:35-5:30

Van Clief-Stefanon, L.
6777

7801 MFA Seminar: Fiction
5 credits.

T 3:35-5:30

Lennon, J.
6781

7850 Reading for Writers: American Realisms, American Unrealisms
4 credits.

R 1:25-3:20

Vaughn, S.
3805

What makes an American text American? Are there any obsessions or strategies that occur in recent and contemporary American fiction that might allow us to find connections across a group of writers who would seem to have little in common with each other beyond a North American connection? What allows any text to be called realistic or even representational? English 7850 will examine a number of narrative texts by late 20th Century and contemporary American writers whose work has been characterized as realistic or as representing a particular American cultural moment, group or place. Writers we will study may include Junot Díaz, Flannery O'Connor, John L'Heureux, Denis Johnson, Z. Z. Packer, Jamaica Kincaid, Tobias Wolff, Cynthia Ozick, Donald Barthelme, and Gish Jen.

Our discussions in some instances will be governed by the assumption that a work of art will appear at its most representational or realistic (however that term is defined) when the conventions shaping it are so fully accepted as to become invisible to the artist or to a particular audience. An audience of one or many is always rooted in a particular cultural place and moment, unlike the work of art itself, which can be unmoored from its creator's intentions, its cultural boundaries, and the moment of its inception. Conventions, when they are invisible, can be oppressive for the artist who is used by them or for the audience who accepts them, but the conventional always provides the necessary point of departure for the artist. Without convention, there can be no resistance.

We will try to identify what conventions and resistances shape a particular work. We will also attempt to recognize our own reading conventions—what invisible sets of judgments and expectations we bring to a work before we encounter the first sentence, view the first moving image, confront the framed image. In particular, we will consider to what extent we value or devalue a work for its perceived ability to offer us a representational or realistic vision of a world we think we know or think we are getting to know. Then we will consider the question of whether realism can ever be satisfactorily or relevantly defined. Along the way, we will attempt to discover in the formal elements, the angle of vision, and in the voice of a piece anything that might constitute an American way of using language and constructing fiction.

7940 Directed Study

This course title should be used for an independent study in which one student works with the supervision of a member of the graduate faculty.

7950 Group Study

This course title should be used for an independent study in which a small group of students works with the supervision of a member of the graduate faculty.

7960 Teaching and Research

This course should be used for an independent study that combines a program of reading, supervised by a professor, with participation (including some teaching) in an undergraduate course.

Graduate students who wish to enroll in undergraduate courses at 300-level or above for graduate credit should consult with their committee chairs, and must have the permission of the course instructor.