
Department of English

Graduate Courses

Spring 2010

5810 Writers at Work: Innovations
2 credits

W 1:25-3:20

Collins, M.
23172

The course centers around discussion of various aspects in the craft of writing specifically designed for graduate writing students.

6120 Beowulf
4 credits.

MWF 10:10-11:00
(also ENGL 3120)

Hill, T.
4404

A close reading of *Beowulf*. Attention will be given to relevant literary, cultural, and linguistic issues. One semester's study of Old English, or the equivalent, is recommended.

6190 Chaucer and Gower
4 credits.

W 1:25-3:20

Galloway, A.
24792

Chaucer: founder of English Literature. Gower: who that? "Friend of Chaucer"? The most famous non-famous founder of English Literature? A dull moralist, or a brilliant literary interlocutor with Chaucer?

This seminar is intended to introduce both of them, or, for those who know something of them, offer opportunities to think further about them in new ways, and in either case use their known interactions to think about literary communities, literature and its social setting, and literary "debates." Their literary interactions seem to bring out very different political ideals, views of economics and value, views of history, ideas about ethics, and the power of language—the last a complex issue in a world where French, Latin, and English all coexisted. Gower wrote major poems in all three languages; Chaucer focused on English (though he seems to have written French poetry too). We will focus on the English writings, but will also read excerpts from Gower's Latin and French works (with translations). The seminar will not require prior knowledge of Chaucer or medieval English literature, but we will arrange an additional weekly hour or so to practice reading and understanding fourteenth-century London English. We'll also read some modern anthropological theory, some readings of sources, and a selection of critical writing. There will be regular small translation exercises (with opportunities for informal commentary), two 5-page papers, and a final long paper (20-25 pp.).

6290 Milton: Authorship and Transgression
4 credits.

R 10:10-12:05

Kalas, R.
24913

A central preoccupation in all of Milton's writing is the delineation of legitimate and illegitimate forms of authority (political, poetic, and theological); and the imperative to obey legitimate forms of authority is matched by an equally strong imperative to resist illegitimate rule. This course will cover Milton's major poetry and prose, focusing on the crucial distinctions that inform Milton's expression of proper agency and action. How does Milton differentiate between unsanctioned rebellion and justified dissent, between service and servility, between the active life and the contemplative life? In answering these questions, we will pay special attention to the poetic and rhetorical devices that allow Milton to distinguish paradox from contradiction. But we will also look into the political and religious circumstances that conditioned Milton's articulation of poetic authority. To what extent (if at all) did Milton invent modern authorship? How have Milton's readers and critics positioned him as an author within (and sometimes outside of) literary history? A cumulative set of short written exercises leading up to the final research project will be required, in addition to the final seminar paper.

6411 After the End: Literature in the Ashes of History **M 1:25-3:20**
4 credits.

Caruth, C.
24916

At the heart of the psychoanalytic, literary and (political) theoretical texts in this course are scenes or conceptualizations of a world beyond the end—not only the end of specific eras or experiences but also the end of thought, or of history, as such. Beginning with the ashes of Pompeii at the center of Freud's reading of Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva*, this course will trace the delineation, in each writer, of a language that appears to anticipate, and paradoxically to survive, its absolute destruction. In Derrida's rereading of Freud's "Gradiva" in *Archive Fever*, in José Saramago's rewriting of Camus's *The Plague in Blindness*, in Hannah Arendt's rethinking of her own earlier work in "Truth in Politics" and "Lying in Politics," in Stanley Kubrik's refashioning of film narrative in *Dr. Strangelove*, and in Cormac McCarthy's rethinking of theology in *The Road*, the writers produce a language that both participates in, and attempts to serve as impossible witness to, a world of ashes in which thought itself has disappeared. In addition to the above texts, the course may include additional material by Shelly Rambo, Paul Virilio, Maurice Blanchot, Shoshana Felman and Jean Baudrillard.

6510 Camp, Kitsch, and Trash
4 credits.

T 2:30-4:25
(also THETR 6050, FGSS 6050)

Salvato, N.
25423

This graduate seminar investigates three key terms for twentieth-century aesthetic thought and performance theory: camp, kitsch, and trash. As we analyze the various meanings assigned to these terms (and the performances articulated under their banners), we will also consider histories of taste; the traffic between popular culture and “high art”; and the relationships among material artifacts, identity politics, and community formations. Issues of class, race, gender, and sexuality will be foregrounded. Authors include Adorno, Bourdieu, Broch, Butler, Debord, Greenberg, Ludlam, Newton, Sedgwick, Sontag, Waters, and Warhol.

6551 Decadence
4 credits.

MW 3:35-4:25
(also ENGL 3550, COML 3550/6551, FGSS 3550/6551)

Hanson, E.
24841

Graduate students must also enroll in the section on R 3:35-4:25

“My existence is a scandal,” Oscar Wilde once wrote, summing up in an epigram the effect of his carefully cultivated style of perversity and paradox. Through their valorization of aestheticism and all that was considered artificial, unnatural, or perverse, the so-called “Decadent” writers of the late-nineteenth century sought to free the pleasures of beauty, spirituality, and sexual desire from their more conventional ethical moorings. We will discuss literary and visual texts by Charles Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe, J.-K. Huysmans, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, A. C. Swinburne, Walter Pater, René Vivien, James McNeill Whistler, and Aubrey Beardsley, with a particular focus on Oscar Wilde. Students may read French and German texts in the original or in English translation.

6611 What is a Just Society? Native American Philosophies and the Limits of Capitalism’s Imagination

4 credits.

T 1:25-3:20
(also AMST 6611)

Cheyfitz, E.
24791

This course is conceived as a corrective to the dominance in postcolonial studies of Western theory. Or, more precisely, this course looks at the way indigenous theory and practice have revised Western theory in a rethinking of the Americas and beyond. While we will be reading a range of Native and Western writers, the focus of the course will be Leslie Marmon Silko’s revision of Marx in her novel *Almanac of the Dead* and the way this revision is linked to the theory and practice of ongoing indigenous movements in Chiapas, Mexico, and Bolivia as well as to the recently ratified UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In addition to the Silko, we will be reading Simon Ortiz’s narrative poem about Indigenous resistance *Fight Back* and Linda Hogan’s book of essays on sustainability *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World*. Theoretical and historical works will come from a list that includes: Taiaiake Alfred *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*; *Beyond Resistance: Everything, An Interview with Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos*; Rupert Ross, *Dancing with a Ghost: Exploring Aboriginal Reality*; Forrest Hylton and Sinclair Thomson, *Revolutionary Horizons: Past and Present in Bolivian Politics*; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*; Federalist 10, and Max Weber, “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.”

6771 Cultural Studies: A Spatial Problematic
4 credits.

R 10:10-12:05

Juffer, J.
24790

Over the last decade, cultural studies has purportedly taking a “spatial turn.” There has been an explosion of publishing on globalization, diaspora, public spheres, cities, suburbs, cyberspace, and so on. In this seminar, we’ll examine what that means, or perhaps, better stated, we’ll inquire into the effects of this spatial turn for the study of culture. Broadly stated, the theories engaged deal in various ways with the relationship between culture and materiality. How does a spatial problematic offer an understanding of this thorny issue, one that has dominated cultural studies since Birmingham? What happens to the centrality of culture and the role of cultural criticism within a spatial analysis? How does space complicate our reliance on notions of the “public sphere” and the “public intellectual”? In the first six weeks of the semester, we’ll read some of the major theorists of space: Althusser, Gramsci, Benjamin, Habermas, Lefebvre, de Certeau, Foucault, Harvey, Jameson, Soja, Massey, and Deleuze and Guattari. These readings offer a way to talk about cultural studies historically and institutionally, though only strategically so given our time constraints. In the remainder of the semester, we’ll consider more specific applications of spatial theories from different disciplines: media studies on the suburbs; critical geographies of sexual desire; ethnography on the U.S.-Mexico border; cultural geographies of the city; participant-observation studies of activist communities; sociologies of domestic space and immigration; and policy analysis of cyberspace and democracy. These case studies many times overlap in their methodological approaches, but we will try to disarticulate them to some degree in order to identify their underlying assumptions as well as what might be useful to students in developing their projects.

6850 Postcolonial Poetries & the Poetics of Relation **W 12:20-2:15** **Monroe, J.**
4 credits. **(also COML 4290/6350, FREN 4350/63450, SPAN 4350/6350)** **25605**

What kinds of poetry might be usefully characterized as postcolonial and what are the stakes of such a designation? How common, variable, translatable are postcolonial values for particular poetics across cultures? To which country's or culture's poetics does the term apply? Is there such a thing as a transnational, transcultural, postcolonial poetics? What relation(s) do specific textual/poetic features or strategies have to geopolitical, cultural, historical, economic circumstances, and to the conditions of what has come to be called the postcolonial in particular? With particular attention to the work of Brathwaite, Walcott, Césaire, and Glissant in light of Glissant's influential concept of a "poetics of relation," this seminar will explore the diverse legacies of Caribbean poetry and poetics, from perspectives at once singular and specific, global and local, for postcolonial approaches to questions of community, language, culture, and identity.

7810 MFA Seminar: Fiction **T 3:35-5:30** **Quinonez, E.**
5 credits. **10886**

7811 MFA Seminar: Poetry **T 3:35-5:30** **McClane, K.**
5 credits. **10884**

7850 Reading for Writers: Contemporary Poetry and Poetics **M 5:00-7:00** **Fulton, A.**
4 credits. **18392**

In this seminar, we'll read at least twelve books of poems published during the last ten years as a means of nourishing and energizing our own writing. Though poetry is frequently discussed under the aegis of schools (New York School, Confessional, Black Mountain, Language, Postlanguage, etc.), most poets do not fit into any identifiable category. Rather than addressing contemporary poetry within a prefabricated context, we'll read with an eye for unstable or emerging descriptions (queer, fractal, elliptical, posthuman, mongrel, hybrid, ecopoetics, ethnopoetics, etc.) and attend to the aesthetics informing poetry effaced between categories. Each poet's idiosyncratic work will send us in unforeseen directions and extend our reach as we trust the expansive, revelatory, and festive capacities of chance. The recent Norton anthology, *American Hybrid*, will supplement the individual books. "We imitate when we think we innovate, and we innovate when we think we imitate." With this in mind, we'll consider the relation of novation and experiment to convention and contrivance. In response to the assigned texts, students will complete a portfolio of poems, fiction, essays, or reviews. The class is limited to graduate students. No exceptions.

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.