

## ***English Single-Description First-Year Seminars 09-10***

### **1108 Writing About Film**

**Course Leader: Fall & Spring, Lynda Bogel**

A writing course that focuses on film, particularly on Hollywood classics, past and current. How is a film put together so that it will manipulate and move its audience? What are the roles of editing, camera movement, soundtrack, and image? What does a film tell us about its culture and our cultures? About the relations between women and men, between filmer and filmed? We explore such questions as we analyze six films. We read about film history, techniques, and analysis. Students write both short exercises designed to sharpen attention to details of each film and regularly scheduled essays on a wide range of topics, such as relations between men and women as represented in these films, the appeal of movie stars, ways of identifying a director's characteristic style, and the tension between the soundtrack and the visual composition in a particular scene.

*Students must be free to attend screenings on Mondays at 6:30 and Thursdays at 4:45. Choose another writing seminar if your schedule conflicts with these screenings.*

### **1127 Shakespeare**

**Course Leader: Fall: Jenny Mann, Spring: Philip Lorenz**

This seminar provides a unique opportunity for students to work very closely with just a few of Shakespeare's plays: a total of four or five over the course of the semester. We will use these texts as a source and motivation for our own reading, writing, and critical analysis, but we will be attentive also to the plays as performances. Film screenings, performances, and historical materials related to the plays in production will be included in each seminar, though the particulars will vary according to the instructor. Course work will involve extensive writing—both formal and informal—and drafting.

### **1123 From Dickens to Zombie Haiku: The Serial Novel Goes Graphic**

**Course Leader: Fall & Spring, David Faulkner**

Charles Dickens was only in his twenties when his first illustrated novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, was serialized between April 1836 and November 1837. The Victorian middle class soon became obsessed with this serial novel, anxiously awaiting each installment much like TV viewers count the days until the next episode of *Grey's Anatomy* or *24*. The graphic novel (sometimes called the "comic book") and these TV serial productions emerged out of the phenomenon of the *Pickwick Papers*, and from the development of early comic strips and the rise of comic-book superheroes. In this course, we will study serial narrative and publication, reading and writing about works by Dickens and selections from early comic strips and comic-books, as well as books such as Spiegelman's *Maus*, selected Manga novels, and Ryan Mecum's *Zombie Haiku*.

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### **1134 Memoir and Memory**

#### **Course Leader: Fall & Spring, Jami Carlacio**

In this course, we will examine how authors construct their public, written selves. Since the self is, at best, a difficult and multi-faceted concept, we will consider a variety of texts in our endeavor to understand an author's choices of literary techniques in his or her narration of the remembered, created self. We will read both book-length memoirs such as Kincaid's *My Brother* or Tobias Wolff's *This Boy's Life* as well as reflective essays, plays (Yamauchi's *The Soul Shall Dance*), poems, and visual renderings (e.g. *Maus*). Together we will investigate writers' methods of self-exploration and presentation, and through reading and the frequent writing of essays we will explore how and why people write about themselves, always asking, "How does writing shape lived experience?"

### **1147 The Mystery in the Story**

#### **Course Leader: Fall & Spring, Stuart Davis**

What makes a story, and what makes it a mystery story? In this course, we'll study and write about the nature of narratives, taking the classic mystery tale written by such writers as Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, and Dashiell Hammett as typical of intricately plotted stories of suspense and disclosure that have been written and filmed in many genres: Greek tragedy, horror tales by Poe and Shirley Jackson, psychological thrillers by Ruth Rendell and Patricia Highsmith, neo-noir films such as *The Usual Suspects* and *Memento*, and postmodern mystery parodies such as those of Paul Auster and Jorge Luis Borges. We'll look at the way they hang together, the desire and fear that drive them, and the secrets they tell—or try to keep hidden.

### **1170 Linked Stories**

#### **Course Leader: Fall and Spring, Laura Brown**

We will investigate a number of short fiction collections that concern a defining incident or trace the development of a character (or characters) over a period of time and/or geographical space. When these stories are read together as a collection, they can define a world. This course, then, explores some of the finest achievements of modern short fiction that share a common setting, characters, or an overarching plot. Texts may include works by the following authors: Sherwood Anderson, Raymond Carver, Edwidge Danticat, Junot Diaz, Louise Erdrich, Denis Johnson, James Joyce, Alice Munro, Gloria Naylor, Tim O'Brien, and Flannery O'Connor.

### **1190 Great Books? Exploring the Literary Tradition**

#### **Course Leader: Fall & Spring, Wendy Jones**

What do *Beowulf* and Virginia Woolf have in common? In this course we will examine and question some of the major works of English literature across various genres and periods. Authors may include Chaucer, Shakespeare, Swift, Austen, Woolf, or Joyce. Touching upon such themes as sex and satire, romance and reason, and travel and colonialism, we will ask what makes these works "great" literature, why we continue to read them, and how they have generated traditions of readership over the ages. Writing assignments will focus on introducing and developing skills in close reading and literary interpretation.