

Spring 2018 Graduate Course Offerings

ENGL 604: Topics in Digital Research (Introduction to Digital Humanities)

TR 11:10am-12:25pm with Dr. Earhart

This course will introduce graduate students to the digital humanities. A broad area of scholarly research, this course will focus on data analysis, digital textual studies, and cultural digital humanities, with a particular focus on race and gender. This course asks students to grapple with these crucial issues by tracing the historical development, theoretical roots, and emergent trends of digital scholarship within literary studies. Reading broadly through a range of historical and contemporary digital literary texts, we will develop a working definition of the field and reach an understanding of current scholarly areas of investigation. Students will examine several case studies and will complete a hands on project that emphasizes both applied and theoretical approaches to digital humanities. In addition, the course will require students to write a traditional research paper.

ENGL 608: Readings in Medieval Literature

T 6:00pm-9:00pm with Dr. Wollock

Literature, pre-1800

Wide reading in English literature of the Medieval period; introduction of major figures, genres, and issues in the period; introduction to current critical conversations in Medieval literary studies.

This spring English 608 (Readings in Medieval Literature) explores selected Middle English literature from the twelfth to the end of the fifteenth centuries. With the emergence of a new form of the English language, the seminar will consider the transformation of literary forms across this key period that witnessed the birth of the English romance in verse and prose, as well as the ballad, autobiography, and drama. Discussion will include Chaucer and his contemporaries, as well as the literary landscape surrounding Sir Thomas Malory, Caxton, and the earliest English printers in the fifteenth century, not to mention the active roles of women as authors, readers, performers, and patrons. We will also consider the media (oral transmission, (live performance), manuscript, and print) through which this material reaches its audiences, as well as its social and historical contexts.

ENGL 623: Topics in Creative Writing (Creative Nonfiction)

W 12:40pm-3:40pm with Dr. Stabile

Creative nonfiction, alternately called literary nonfiction, literary journalism, or simply the fourth genre, is a developing field for reflection, inquiry, and experimentation. A generic hybrid, the essay (from the French *essai* for “trial” or “attempt”) is its most vibrant and flexible nonfiction experiment. Its forms are variable, including the personal, nature, travel, reportage, lyric, braided, and hermit-crab essay. And its content is limitless. Current debates fixate on the lived, experiential, and remembered truth, but the essay, above all, crafts that truth through literary conventions of description, point of view, mood, dialogue, scene, and prosody. Unlike the

academic essay that proves an argument, moreover, a literary essay translates the situation, as writer Vivian Gornick insists, into the story. More than narration, an essay explores what the story means.

Students will learn to read like a writer by examining the architectures of essays: how personal story is transformed into art that engages both self and world. Through close reading, class discussion, Ted Talks, and presentations, they will engage the ethical questions regarding “truth” and “fact” as well as gain awareness of nonfiction as craft rather than navel gazing or confession. They will also practice (and create new) architectures through writing flash and longer form essays. They will keep a writer’s journal, provide constructive feedback of developing work through peer review, present a selection of their nonfiction work at a public reading, and develop a publishable essay for submission to a literary journal or magazine at the semester’s end.

ENGL 634: Readings in 19th Century British Literature

W 6:00pm-9:00pm with Dr. O'Farrell

Literature, post-1800

As a readings course in nineteenth-century British literature, this class will offer students the opportunity to read widely in such literature and to become acquainted with major issues in and important critical conversations about the period. Ranging across years and genres, the readings will be held loosely together by their relation to the nineteenth-century interest in management (of workers, of households, of communities, of nations, of social forms, of feelings, of characters, of bodies). Our class discussions will unite attention to literary and aesthetic concerns with attention to the social issues and intellectual questions with which nineteenth-century British literature so often engaged. We will also be interested in nineteenth-century visual culture.

ENGL 653: Topics in 20th and 21st Century Literature (Transatlantic Modernist Poetry)

TR 3:55pm-5:10pm with Dr. Ross

Concepts, themes; Literature, post-1800

New approaches in modernist studies that emphasize transnational affiliations and movements are especially illuminating for investigating transatlantic modernist poetry. We will buttress our wide reading of modernist poetry with contemporary scholarship on transnational modernism, such as excerpts from Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large*, Jessica Berman's *Modernist Commitments*, Bridget Chalk's *Modernism and Mobility*, Laura Winkiel and Laura Doyle's *Geomodernisms*, Susan Stanford Friedman's *Planetary Modernisms*, Peter Kalliney's *Modernism in a Global Context*, Paul Jay's *Global Matters*, Simon Gikandi's *Modernism in Limbo*, Adam McKible and Suzanne Churchill's *Little Magazines & Modernism*, Mark Morrisson's *The Public Face of Modernism*, Anita Patterson's *Race, American Literature and Transnational Modernisms*, and Eric White's *Transatlantic Avant-Gardes*, as well as essays by Rebecca Walkowitz, Douglas Mao, and Rita Felski. Canonical figures, such as W. B. Yeats, T.

S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, H.D., Marianne Moore, Amy Lowell, Harriet Monroe, Rabindranath Tagore, and Charlotte Mew will be re-contextualized as transnational poets. We will effect this re-contextualization not only by investigating their global migrations and international influences but also by researching the publication histories (e.g., in the Georgian, Imagist, and Wheels anthologies, and in established journals, such as Poetry and The Dial, or "little magazine" journals) that illuminate the transnational nature of poetry's publication, circulation, and reception in the early 20th century.

Poetic readings will be based on The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry, Volume 1: Modern Poetry, 3rd Edition, so that the class also serves as a broad survey of modernist poetry. The Modern Journals Project (online) will also be used regularly in class. Students will give a 15-20 minute presentation that interprets a poet of their choice from the syllabus as a transnational figure; these should summarize relevant transnational contexts from the figure's biography and literary output (in terms of theme and, where possible, publication and reception history), as well as the current scholarly consensus about these transnational issues. Students will also participate in a mini-conference by writing a 250-word abstract; 1,000 word panel proposal (collaborative); and 15-minute presentation. This presentation should then be used as the basis of a 7,000-9,000 word final research paper.

ENGL 667: Topics in History and Theory of Rhetoric (Infrastructure Tales)

R 12:45pm-3:45pm with Dr. Pilsch

Theory

As rhetorical theory turns to the nonhuman (works by Kenney, Rickert, and Cooper), recent attention has been paid to the role infrastructure---the human-built systems that sustain and structure modern life---plays in facilitating, sustaining, and even shaping rhetoric. Specifically, the built environment provides or forecloses the spaces, means, and forms by which persuasive speech circulates in both public and private. Could we do rhetoric in the 21st century without the Internet or telephone cables or the power grid? Of course not, but these infrastructure means of persuasion have remained invisible to thought. This seminar proposes to unpack the hidden grounding of rhetoric in infrastructure by staging a conversation between recent work on rhetoric and the growing field of "infrastructure studies."

Specifically, our seminar readings will focus on works that use narrative and tropes of storytelling as tools for mapping rhetorical engagement across and with infrastructure. Seminar members can expect to participate in the emergence of a new mode of rhetorical theory that has started appearing in recent conferences and journal articles. Readings may include works by Nicole Starosielski (on oceanic telecommunication cables), Bruno Latour (on trains), Matthew Kirschenbaum (on word processing), Jonathan Sterne (on MP3s), John Law (on airplanes), Janet Abbate (on Internet architecture), and Bernard Seigert (on doors).

ENGL 669: Topics in African American and Africana Literature and Culture

R 6:00pm-9:00pm with Dr. Collins

Concepts, themes; Literature, post-1800

Peoples are created and destroyed by the history that they write or that is written about them. Peoples of the African diaspora were for centuries the victims of what might be called enslaving historiographies. In the United States, which will be the primary focus of this class, the persistence of these historiographies is one of the reasons why it has been difficult for African Americans to “get over” slavery, as a U.S. lawmaker once suggested they do. Eager to get past enslaving historiographies, African American and Africana thinkers and writers have, even before emancipation (or, in the 20th century Africana world, decolonization) and increasingly afterwards, struggled to create counter-historiographies—slave narratives, anticolonial works, protest fiction, activist histories, “negritude” masterworks.

However, in the United States, the overt protest tradition has been challenged and modified by authors such as Ralph Ellison and Robert Hayden, who consciously sought to win a place for themselves in the “mainstream” canon of American literature without ceasing to celebrate African American culture and sensibility. They in turn were challenged by authors of the Black Arts movement. Outside the United States, authors like Derek Walcott overtly sought to shoulder the whole Western tradition while incorporating elements of African thought and culture into their writings. At the same time, other authors worked in a more Afrocentric vein, writing, in the case of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, in an African language rather than a more widely spoken European one.

In this class, we will explore some of the interrelationships between key texts by American writers and thinkers, writers and thinkers from elsewhere in the diaspora,, and “mainstream”—i.e. white— American literature and culture. We will seek to answer questions about categorization, influence, cultural impact, and afrocentricity.

ENGL 672: Topics in American Literature and Culture to 1900 (American Authors and the Civil War)

M 12:40pm-3:40pm with Dr. Reynolds

Concepts, themes; Literature, post-1800

This course treats one of the most violent and problematic events that major American authors ever attempted to understand and illuminate in their work. The course will focus on writings of theirs that dealt with the Civil War in direct and indirect ways. The figure of John Brown and the issue of slavery will garner much of the critical attention of the material to be read and discussed. Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Douglass, Whitman, Dickinson, and Louisa May Alcott will receive the most attention, but political documents and popular works appearing in contemporary periodicals will also be examined as part of an overall historicist approach to the topic. The goal of the course will not be to rehearse the various military events that occurred, but rather, the struggles of these literary artists to conceptualize, understand, and address in their writings the pain, suffering, and death that preceded and attended the War.

ENGL/WGST 680: Theories of Gender

F 12:40pm-3:40pm with Dr. Eide

In this remarkable moment of proliferating knowledge about gender, in which there are no settled orthodoxies, expansive gender and sexuality scholarship circulates around a few core principles and debates: social construction, performativity, bodily materiality, intersectional identity, and transnational engagement. This course will review scholarship from the last dozen years or so, while tracing the roots of contemporary writing in the gender theory tradition.

Students will collaborate to produce an eBook anthology of contemporary gender theory.

Assignments are designed to build toward the collection. Student contributions will include headnotes, explanatory notes, a glossary of crucial terms, and discussion material.

ENGL 681: Placement Seminar

R 4:00pm-5:00pm with Dr. Perry

Presentations by faculty, students and visiting scholars based on current research. May be repeated for credit.

ENGL 695: Publication and Professionalization

MW 4:10pm-5:25pm with Dr. Estill

This course, targeted for advanced doctoral students, explores how to publish scholarly writing with a focus on journal articles, though we will also discuss conference presentations, dissertations, and monographs. The class will be primarily discussion and workshops; students should expect lots of writing and editing. And, of course, since the key to being a good writer starts with reading, we will be reading too! As Stephen King said about writing: “you can, you should, and if you’re brave enough to start, you will.”

Students will learn how to choose a publication venue, how to navigate the publication process, and how to create helpful writing practices. We will strive for clarity and grace in our writing.