

ENGL 602: First Year Seminar

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

Required for PhD Students

This course is designed:

- To introduce new PhD students to graduate study in English both locally at Texas A&M and in the profession more generally;
- To develop some familiarity with the key questions about reading, writing, and teaching that currently engage the discipline of English Studies;
- To facilitate improvement in students' writing by intensive discussion of what makes good academic writing; and
- To foster a sense of the intellectual community within the class and more broadly within the English Department and the university.

In addition to active, intelligent, engaged, and thoughtful participation, requirements for the class will include attendance at scholarly events on campus, an interview with (and report on) a TAMU PhD program alum, an annotated "Ideas for Further Study" log based on class readings and activities, and a variety of additional short writing projects (e.g. a response to a critical article, a conference abstract, a professional CV).

ENGL/LING 610: Topics in the History of the English Language (Old English)

T 12:45pm-3:45pm with Dr. Mize

Literature pre-1800; or, Language Requirement

Old English: Beginning study of the Old English language through instruction in phonology, morphology, and syntax and the reading of various texts in verse and prose. The objective of the course is to bring students up to an intermediate level of reading ability in the English language as it existed prior to the Norman Conquest. The grade is based on student success in learning the language as evidenced mainly by translation exercises.

ENGL 645: Topics in Gender, Literature, and Culture (Race, Citizenship, and Globalization in Cultures of Fashion and Beauty)

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

Concepts, themes; Literature post-1800

This graduate course explores cultures of beauty and fashion as everyday practices, commodities, industries, sites of political activism, and regimes of governmentality. Feminist scholarship on beauty and fashion has recently re-emerged onto the academic scene after a brief hiatus following western feminist critiques of beauty in the 1990s, which castigated it as morally and ethically suspect, and/or as evidence of an oppressive patriarchal culture industry. More recently, feminist scholarship has begun to re-think its own historically punitive stance toward beauty by recasting beauty as a site of feminist agency.

This course begins with a question that arises from this brief genealogy: Is there a way to examine beauty/fashion that complicates the casting of beauty as either punitive (beauty as undemocratic and elitist) or recuperative (beauty as salutary and democratizing)? What might new feminist scholarship in the emerging field of critical fashion and beauty studies have to say about the way that fashion and beauty express and address concerns around race, citizenship, and globalization?

We will explore the following topics in literature and cultural production in order to posit some possible answers to these questions: beauty as a form of aesthetic labor and capital; the relationship between beauty and histories of colonialism and nationalism; the relationship between beauty and social justice, democracy, and/or global feminist work; beauty's relationship to modernity in postcolonial and neoliberal contexts; the possibilities for community and the production of social divisions that might emerge through acts of self-beautification, self-styling, pageantry, and fashionability.

We will begin by reading some fairly well known philosophical and feminist treatises on beauty and fashion, while inquiring into how silences around and the recognition of racial difference factor into

these definitions. We will then consider how beauty and fashion constitute everyday practices of the self, and what such practices have to say about modern subject formation in colonial, postcolonial, queer, and neoliberal contexts. The course concludes with a consideration of beauty and fashion as sites of material and affective labor as a way of complicating both punitive and recuperative treatments of beauty.

ENGL 653: Topics in 20th and 21st Century Literature (Freud and British Modernism)

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

Concepts, themes; Literature post-1800

The publication of the first English translation of Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1913 set off a keen interest in psychoanalysis the British avant-garde. Freud's accounts of dreams and jokes, of childhood sexuality and adult repression, of dysfunctional bourgeois families and traumatized World War I veterans divided modernists into Freudians and anti-Freudians. Salons and lectures introduced British writers to Freud's basic concepts, resulting in social experiments that transformed the talking cure into drawing-room entertainment and artistic experiments that revealed the unconscious and created new literary styles and writing methods. Students will read widely from *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *Lectures on Sexuality*, *Totem and Taboo*, and key essays and lectures by Freud, using early translations made available to the English-speaking world in the early twentieth century. Rather than accept accounts of Freudianism from literary theorists or literary theory textbooks, which privilege psychoanalytic developments of the 1960s-1980s, we will investigate Freud within the context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Interpretations of these readings will emphasize Freud as a writer of *narratives* and an interpreter of literature.

We will also read from modernist authors who engaged with Freud, particularly those who directly contributed to the publication of Freud's texts, the popularization of his ideas, or the therapeutic cultures and methodologies of psychoanalysis. Readings may include T. S. Eliot (*The Waste Land*),

Virginia Woolf (*To the Lighthouse*, "A Sketch of the Past," "An Unwritten Novel"), Katherine Mansfield (*In a German Pension*, "Bliss," "Mr. and Mrs. Dove"), May Sinclair (*Mary Olivier*, various lectures on psychoanalysis), James Joyce (*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, "A Painful Case"), D. H. Lawrence (*Women in Love*), Rebecca West (*The Return of the Soldier*), Somerset Maugham (*Of Human Bondage*), and Mary Butts (*Armed with Madness*). What will emerge is a more nuanced understanding of Freud as a modernist writer and modernist writers as Freudians.

ENGL 667: Topics in the History and Theory of Rhetoric (Rhetoric Inside Out)

T 6:00pm-9:00pm with Dr. J. DiCaglio

Theory

This course will examine the foundational questions of rhetoric through a comparative study of Greek and Indian texts. This cross-cultural encounter will bring into relief a somewhat non-traditional view of the basic concerns present in the foundational Greek texts defining and delineating rhetoric as a topic to be studied. Both the Upanishads and Plato demand that you, in some way, seek to "know thyself" and both tie this form of knowing into the possible persuasive capabilities of thought and language. This focus on self-inquiry as the foundation for Plato's conception of rhetoric differs from our usual view of rhetoric as the persuasion of others. We will thus experiment with what it would mean to study rhetoric "inside-out" in the sense of how the fundamental questions of rhetoric are not just the practice of persuading others but a means of reflectively persuading oneself and considering how oneself is already persuaded.

Our readings and discussions will thus be focused on outlining this "inside-out" perspective (a tradition of Platonic and/or contemplative rhetoric), how it relates to the fundamental questions about language, and how it contrasts with our usual way of thinking of rhetoric as the persuasion of others (a more Aristotelian or handbook tradition of rhetoric). In doing so, we will consider how this view of rhetoric reworks perennial concerns about the persuasive capacity of language, the purpose of rhetorical study, and the origin and ends of persuasion and literature.

Students interested in the relationship between philosophy, contemplative (aka mystical) traditions, and the many literary figures who engaged closely with these traditions will also find this course of interest, particularly since much of the course will deal closely with the relationship between poetics, rhetoric, interpretation, and the purpose of critical inquiry into these matters. Students interested in the methodological challenges of comparative study (including comparative rhetoric, religion, or literature) will also find this course useful.

Greek and Roman texts may include works by Sophists (Gorgias, Protagoras), Pre-socratic philosophers (Heraclitus, Parmenides), Plato (Phaedrus, Gorgias, Theaetetus, Sophist), Aristotle, Longinus, and Augustine. Indian texts may include selections from the Upanishads, works by Adi Sankara, the Diamond and Heart Sutras, Nagarjuna, the Bhagavad Gita, the Ribhu Gita, Dandin's Kavyadarsa, Aurobindo Ghose's commentary on the Upanishads and the Vedic tradition, and Franklin Merrell-Wolff's commentary on Sankara. We will also have some space to discuss the methodological difficulties of comparative rhetoric and the scholarly challenge presented by mysticism/contemplative studies.

ENGL 658: Topics in Film History (Film Noir)

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

Concepts, themes

This course will investigate the phenomenon of the film noir as it appears in American cinema from the 1940s to the present. The emphasis will fall upon film noir production from the early 1940s through the early 1960s, although we will examine a number of so-called "color noir" films as samples of more recent film noir production. We will consider film noir's cinematic and literary antecedents (e. g., the gangster film, the hard-boiled detective novel, and women's fiction), its connections to a variety of foreign cinemas (particularly those of France, Germany, and England), its associations with documentary, and its interest in psychoanalysis as a mode of investigation and as a framework for narration. We will take up the issue of film noir's apparent misogyny, both in

narrative terms and in its deployment of particular male and female performance styles through a closer examination of the work of Humphrey Bogart and Rita Hayworth. We will pursue a variety of cultural pressures on film noir production, including changes in the studio system, the influence of a climate of political and social suspicion generated by Congressional investigations of Hollywood, and the effect of the Cold War generally. We'll conclude by considering recent film noir production in order to consider film noir's adjacency to other modes of filmmaking, including the screwball comedy, the western, and the science fiction film.

We will be screening possibly as many as 18-20 films, including many of these:

Double Indemnity (Wilder, 1944, 106m)

Out of the Past (Tourneur, 1947, 97m)

The Maltese Falcon (Huston, 1941, 101m)

Border Incident (Mann, 1949, 94m)

T-Men (Mann, 1947, 92m)

Scarlet Street (Lang, 1945, 102m)

La Chienne (Renoir, 1931, 95m)

Crossfire (Dmytryk, 1947, 86m)

Murder My Sweet (Dmytryk, 1944, 95m)

Laura (Preminger, 1944, 88m)

Gun Crazy (Lewis, 1950, 87m)

Detour (Ulmer, 1945, 68m)

Gilda (C. Vidor, 1946, 110m)

The Lady from Shanghai (Welles, 1947, 87m)

In a Lonely Place (Ray, 1950, 94m)

The Third Man (Reed, 1949, 93m)

Kiss Me Deadly (Aldrich, 1955, 106m)

Chinatown (Polanski, 1974, 131m)

Taxi Driver (Scorsese, 1976, 113m)

The Deep End (McGehee, 2001, 100m)

Mildred Pierce (Curtiz, 1945, 111m)

The Man Who Wasn't There (Coen and Coen, 2001, 116m)

ENGL 666: Topics in Textual Studies and Book History (William Caxton)

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

Concepts, themes

This seminar is centered on the life and times of William Caxton (c. 1422-92), England's first printer. Caxton has been long appreciated for his role in bringing the print revolution of the fifteenth century. He is still often underrated as an author, translator, and editor, a pioneer in building the English literary canon, the English publishing industry, a tradition of English literary criticism and stylistic analysis. In his prefaces, epilogues, and editorial insertions he speaks to his readers in his own voice. Caxton was notable for his participation in the international book trade, for his international contacts with courtly and civic patrons, his mercantile skill and diplomatic training. He first printed Chaucer, Malory, and Gower, and gave English readers access to a wide range of historical, literary, and religious works. Much research remains to be done on Caxton and his work in the midst of the English Wars of the Roses, in close contact with many key players. He provides a vantage point from which scholars can look forward to the London literary scene of the sixteenth century, and backwards to the achievements of the Middle Ages. This seminar will take a fresh look at him as an agent of change.

This course will be useful to students interested in book history, medieval and early modern literature, the history of criticism and publishing, the history of the English language, translation, and many other topics. It will fulfill the distribution requirement for a course on a topic before 1800.

There will be two oral reports and a 12-15 page term paper (with presentation in class.) Class participation in seminar discussions also counts towards the final grade.

ENGL 672: Topics in American Literature and Culture to 1900 (Terrorism, Terrorists, and Classic American Literature)

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

Concepts, themes; Literature post-1800

The course will feature literary responses to moments in antebellum American culture when civilian populations were intentionally terrorized for political purposes by individuals or groups seeking to impose their will or religion upon others. These moments will include the Salem witchcraft hysteria, the violence of Skinners and Cowboys during the American Revolution, the Haitian revolution, Nat Turner's slave uprising, Frederick Douglass's and Garrison's antislavery activities, the murders in "Bleeding Kansas," and John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry. Authors will include, in addition to those mentioned above, Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Fuller, Melville, Emerson, Thoreau, L.M. Alcott, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

Possible Texts:

Edgar Allan Poe: "Murders in the Rue Morgue," "Hop-Frog," "The Black Cat,." and others.

Nat Turner, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*.

William Lloyd Garrison, Selections from the *Liberator*

Frederick Douglass, selected addresses

Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Kinsman," "Young Goodman Brown," *Septimius Felton*

Margaret Fuller, from her *European Dispatches*

Harriett Beecher Stowe, *Dred*

Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Antislavery Writings*

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *A Ride through Kansas*

John Brown, New England lecture, and letters from prison

Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience," "Slavery in Massachusetts," and "A Plea for Captain John Brown"

ENGL 697: Pedagogy

W 12:40pm-3:40pm with Dr. S. DiCaglio

Required for new GATs

English 697 provides an introduction to the practical and theoretical aspects that surround teaching at the college level, particularly within the writing classroom. The course has three major goals:

- To provide a practical support mechanism for new or future instructors of composition and writing at A&M. A portion of each class will be spent directly reflecting on students' ongoing teaching experience by sharing lesson plans and discussing questions that arise from within classrooms.
- To develop an understanding of the theoretical background that surrounds the teaching of writing by examining important historical and contemporary work in composition studies and related pedagogical fields.
- To work to put these two sometimes disparate elements together. How can pedagogical theory help inform our teaching on the ground? How can our teaching on the ground help inform your interactions with pedagogical theory? How can this study remain ongoing even as you move on to teaching different courses and sub-disciplines? And how does any of this relate to your role as a graduate student?

By the end of this course, students will have developed confidence as instructors, an understanding of how to build pedagogical communities, a working knowledge of the field of composition studies, and a toolkit to help develop their future pedagogy. And hopefully we'll have had some fun along the way.