

## English Graduate Courses Spring 2016

### **513 / The Writing of Poetry**

**Julia Kasdorf**

**M 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 104 Oak Building**

Esteemed American essayist Philip Lopate wrote books of poetry first, ditto Diane Ackerman. A collection of James Baldwin's poems just appeared last year. Adrienne Rich and W. H. Auden are remembered for important essays in addition to their important poems. Need more proof that essayists write poems, or the other way around? But why does it seem that the evidence and skills developed in one genre so easily serve the other? And would you like to try your hand at both? Students in this class can expect to read both poetry and essays and to write some of each, choosing to focus on a primary genre for their own concentration. Each week we will discuss assigned readings and critique drafts of new writing by all students. The final project is a portfolio of revised poetry or essays.

### **512 / The Writing of Fiction**

**Elizabeth Kadetsky**

**T 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 104 Oak Building**

In this spring's fiction workshop, the focus will be students' work. Using a writers' workshop format, the group will read, edit, comment upon in writing and discuss the works of their classmates in all forms of fiction, from narrative to modular to non-linear, from character driven to language driven to story driven. An emphasis will be put on the overall structuring of a work of fiction, be it story length, novella length, or novel length. What gives a piece of writing a pleasing and aesthetic shape? Course discussions will incorporate other art forms—for instance music and visual art—to help get to the heart of a larger discussion of aesthetics. Narrative structure will also come into play—how can a writer manipulate the classic Freytag pyramid to retain a sense of rise, fall, and release, but while perhaps breaking from plot-driven formulas? What is the role of character change and development in creating other versions of the pyramid? A readings component of the class will incorporate writing by visitors to our reading series: Tom Williams, Charlotte Holmes, Aryn Kyle. Students will produce approximately 35 pages of writing and present on a course reading and an art form.

### **540 / Studies in Elizabethan Prose and Poe**

**Patrick Cheney**

**W 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 215 Boucke Building**

This seminar seeks to create a dialogue about the historical importance of Renaissance literary careers within English literature, especially in response to European literature—classical, medieval, continental—from Virgil and Ovid to Petrarch and Chaucer. The seminar opens this dialogue by foregrounding three critical dynamics making up a literary career, each of which has been the subject of a recent volume in Routledge's *New Critical Idiom* series: authorship (Andrew Bennett); genre (John Frow); and intertextuality (Graham Allen). We will concentrate on the way that late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century poets and playwrights use literary forms imitatively to script their careers in print, manuscript, and performance. We will situate this critical model within two sets of commentary: English Renaissance literary criticism (e.g., from Philip Sidney and George Puttenham to Thomas Hobbes and John Milton); and recent criticism on the English Renaissance (such as Stephen Greenblatt, Richard Helgerson, Heather Dubrow, and Lukas Erne). Concentrating on both poems and plays, we will pay attention to the institutions underwriting literary careers, the print house and the theater (to an extent, the coterie), and feature such poets as Isabella Whitney, Spenser, Sidney, Mary Sidney Herbert, and Donne and such poet-playwrights as Marlowe,

Shakespeare, Jonson, and Lady Mary Wroth. We will also read major theoretical work on authorship (from Eliot, Barthes, and Foucault forward), genre (such as Burke, Frye, Todorov, and Jameson), intertextuality (Kristeva, Bloom, Culler, Genette, and others), and literary careers themselves (starting with the two pioneers, Lawrence Lipking and Helgerson). Weekly mini-arguments; one 30-minute teaching presentation; and a research project, consisting of abstract and bibliography, conference paper, and critical essay.

## **542 / Middle English Literature**

**Carrie Eckhardt**

**W 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 104 Oak Building**

This seminar concentrates on two great secular narratives of the European Middle Ages — the Arthurian legends and the Trojan War tales. These narratives complemented and contested each other in generating constructions of the past that were repurposed again and again for new contexts, whether as nostalgic precedents with implied critiques of the present, as ethical models for proper and improper behavior, or as political and nation-building propaganda. We will study both of these narratives and also situate them in relation to a third great body of traditional narrative, that of the Bible, as expressed in late medieval drama.

After a glance at Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (12th century), our course will include the two most important English Troy versions, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and Lydgate's *Troy Book*, along with major Arthurian works: *Gawain and the Greek Knight*, the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the Stanzaic *Morte Arthur*, selections from Brut chronicles and from Malory. Excerpts from continental works, such as Guido delle Colonne's *History of the Destruction of Troy*, will provide essential comparative contexts. Finally, we will read examples of late medieval drama, at the juncture of the medieval and the early modern, to consider how these performed Christian narratives relate to the Trojan and Arthurian secular traditions.

All texts will be available in modernized versions or, if in Middle English, in annotated versions, and we will also consider the manuscript archives, which offer fascinating opportunities for research and discoveries. There will be workshop opportunities for practice in palaeography, the reading of medieval handwriting. *Prior experience with manuscripts or with Middle English is not necessary.* Course expectations include class participation, a short proposal in the format of a conference abstract, a 15-20 presentation in the format of a conference paper, and a final project that can be either a journal article or a teaching portfolio.

## **543 / Studies in Theory: Seventeenth-Century Women and the Literary Canons that Include, Exclude, and Define Them**

**Marcy North**

**F 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 104 Oak Building**

This seminar will allow students to study several of the women authors that are now regularly included in the canon of early modern literature, Aemilia Lanyer, Elizabeth Cary, Mary Wroth, Margaret Cavendish, Katherine Philips, and others. The course will ask, "Why these women and not others?" It will consider skeptically and methodologically the criteria for canon admission—early discovery, a substantial print oeuvre, proof of autonomous female authorship, an ability to represent the condition of women through characters or personal experience, and a distinctly female voice. What happens to the canon of women's literature if we apply different admissions standards, if we include manuscript sources, anonymous works, collaborations such as letters dictated by women and memoirs mediated by husbands, and women writing in the style of male authors? Can we expand the canon in these directions without losing the designation "woman writer?" Interestingly, editors of women's literature have been very liberal on another front; they have long argued for the inclusion of non-literary genres in the canon of women's literature such as letters, diaries, prayers, and mother's advice manuals. In the study of male authors of the same period, this type of material is less often included in standard teaching anthologies and editions, though it is available to advanced scholars. Students in this course will have the chance to consider how the generic breadth of the canon of early women's literature shapes

our picture of women and their literature. Archival sources will give us a third way to look at canon formation. The body of women's literature has been changing almost yearly because of new archival discoveries and recoveries. Many of these newly found works challenge previous canon formation criteria and redefine the social restrictions that were long assumed to hold creative women back, but which ones will find their way into the Norton Anthology or other general early literature anthologies? Students in this course will engage in debates about the early modern women's canon and the definition of "woman author," explore new archival and digital resources available for the study of early women authors, and pursue an independent research project that takes into account both new and old discoveries. Assignments will include an anthology review, small archival assignments, leading discussion of an assigned article, and a final project. The focus of the course will be the 17th century, though students are invited to propose projects in periods adjacent to the 17th century, as long as they have the motivation and necessary expertise.

### **562 / Studies in the Literature of Victorian England**

**Lisa Sternlieb**

**F 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 215 Boucke Building**

We will cover as many highlights of the Victorian period as time permits. Authors may include: Charlotte and Emily Bronte, Robert & Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Wilkie Collins, Charles Darwin, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, John Stuart Mill, Christina Rossetti, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, W.M. Thackeray, Anthony Trollope. The emphasis of the class will be on learning to teach Victorian literature.

### **564 / Studies in 19th Century American Literature: US Prose**

**Hester Blum**

**R 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 215 Boucke Building**

**Proseminar in C19 US Prose:** This is a reading-intensive course on American fictional and nonfictional prose writing in the nineteenth century. We will read a variety of prose forms (novels, sketches, tales, essays, personal narratives, polemics, confessions, declarations, manifestos, fantasias, memoirs, reveries, proposals, short stories, travel narratives, sermons, histories, letters) by a range of authors (including but not limited to Charles Brockden Brown, Catharine Maria Sedgwick, William Apess, Lydia Maria Child, Edgar Allan Poe, George Lippard, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Frederick Douglass, Hannah Bond [Hannah Crafts], Herman Melville, Harriet Jacobs, William Wells Brown, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Elizabeth Stoddard, Martin Delaney, Fanny Fern, Harriet Beecher Stowe, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Henry Adams, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mark Twain, Henry James, José Martí, George Washington Cable, Charles Chesnut). The course reading will provide a broad overview both of C19 US literary history and current scholarly conversations in the field. While the reading demands will be high, the writing expectations will be modest; students will produce a 10-15 textual and critical history of a keyword drawn from the course reading, as well as several short presentations or responses.

### **565 / Period Studies in African-American Literature: Black Dawning: African Americans Writing before 1900**

**Aldon Nielsen**

**W 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 108 Oak Building**

Scholars of the slave narratives have called that genre the Rosetta Stone for an understanding of subsequent African American narrative form, and yet this would seem to beg such questions as how we understand other genres, including poetry and political tracts. For that matter, what is the Rosetta Stone that can serve as a hermeneutic for understanding the slave narratives themselves? And to what extent is African American writing in some ways a Rosetta Stone for comprehending American Literature cast more generally? The controversies surrounding Kenneth Warren's recent book, *What Was African American Literature*, have centered on his claim that African American literature per se ceased to exist following the Civil Rights era, but his book also argues that African American

literature did not yet exist prior to the rise of the antebellum abolitionist movement. This course will examine the coming into being of African American literature and its subsequent evolution. While it is true that early slave merchants would advertise the specific nations from which Africans had been taken, and would even lie about the people's origins for commercial gain, it is clear from the earliest extant writings, such as Jupiter Hammon's acknowledgment of Phillis Wheatley or Wheatley's own writings addressed to her fellow Africans in America, that New World Africans had come to think of themselves as a people as early as the seventeenth century, even as white Americans increasingly defined themselves in opposition to a black other. We will read texts from the colonial era, the period of the early Republic, the antebellum period, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the time that Blyden Jackson termed "the nadir" of post-War black life in the United States. Our readings will be in all genres of the literature.

### **574 / Studies in 20Th-Century American Literature: Expatriate American Modernists**

**Sandy Spanier**

**W 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 104 Oak Building**

This course will focus on American expatriate writers between the World Wars. Many were born around the turn of the century and came of age during the Great War, which Malcolm Cowley described as "a watershed" that gave young writers "the feeling of having lived in two eras, almost on two different planets." Gertrude Stein called them a "lost generation"--a label that most of its members contested. It was a time that engendered searching for values (many of the old ones having been shattered), acts of rebellion against social and literary complacency and conventions, and movements like the "Revolution of the Word" (dedicated, in Kay Boyle's words, to creating a "lively, wholly American, grandly experimental and furiously disrespectful school of writing"). We will revisit Paris in the Twenties, examining the fiction of such famous modernists as Hemingway, Dos Passos, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, along with their lesser known contemporaries, including Boyle, Robert McAlmon, Zelda Fitzgerald, Ernest Walsh, and others publishing in the avant-garde "little magazines." We will look at other sites of expatriation between the World Wars as well (Katherine Anne Porter went to Mexico and Germany, Kay Boyle from Paris to Austria to England to Vichy France) and will consider more broadly the issues of expatriation and American identity. We will examine various writers' experiments in genre and form, including memoirs, as well as what happens when avant-garde sensibilities of the Twenties meet the rise of Fascism and other social realities of the Thirties. And we will interrogate some of the long-held definitions and assumptions about modernism that have excluded the work of some writers from serious critical consideration over the decades by dismissing it as "sentimental," "popular," or "political."

### **577 / Contemporary Fiction: Graphic Medicine**

**Susan Squier**

**T 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 108 Oak Building**

The focus of this seminar is *graphic medicine*: comics that address issues of illness, disability, and medicine from the perspectives of patients, health care workers, caregivers and/or family members. This is a field that has its own international conference, about which I will tell you more, as well as its own book series and a range of publication venues. In addition, from this focus you can go in a number of directions. You will learn to write about comics, which is one of the goals of the seminar, whether your focus as a scholar is literature, rhetoric, cultural studies, or science studies; whether you plan to write about comics in your dissertation, or are merely curious about the medium. You will also learn about the issues at stake in the field of literature-and-medicine, an area of study that has its own journals (*Literature and Medicine* and *Journal of the Medical Humanities*), its own conference (*American Society for Bioethics and Humanities*), and substantial representation at the MLA as well. And, because I will be editing a special "Graphic Medicine" issue of *Configurations*, the Journal of the Society of Literature, Science, and the Arts, during the semester of this seminar, you'll have an opportunity to put your comics knowledge to use as reviewers for that special issue, and learn something about science studies as you do so.

In the seminar, we will analyze comics as a medium: a very powerful form of multi-dimensional story telling in genres that are virtually limitless. We will read a range of the best work in graphic medicine, and we will also read several

studies that present synoptic theories about the medium of comics in general and about graphic medicine in particular.

Finally, because in my view the way to write about comics with authority is to have an appreciation of what it takes to create them, we'll devote one hour of each class to studio time in which we will learn about the construction of comics, on a practical and pedagogical level. While most of you are talented writers, I do not assume that any of you think of yourselves as artists. And that's not a problem. Knowledge of the nuts and bolts of comics creation will make you a better comics critic or theorist.

By the end of the seminar you will have:

- Learned the basic lexicon of comics.
- Learned the basics of storytelling, visual and verbal, in comics.
- Taken your own work of graphic medicine from a faint idea to a finished form.
- Given a report in which you analyze the composition of one comic of your choice.
- Written a seminar paper on one or several comics (no longer than 20 pages).
- Read some of the best comics out there.
- Have a sense of the comics you want to read next.

Requirements:

- \* Class presentation
- \* Five response papers
- \* Review of a work of graphic medicine or a work *about* graphic medicine
- \* Creation of a work of graphic medicine of your own [this is a pass/fail, process oriented assignment]
- \* Final conference length paper (in the past, people in the seminar have presented their work at the International Graphic Medicine conference).

### **583 / Studies in Critical Theory: Theories of Desire and the Social**

**Claire Colebrook**

**W 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. / 320 Sackett Building**

***COURSE CANCELLED***

### **584 / Studies in Rhetoric: Plato, Platonism and Rhetoric**

**John Jasso**

**R 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. / 215 Boucke Building**

In contemporary rhetorical studies Plato often plays the role of archenemy, and not without good reason – he has harsh words for sophistic rhetoric. However, in the intellectual history of the West, Platonists like St. Augustine, St. Bonaventure, and Richard Weaver have championed the art of rhetoric when threatened by antagonistic cultural forces. Accordingly, this seminar investigates the seemingly paradoxical notion of “Platonic Rhetoric” and its influence on Western thought. Taking seriously Plato’s suggestions in the *Phaedrus*, we will examine rhetoric as the art of moving souls by means of words. Thus, we will pay as much attention to Plato’s psychology as we do to his overt comments about the art of rhetoric. By tracing the influence and evolution of Plato’s psychology, cosmology, and general metaphysical outlook in concert with the impact of his rhetorical thought on later rhetoricians, we will consider how Platonic rhetoric helped to literally form the intellectual and spiritual landscape of the West. Special attention will be given to Plato’s detractors both ancient and modern.

### **586 / Article Writing Workshop**

**Nicholas Joukovsky**

**T 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. / 302 Pond Building**

The aim of this workshop is to help graduate students develop promising seminar papers into publishable articles that will be ready by the end of the semester for submission to reputable or even prestigious journals. To achieve this goal, you will need to do additional research as well as additional writing and extensive revision. The nature and scope of the revision will naturally vary from student to student and from paper to paper, but unless you have already done a good deal of revision, you should plan to produce at least three complete drafts and perhaps as many as six revisions of the introduction and conclusion. Since most of you will be working on papers in fields outside my areas of expertise, it will be essential for you to work not only with me but also with at least one expert in your chosen field, preferably with more than one. If the person who supervised your original work is not available this semester, try to find someone else who can help you. This can be a good opportunity to introduce yourself to faculty members whose seminars you have not been able to take.

Students should begin the workshop with at least one seminar paper of at least 15-20 pages that a faculty member has identified as potentially publishable. If you have several such papers that you would like to revise, you should focus on one of them first and work to prepare it for publication before turning your attention to the others. Too many graduate students have a drawer full of potentially publishable papers, none of which is quite fully revised and ready for submission. Getting the first one ready to go out is always the biggest challenge, and I want to see everyone get to that point this semester.

Each weekly meeting will include workshop sessions devoted to students' articles, which will be circulated to the group in advance. Everyone should expect to present his or her work at least three times, beginning with the entire article in the early weeks. Later workshops may focus on specific portions of the article, especially the introductory framing. Everyone should aim to submit a penultimate draft to me before Thanksgiving break. This will allow time for final polishing and actual submission by the end of the semester. If you finish revising your first article earlier, you will be able to present a second at one of the later workshop sessions. Lectures and Q&A sessions will cover all aspects of article publication, from initial conception to final appearance in print. Topics will include such matters as evaluating journals, selecting a target journal, framing and structuring an argument, bibliographical searching, choosing which editions to cite, using electronic databases, locating and accessing archival material, systems and styles of documentation, cover letters and editorial correspondence, readers' reports and requests for revision, copyediting and proofreading, copyright forms and offprints. The aim throughout will be to demystify the whole process of writing for publication and getting your work accepted. Students who have taken this course in previous years have had their articles accepted by *Philological Quarterly*, *Studies in Philology* (2), *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1800* (2), *American Literature*, *African–American Review*, *New England Quarterly*, *Critique* (2), *Journal of Modern Literature*, and other leading journals.

### **597A / Literature and Letters/Letters as Literature**

**Michael Anesko**

**T 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 215 Boucke Building**

***COURSE CANCELLED***

### **597B / Special Topics: Disability Theory and Literary Studies**

**Janet Lyon**

**W 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 108 Oak Building**

Introduces students to the major works of disability theory in the humanities—many of which take up philosophical and historical questions about embodiment, the rise of statistical norms, possessive individualism, and the place of the human in the *zoe*-sphere—and then works through a series of literary theories and texts in which disability surcharges or disrupts or fundamentally alters the unreflective assumptions of literary practice.

### **597C / Special Topics: The Biopolitics of Bodies**

**Leisha Jones**

**T 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. / 001B Verizon Building**

In order to make sense of the multiple regulatory regimes that produce these physical things we call our bodies, the course examines the biopolitical structures that aggregate and determine them. Beginning with Foucault's notion of biopower and Agamben's bare life, we will explore broad debates around health, healthcare, and disability, including

specific topics such as sexual and reproductive biotechnologies, organ harvesting, drug development, and the “global” genome.

### **597D / Special Topics: Ecopoetics**

**Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor**

**M 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 108 Oak Building**

According to Scott Knickerbocker, author of *Ecopoetics: The Language of Nature, the Nature of Language* (2012), this emerging field of study is described as: a) “the foregrounding of poetic artifice as a manifestation of our interrelation with the rest of nature”; b) the study of “organic formalism”; c) a “sensuous poesis,” “weaving word to world” (1). Knickerbocker’s book helped jumpstart the theorizing of this term, particularly because the book appeared just as the first conference on ecopoetics, sponsored in part by ASLE, took place at UC/Berkeley, in 2012.

Knickerbocker’s approach is closely tied to the tradition of American nature writing, but is not the only approach, and perhaps not the most interesting one. In this course we will explore current debates about this emerging field, which has its *academic* roots in studies of American and Western literatures, but which has quickly been opened out to diverse literary and/or philosophical perspectives. Because the parameters or characteristics of the field are far from determined, we have an opportunity to work through the strengths and weaknesses of approaches based on national and/or formal traditions (particularly Anglo-American), or on aesthetics (Western and non), or on new materialisms, or on other speculative theoretical grounds we might bring forward. We can address the fuzziness of distinctions between, for example, the terms *ecopoetics*, *ecophilosophy*, *ecocriticism*, *the ecological thought*, *literary ecology*, *environmental literature*, and what any of these might have to do with frameworks such as feminism, or postcolonialism, both of which play a role in the field’s emergence. We can explore several artists’ proposal that we think beyond our human standpoint; that we attempt an experiment in a speculative consciousness of nonhuman beings (Gander and Kinsella’s birds), or in nonhuman-based economies; that we find artistic forms that can represent such experiments. The class will offer a theoretically challenging as well as play-full intellectual space for us to consider a range of contemporary ecopoetical (so-called) texts. In short, the class seeks to entangle theoretical investigation with readings of exemplary works in poetry, prose, drama/ film, and visual art. Our goal will be to arrive together at a robust definition of “ecopoetics” that will extend, challenge, or at least clarify the more prominent lines of theoretical discussion: agency; temporalities (human, geologic); ecologies/economies/epistemologies of the human and nonhuman; “voice” and literary form; language, languages of place, and translation; aesthetics and “pla(e)sthetics” – a term I have coined as a contemporary rethinking of traditional aesthetics as a transitive aesthetic amenable to thinking about literary/artistic forms in ecopoetical contexts.

In order to focus our discussion, I will focus on texts that take up two particular ecological problematics, climate change, and plastic. Central texts will include Ruth Ozeki’s *A Tale for the Time Being*, and the poetry collection *Redstart: An Ecological Poetics*, by Forrest Gander and John Kinsella (2012). Possibilities for further readings in poetry are extensive and growing, but would range from ‘nature poetry’ to today’s more complex poetic positionings to be found in recent anthologies (*The Ecopoetry Anthology* [2013]; *Entanglements: New Ecopoetry* [2012]; *The Ground Aslant* [2011]). In the novel, possibilities range from JG Ballard (*The Drought*), to Amitav Ghosh (*The Hungry Tide*) to Ursula LeGuin’s *Always Coming Home* to Alexis Wright’s explorations of Australian aboriginal ecologies against contemporary consumer economies. Theoretical readings are likely to include excerpts from Timothy Morton; Stacy Alaimo; Karen Barad; Jane Bennett; Lorraine Code; Donna Haraway; Ursula Heise; Bruno Latour; Phillipe Lescola; Rob Nixon.