

English Graduate Courses Fall 2015

501 / Materials and Methods of Research

Tina Chen

M 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 203 Sackett

This course will introduce first-year graduate students to the study of literature in its methodological and professional dimensions. Our primary focus will be on how to perform research, both practically and theoretically. In doing so, we'll also be thinking more critically about why to take a given approach to materials, how to determine the research methodologies of others and how to choose our own, and how to identify and enter critical conversations. Short writing assignments throughout the term will be tied to library exercises as well as to critical and theoretical readings.

In this class we will study—and model—the kinds of critical conversations that enable individuals to enter the professions of literary studies and creative writing. We will conduct workshops (both class-generated and featuring guest speakers) on attending conferences, writing abstracts, applying for grants and residencies, entering into scholarly or creative collaboration, and publishing both scholarly and literary texts.

511 / Readings in Literature

Jack Selzer

T 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

This course, which will meet weekly, is designed to assist doctoral students in developing successful academic prose—for journal publication especially but also for conference presentations and grant proposals. It is anticipated that the course will appeal mainly to graduate students in English and related humanities disciplines, but others are welcome as well (and the instructor has experience with scientific and technical communication as well as with a broad selection of journals in English literature, rhetoric, and the humanities more generally). Working with students' own developing manuscripts, typically in workshop fashion, the course will improve students' familiarity with generic conventions, assist them in polishing their professional voices, and ensure that students can succeed in promoting their work in professional forums.

512 / Fiction Workshop

Charlotte Holmes

W 12:30 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 114 Sparks Building

This is a fiction writing workshop designed primarily for students enrolled in the BA/MA program. Here, you'll write short stories, and we'll discuss them in class. You'll also write to weekly journal prompts, amassing a stack of beginnings to build on later. We'll also read and discuss published stories as a way of studying the craft of writing. We'll be reading the work of several very fine retro writers—Katharine Mansfield, Isaac Babel, Guy de Maupassant, Anton Chekhov—alongside contemporaries collected in Ben Marcus's 2015 anthology *New American Stories*.

513 / The Writing of Poetry

Robin Becker

T 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

In this grad seminar, we will write in a variety of verse forms, experimenting with stanza shape, line length, diction, syntax, and metaphors, in an effort to expand our poetic vocabularies. Weekly, we will read and discuss individual volumes of contemporary poetry, and students will submit poems each week for workshop. Students will submit a revised portfolio at the end of the semester which will culminate in a class reading. Additionally, we will welcome visiting poet Kate Daniels to our class during her residency on campus.

515 / Writing Nonfiction**Toby Thompson****T 6:35 p.m. – 9:35 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street**

Will concentrate on creative nonfiction and how we, as nonfiction writers, create. Techniques for mining memory, as well as for creating memorable stories, will be taught. Rites of passage, such as love affairs, family deaths, interesting jobs, great trips, various disorders and assets are possible topics. The line between nonfiction and fiction in creative nonfiction will be discussed. Several contemporary or near-contemporary texts will be read. One six-thousand word piece, due at the middle of the semester, and revised by the end, will be required. Or the student may choose to write a completely new piece for the second due date. Writing samples will be submitted and discussed on a bi or tri-weekly basis. Since this is a writing, not a literature course, readings will be assigned as the subjects they cover emerge in class; a rigid time frame for required readings is not practical. There will be no examinations. Grades will be based on writing assignments, readings (short written reactions to texts will be required) and class participation. Attendance at all classes is required.

530 / Literature of Biography and Autobiography**James L. W. West III****W 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street**

This will be a seminar in twentieth-century American literary memoir and autobiography. We'll study texts by such authors as Mencken, Stein, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Wright, McCarthy, Styron, Mary Karr, and several others. The seminar should be attractive to both PhD and BAMA candidates. Each student will write one interpretive paper and one personal memoir and give an oral report. We will discuss how you might teach these texts—at various levels. We'll talk also about the differences between biography and autobiography as genres and about the line between memoir and fiction. I'll suggest some publication possibilities in the field, both for personal memoir and for critical interpretation of memoir texts.

545 / Chaucer: Chaucerian Retrospect**Robert Edwards****M 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street**

In this course, we'll read works from across the corpus of Chaucer's writings—dream visions, the self-announced "tragedie" of *Troilus and Criseyde*, classically inspired narratives from the *Legend of Good Women*, and major components of the *Canterbury Tales*. Our aims are to develop a nuanced understanding of the texts, to examine the literary questions they raise, and to assess some of the critical methods used to interpret them (this year marks the centenary of Chaucer criticism as a professionalized academic discipline). We'll go over some major features of the grammar, syntax, and sounds of Middle English and look at Chaucer's practice with meter and form. Our main focus, however, will be on mapping the fictional worlds his poetry sets out and analyzing the stakes of representation in multiple contexts (literary, social, political, and historical). The requirements are active participation, several short reports, an abstract and bibliography exercise, a twenty-minute conference presentation, and a final article-length paper (15-20 pages) growing out of the presentation. No previous knowledge of Middle English is required.

546 / Liberty and Dissent in Milton's England

David Loewenstein

W 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

In this graduate seminar, we will consider seventeenth-century England as a major period in literary and cultural history when writers defined, debated, and reshaped discussions of liberty, dissent, censorship, and toleration. Milton (1608-74) was arguably the greatest English writer to examine these issues—still so crucial to us today—and he did so with enormous imagination and polemical energy. Consequently, his writings will be at the very center of our course. How does Milton, in his major prose and poems, boldly rethink concepts of civic, domestic, political, and religious liberty? We will study substantial selections from his early poetry and his controversial prose of the English Revolution before turning to his greatest visionary poem: *Paradise Lost* (1667, 1674). We will read Milton's poems in the context of the literary culture and religious politics of Caroline England, the English Revolution, and Restoration England, the latter a dark period of religious persecution and political conformity when the blind, prophetic, and heterodox Puritan poet indeed felt that he had fallen on "evil days." We will consider how Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the major poems he published together in 1671 (*Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regained*) imaginatively represent issues of dissent, as well as issues of religious, political, and domestic freedom. In order to study Milton in relation to his contemporaries, we will also read Lucy Hutchinson's republican biblical epic, *Order and Disorder*, and John Bunyan's major Puritan text and prose allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the latter one of the greatest works of religious dissent in our language. As we consider Milton's works and those of his contemporaries in relation to the culture of early modern English dissent, we will also address, by sampling some of the important critical scholarship, the methodological and interpretative issues involved in reading early modern literary texts in cultural and historical contexts. At the same time, we will consider how Milton's imaginative and moving depictions of dissent in a persecuting society still speak to us today as we continue to struggle with issues of civic, political, and religious liberty.

Course Requirements: Every member of the class will write two essays: one 7-8 paper on Milton's early poetry or prose; and a term paper of 18-20 pages on a topic your choice. Evaluation for the course will be based on the two papers, especially the term paper, and informed classroom participation from week to week. I will also ask each class participant to write a short book review (of about 1000 words) of an important critical work in Milton studies. Class will be conducted by a mixture of discussion and informal lecture. At least one seminar will meet in the rare book room of the Penn State Library: this will allow us to examine its rich collection of original seventeenth-century editions and to consider the importance of print culture in Milton's England in relation to the major issues of our course.

549 / Shakespeare and British Films of the Second World War

Garrett Sullivan

R 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 007A Sparks Building

This course seeks to perform two main tasks. First, we will discuss a number of Shakespeare plays in detail; among these will be *Othello*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry V*, *Taming of the Shrew* and *The Tempest*. We will attend to the cultural and theatrical contexts for the production and reception of these plays, as well as their engagement with a range of contemporary literary and social issues—among others, the contested nature of sovereign rule; the "woman question" and the struggle between the sexes; race, class and broader issues of Otherness; the antitheatrical tradition and the cultural place of the author. Second, we will examine a handful of British movies that engage with these plays; in doing so, we will similarly attend to the films' production contexts, as well as the history of British involvement in World War II. While we will examine one or two movie adaptations of Shakespeare plays (e.g., Laurence Olivier's *Henry V*, 1944), our primary emphasis will be on films whose appropriations of Shakespeare are more complex and oblique. These may include Powell and Pressburger's *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1944) and *A Matter of Life and Death* (1945), Leslie Arliss's *The Man in Grey* (1943), Noël Coward's *In Which We Serve* (1942) and David Lean's *This Happy Breed* (1944) and *Blithe Spirit* (1945)—all of which mobilize Shakespeare to explore pressing war-time issues, such as race and class relations; the changing role of women in society; post-traumatic stress disorder; the place of the artist in wartime; uncertainty regarding Britain's post-war future, especially its relationship to the U.S.; and even, as the war was winding down, nostalgia for the national unity World War II helped engender.

While this course aims to put the late 16th- and early 17th-century in dialogue with the mid-20th century, it is also designed to meet the English department's pre-1800 requirement. Our engagement with Shakespeare and early modern culture will be extensive, and major writing assignments will reflect this. Assignments can also be tailored for students not seeking to fulfill the pre-1800 requirement but primarily interested in 20th-century British culture and Shakespeare's place within it.

561 / Studies in the Romantic Movement: The Global 1790s

Anne McCarthy

T 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 109 Oak Building

“Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very heaven!” So wrote William Wordsworth in Book 3 of *The Prelude*, reflecting on the years just following the French Revolution. The 1790s were a tumultuous decade, not only in France but in Britain and elsewhere, where the promise of revolutionary ideas sparked often extreme acts of political paranoia. Writers, finding inherited forms inadequate for the task of representing a changing world, invented new forms of fiction, drama, journalism, poetry, and criticism. It is no accident that this decade should witness the popularization of the Gothic and the invention of melodrama, not to mention an equally conspicuous consumption of millennial pamphlets, revolutionary treatises, reactionary prophecies, and apocalyptic imaginings—much of which came to characterize “romantic” aesthetics. In this seminar, we will read widely across genres and forms. While the main focus will be on how British authors such as William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Charlotte Smith experienced this decade as a global phenomenon, the syllabus will also include works by authors elsewhere in Europe and in America (including Charles Brockden Brown and Susanna Rowson), with a focus on topics that include the Haitian Revolution and the abolitionist movement. We will conclude by looking anew at that important poetic “experiment,” *Lyrical Ballads*, as a product of the ferment of these years. Seminar requirements include three response papers, a review of and presentation on a recent scholarly book on the period (list TBD), an annotated bibliography, and a 20- to 25-page seminar paper.

565 / Period Studies in African-American Literature

Kevin Bell

T 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. / 007A Sparks Building

No description provided.

567 / African American Literature and Folklore

Shirley Moody-Turner

R 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

This course explores the role of folklore and black cultural traditions in African American literature and American culture. We will begin the semester by historicizing the relationship between folklore and race, interrogating the social, cultural and political investments in constructions of African Americans as “folk.” We will then consider how numerous African American literary works use/include/represent/transform various forms of folklore. Our course will be framed by several questions, namely: What happens to folklore when it is mediated through a literary text? What’s at stake in representing folklore? What role has folklore played in the construction US national identity? How has black folklore been used to suggest alternative ethnic, cultural, national, local, diasporic and/ or transnational identities? How do we account for the issues of “authenticity” and the role of “performance” in the study of folklore in literature? What is the relationship between folklore, modernity and postmodernity? What role has folklore played in shaping African American literary traditions and canons? How do literary engagements with folklore speak to the negotiations between orality, literacy, and print in African American literature? How do African American literary works engage folklore as an alternative “archive” for African American/diasporic/transnational cultural memories/histories/subjectivities? In addressing these and other questions we will consider several theoretical/methodological approaches to reading folklore in literature, thus stimulating new ways of reading the many and varied forms of folklore as they appear in a range of literary texts. The course will likely include works by authors such as Charles Chesnutt, Frances Harper, Zora Neale Hurston, Lloyd Brown, Fran Ross, Sonia Sanchez, Toni Cade Bambara, Gloria Naylor, John Edgar Wideman, Toni Morrison, Colson Whitehead, Sharon Bridgforth and others.

574 / Proseminar in Cold War American Prose, Hiroshima to Reagan

Benjamin Schreier

F 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

This seminar aims to orient students in a rich field of literary production that sometimes suffers a bit from overdetermination by clichés. Bookended by two of the great disasters of the twentieth century, this period encompasses the ostensible Cold War consensus, postmodernism and all those big postmodern novels everyone knows about but few can really bear to read, the Hippies, Women's Lib, and the emergence and ascendancy of multiculturalism, to hit a few of the marquis events. We'll sort all of this out. We'll read a lot of fiction, but a fair amount of non-fiction as well; keep in mind that this is a pro-seminar, and will accordingly carry a heavy reading load. Requirements will include active, engaged, and intelligent participation; a presentation and presentation response; a few short critical reading responses; and a 10-or-so-page critical bibliographic essay surveying the history of scholarship on a relevant text of your choice.

577 / Contemporary Fiction

Kathryn (Kit) Hume

M 6:35 p.m. – 9:35 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

This is a course in fiction written in English during the last twenty years. The books are drawn from American (including Native American, African American, Asian American, and Anglophone literature from various Spanish-influenced cultures), British, Subcontinental Indian, Anglophone African, Canadian, Antipodean. Where possible, novels exhibit various political convictions, sexual orientations, religious concerns, and avant-garde as well as traditional literary techniques. Each week, a seminar participant is responsible for presenting the text of the week by offering a brief biography of the author and a selective bibliography emphasizing the work being read. Discussion will focus on ways of working with such a text and how one could usefully write an article on it. Everyone will write a minimum of two drafts of an article on one of these texts or on some other, preferably post-1900, text that interests you. You should try to make your article work for you. If you specialize in the 17th century, work on some modern texts that reconstruct the 17th century; if you are a rhetorician, take a rhetorical approach to your text; if film is your thing, you can work on some film/lit problem; if you are in Comp Lit, do something comparative. I do not insist that your topic be contemporary; the point is to get you launched on an article you are excited about and one that will help you professionally. The last few meetings are devoted to workshopping your article.

Tentative Reading List for 2015

Martin Amis, *Time's Arrow* (rethinking modernist period and rethinking enemy; British)
Eimear McBride, *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* (Irish; Joycean use of language; neomodernism)
Marilynne Robinson, *Lila* (Gilead pastor's wife; American; religion)
Salvador Plascencia, *People of Paper* (Chicano/realistic/fantastic)
Chang-Rae Lee, *On Such a Full Sea* (dystopian future in Baltimore, As-Am)
Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon* (Nigerian; sf set in Lagos)
Peter Carey, *Amnesia* (Australian; cybersecurity)
Toni Morrison, *Home* (Af-Am)
Joseph O'Neill, *The Dog* (British, satiric, set in UAE)
Jules Feiffer, *Kill my Mother* (graphic novel)
And one more, possibly Peter Matthiessen's *In Paradise* (Zen, Auschwitz)

582 / Proseminar: Survey of Contemporary Literary Theory

Jeffrey Nealon

W 6:35 p.m. – 9:35 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

Course Description: This course is a proseminar designed to familiarize you with the kinds of questions that contemporary critics and theorists have asked when they study literature and other cultural texts. It will be, to some extent, an introduction to all those "-isms" (formalism, structuralism, psychoanalytic criticism, Marxism, post-structuralism, feminism, post-colonialism, cultural studies, deconstruction, queer theory, and so forth), but we'll try not to go through some mechanical history of these movements. Insofar as these schools of criticism or theories of interpretation all continue to inflect or infect one another, it's rather disingenuous to line them up into a lock-step history ("in the beginning, there was formalism..."); so we'll be interested in tracing the history of critical topics or concepts rather than merely tracing competing schools and methods. Although we'll certainly be concerned with differences among competing theoretical approaches, we'll be perhaps more interested in looking at the ways that different approaches to texts can be fruitfully combined. We'll also be keenly interested week to week in the status and usefulness of theory today, and going forward -- insofar as the so-called "death of theory" has been greatly exaggerated (as you'll see by merely glancing at any high-end journal or major university press catalog).

584.001 / Studies in Rhetoric

Stuart Selber

W 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. / 007A Sparks Building

This seminar focuses on the rhetorical nature of literacy technologies, especially digital environments and contexts, in an effort to map this complex terrain for scholars and teachers in English studies. We will consider the ways in which people discuss and represent technological activities and spaces: Language is constitutive of human enterprises. But we will also investigate digital environments and contexts as an aspect of the rhetorical situation that must be engineered and addressed in a conscious manner. The course will not overstate the autonomous powers of literacy technologies, but situate their tendencies, biases, and affordances in ways that are productive and meaningful for the field. We will frame these plans with a series of key questions: How do literacy technologies organize and mediate work, especially in academic settings? In what ways are they socially and politically organized? Institutionally organized? What is at stake in the contexts in which literacy technologies are developed and used? What are the implications for rhetoric and writing studies? And for English studies more generally? What are productive uses to which literacy technologies can be put? We will investigate these questions (and others) through texts that situate technology historically, critically, and contextually. Students will read an array of perspectives on rhetorics and technologies, write about those readings, lead class discussions, and prepare a paper or project. Students from all area groups are invited to enroll.

584.002 / Studies in Rhetoric: "Landmarks in Rhetoric and Feminism"

Cheryl Glenn

T 9:05 p.m. - 12:05 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

"Rhetoric." "Feminism." For millennia, these two terms have seemed to have little in common, with women neglected as subjects of scholarly interest. The past forty years, however, have produced a steady flow of rich and complex scholarship at the confluence of these two terms, making possible—even necessary—"Landmarks on Rhetoric and Feminism." A first volume of landmark essays (1973-2000) will anchor our course materials, with additional materials provided by the essays currently under consideration for volume 2 (2000-2015), various scholarly treatments (see below), and *materials students themselves discover, develop, and present*.

In this seminar, we will trace the arc of the huge scholarly endeavor, from historical research and contextualization to selection criteria (what makes a landmark, anyway?), organizing principles, and editing—all the while demonstrating the multiple ways feminism and rhetoric have come to establish a mutually enhancing relationship. Given the sheer amount of scholarship, the widely differing views on what constitutes feminist rhetorical research, and the expansive reach of feminist rhetorical scholarship both across disciplinary boundaries and around the globe, our seminar promises to be wonderfully sprawling, generative twenty-first-century beginning. Our collective goal is to make the research, practice, and pedagogical goals of feminist rhetoric more widely accessible.

To that end, we will consider (some of) the following texts: Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists*, Buchanan's *Walking and Talking Feminist Rhetoric*, Cliff's *If I Could Write This in Fire*, Eichhorn's *The Archival Turn in Feminism*, Gay's *Bad Feminist*, Glenn and Lunsford's *Landmark Essays on Rhetoric and Feminism* (volume 1), Lerner's *The Majority Finds Its Past*, Logan's *With Pen and Voice*, Lorde's *Sister Outsider*, Lunsford's *Reclaiming Rhetorica*, Royster and Kirsch's *Feminist Rhetorical Principles*, Solnit's *Men Explain Things to Me*, and various essays available online.

586 / Readings in Literature

Nicholas Joukovsky

R 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

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 / Global Rhetoric and Composition

Suresh Canagarajah / Xiaoye You

W 6:35 p.m. – 9:35 p.m. / 301 Willard Building

This course will explore how globalization impacts composition and how composition furthers globalization. As composition is going global as an industry, scholars need to examine if the field accommodates the rhetorics, writing traditions, and social interests of diverse communities. This exploration can help strengthen the field of composition by pluralizing its research concerns and pedagogical practices.

597B / New Materialisms

Ebony Coletu

W 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

This course surveys the development of 'new materialisms' as a loosely linked set of theoretical approaches that reframe our engagement with matter, embodiment, relationality, and the vitality of things. We will begin our discussion with a review of debates about the demise of the "old materialism" and what critical questions seeded new approaches in feminist materialism, object-theory, rhetorical materialism, and the push to account for the material dependencies of media and technology. The course is driven equally by theory and case studies. For instance, we will track the persistent life of things we want to disappear in order to push beyond the discursive metaphor of the 'life cycle' into the decay, transformation, and impact of garbage. We will also explore the material dimensions of bureaucracy and how it affects available arguments, along with the obscured materiality of cloud technology and surveillance. The most dramatic reorientations may well be in approaches to the body and illness, which demand a flexible sense of scale and interdisciplinarity to grasp the stakes of new materialism's novel claims about nonhuman material circulating within and affecting the course of human life. Students will learn a variety of methodological approaches that fall under the heading of new materialism and determine its usefulness for their research agendas.

597C / Communities of Effluence, Arts of Resilience and Surviving Dis-ease

Rosemary Jolly

T 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 007A Sparks Building

THE EBOLA VIRUS: CURIOUSLY BEAUTIFUL? DEADLY? BOTH OF THESE? DEADLY TO WHOM? SURVIVABLE BY WHOM? SIGN OF IMPENDING ZOMBIFICATION? SIGNIFIER OF GLOBAL INEQUITY *PAR EXCELLENCE*?

This course looks at contemporary narratives from marginalized communities from a posthuman perspective. We will investigate the ways in which creative narratives illuminate and underwrite the move from Foucauldian biopolitics to the “necropolitics” of Achille Mbembe and the “thanatopolitics” expounded by Roberto Esposito. The course rests on the idea that communities relegated to the margins through late capitalist colonialist “accumulation through dispossession” due to racial, Aboriginal, ageist, gender and related forms of structural stigmatization, embody resilience and other strategies, such as environmental awareness, upon which we shall all need to draw to maintain sustainability in the no longer distant future.

In particular, this course will offer students a strong foundation in the critical medical postcolonial humanities by exploring texts in ways that open up the connections between written and oral genres and bioethical questions. We shall also explore how interpretive skills used in English/Comparative Literature can work in applied contexts of health prevention, care and building resilience, in part by exploring connections between how ‘race’, marginalization and gender play out in literary, public health and biomedical contexts.

Texts and films will include a range comparable to the following: Alexis Wright (Waanyi; indigenous Australia); J.M. Coetzee (South Africa/Australia); *A Windigo Tale* (Film: Armand Garnet Ruffo (Ojibwe, Canada); Film: Ari Folman, *Waltz with Bashir* (Israel); Zakes Mda, *Ways of Dying* (isiXhosa, South Africa); and testimony and artworks drawn from global communities of “disposable populations”, including narratives not originally composed in English.

The pedagogical point will be to compare understandings of embodiment, resilience and ecological awareness not embedded in Cartesian traditions of body/spirit dichotomies; texts that highlight the limitations of biomedical understandings of disease; and texts that explore the phenomena of objects with subjectivity, a way of thinking now highlighted in the body of theoretical work known as the “new materiality” (Bennett; Braidotti).

Graduates interested in histories of medical experimentation upon particular populations; bioethics; environmental ethics/postcolonial ecocriticism and feminism; and the ethical implications of the species boundary, among others, will be attracted to the class. *Graduates from/studying languages other than English will be encouraged to submit texts/artefacts for our scrutiny, if they are translated into English/have English subtitles. Time is set aside to do so.*

597D / Digital Humanities: History (and Theory?)

Brian Lennon

W 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 007A Sparks Building

“Digital humanities” is a deliberately, rather than accidentally presentist name for a set of practices that are not new at all. Literary humanist involvement with computing is coterminous with the history of computing itself, beginning with research on machine translation immediately after the Second World War and in computer-assisted or computer-enhanced philological activity going back to the 1950s. This seminar will take a historicizing approach to the emergence of “DH,” situating it in relation to its antecedents and fellows (chiefly humanities computing and new media studies) and examining what is at stake in debates both in and around the image of “DH” today. Topics to be examined will include the history of tension between quantitative and qualitative research methods in the humanities; the history of computational philology, from literary scholarship’s involvement with cryptology during the First World War to the machine translation research of the 1950s; race and gender in the history of computing; debates and issues in research methodology, academic publishing, and the academic labor market; and relations between humanities scholarship and the contemporary security state. We will both examine and challenge the self-segregation of DH from the study of the impact of technology and media on culture, as well as its promotion as a set of practices removed from or explicitly hostile to theory. We will also consider some developments since 2013 for which DH enthusiasts were unprepared, and which have left them excluded from emerging critical conversations on the politics of the technology industry, software engineering ethics, and the legislative regulation of data collection and analysis.

597E / Ecopoetics: Rethinking the Natural and Ecological in Literature and the Arts

Jennifer Wagner Lawlor

F 12:20 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. / 01B 224 S. Allen Street

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.” It is that and more.

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 opened out to diverse literary and philosophical perspectives. Because the field is still “under construction” we have an opportunity to describe what has led to this subfield. We can explore how *ecopoetics* intersects and diverges from already familiar areas such as *ecophilosophy*, *ecocriticism*, *literary ecology*, *environmental literature*, or *literature of the Anthropocene*. In addition to a theoretical readings the course will focus particularly on literary, as well as visual, texts addressing climate change and petroculture.

We can explore several artists’ proposals that we think beyond our human standpoint; that we experiment speculatively on the consciousness and agency of nonhuman beings and of nonliving, but agentic, materials and natural systems. 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 including: 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 coined to describe a transitive aesthetic that is amenable to thinking through and about literary/artistic forms in ecopoetical contexts.

In addition to weekly assignments, students will complete a seminar paper and present a 15-minute presentation summarizing that work.