



**English Graduate Courses
Spring 2014**

502

Theory and The Teaching of Writing

Xiaoye You

M 12:20 PM – 3:20 PM; TBA

The history of writing studies in the United States parallels the socio-political landscapes of post-WW II culture. Composition studies exists as a thin membrane between the discourse of the academy and the political, economic, and passionate pressures of everyone who stakes a claim to “literacy.” In this course, we will trace the history of rhetoric and composition studies as the discipline has emerged alongside cultural ruptures. Our goal will be to better understand the questions and controversies within rhetorical studies and composition. Why have these questions mattered? Why do they continue to be important? We will also want to understand the *rhetorics* of rhetoric and composition: Why is there so little agreement about what rhetoric is, or what composition should be? Additionally, this course will approach the same question that Plato posed so long ago: What is rhetoric’s subject matter? What is composition’s subject matter? And, finally, we will look beyond the U.S. context and reconsider rhetorical studies and composition in relation to the global political and economic forces. This course should give you a firm grounding in the conversations in rhet-comp, as well as a sense of why these conversations are relevant and important to broader cultural conversations.

512

The Writing of Fiction

Toni Jensen

M 12:20 PM – 3:20 PM; TBA

This course will focus on crafting short fiction that works toward experimentation in voice, content, or form. We’ll read contemporary story collections that range from the conventional to the experimental, exploring the broad possibilities of the short story form.

513

Poems, Prose Poems, and The Lyric Essay

Charlotte Holmes

F 12:20 PM – 3:20 PM; 103 Ferguson

What is the lyric essay? Although such essays are usually short, we know that they differ from flash fiction, in that they are true (so far as memory is true), and though they use poetic techniques, they differ from poetry because in the lyric essay, there are no line breaks. Unlike a personal essay, where we follow narrative and plot in the way we might in a fiction, the lyric essay uses poetic techniques—repetition, the speed of the language, assonance and alliteration—to express, as lyric essayist Roxane Gay says, “the intangible in a tangible way.” A lyric essay catches us in the magic of its language, as we might be caught in a prose poem, but practitioners insist that the two forms differ. One of our goals in this course will be to find out how.

In this class, which is above all a writing workshop, we will consider how important defining the form is for the writer, and how defining a piece of writing as a particular form influences our reading of it. We will write prose poems and lyric essays, and discuss the differences between them. You can expect to be writing a poem, prose poem or lyric essay every week, shaping these into an 8-10 piece portfolio for your end-of-semester project.

Our texts will be David Shield’s *Reality Hunger*, an issue of *The Seneca Review* focused on the lyric essay, David Lehman’s anthology *The Great American Prose Poem: From Poe to the Present*, and individual collections in each genre. In addition, we will be welcoming several guest lecturers to the class to discuss the writing of poems and lyric essays.

540

Elizabethan Literature: Culture of Manuscripts

Marcy North

M 9:05 AM – 12:05 PM; TBA

“The Culture of Manuscripts” explores the intersection of bibliography, literary criticism, and cultural studies. It introduces graduate students to early modern lyric poetry and prose outside of the modern anthology, it teaches them basic archival skills, it exposes them to theories of material culture, and it directs them to a body of manuscript literature where the dissertation opportunities are plentiful. In part, this course is organized around a set of surprisingly controversial questions. How exactly does the hand-written manuscript, a medium for the transmission of literature, become a culture in early modern England? Especially a culture apart from the seemingly dominant print culture of the time? How does the obvious flourishing of this post-print manuscript culture pose a challenge to traditional Book History and modern canon formation? Why was manuscript the medium of choice for many court authors, university poets, and women authors, among them Wyatt, Surrey, Margaret Howard, Sidney, Dyer, Oxford, Raleigh, Queen Elizabeth, Esther Inglis, Donne, and, of course, anonymous.

To begin to answer these questions, students will become acquainted with the materials of the culture and the ideals, fashions, and behaviors that set the literature in motion. Students will learn to read early modern hands, locate manuscript sources in the library and online, and research the cultural context of those manuscripts. We will make use of the Pattee Library's British Literary Manuscripts microfilm collection, on-line resources such as *The Perdita Project*, Cambridge University's *Scriptorium*, and Alastair Bellany's *Stuart Libels*. We will also draw upon the work of recent historians of the book, manuscript bibliographers and editors, and theorists of material culture such as Arthur Marotti, H.R. Woudhuysen, Peter Beal, Stephen May, Margaret Ezell, Jonathan Goldberg, Nigel Wheale, Mary Hobbs, Sasha Roberts, Harold Love, Julia Boffey, and Seth Lerer. Topics for discussion might include coterie culture; the stigma of print; Inns and University circulation networks; problems in editing manuscript sources; women's participation in literary culture; manuscript authorship and anonymity; appropriation and reuse of manuscript poetry; scribal labor in the age of print; illegal literature and censorship; compilation strategies and practices; tastes and fashions; print culture as a foil or analogue; manuscript culture and social class; Erasmian commonplace books and humanist education; news culture; the influence of manuscripts in various political arenas; modern anthologizing and the neglect of manuscript literature in college classrooms. Students interested in reading literature in its early material contexts will find the class rewarding.

Coursework will include several short paleography exercises, an informational review of a manuscript finding aid, a historical collation of a poem or short prose piece, a short paper defining manuscript culture in response to select criticism, a first-line index of a miscellany or anthology or a similar bibliographical discussion of manuscript content, a handout of both primary and secondary texts to be distributed to the class a week before the presentation, a 40-minute presentation and class discussion of the project research, and the completion of a final project that incorporates archival research, literary criticism, and cultural theory. In their research for the final project, students will have the chance to become intimately acquainted with a particular manuscript, copyist, manuscript author, or manuscript archive, and the literature that students discover in their research will serve as our texts during the last third of the semester. This course is intended to cross traditional period lines, and (in consultation with me) students may apply the questions raised in class to projects in slightly earlier or later periods.

545

Chaucer

Caroline Eckhardt

W 9:05 AM – 12:05 PM; 109 Bouke Building

Chaucer -- whose works range from comedy to tragedy, scientific prose, philosophical translation, dream-visions, and parodies of love and desire -- is among the most versatile and widely circulated writers in the English language. We will read a selection of his works, beginning with his earlier poems, such as the *Book of the Duchess*, including examples of his philosophical and scientific prose, and then emphasizing the love-story *Troilus and Criseyde* (very different from Shakespeare's) and the *Canterbury Tales*. Those who have already studied *Troilus* extensively may substitute a different work. We will also compare Chaucerian narratives with those of continental writers, and consider the way in which Chaucer and his near-contemporaries constitute a challenge to the conventional periodization that separates medieval from Renaissance/early modern European culture.

Topics will include Chaucer's position as public poet and social critic, his sense of the past, gender issues, the multiple discourses (including scientific and philosophical) in which he participates, his humor, his role in the circulation of European culture in England, and questions of literacy, language, power, and audience (did he write for the court? the city? International audiences?). We will also consider whether fourteenth-century England can validly be regarded as a postcolonial context, and we'll glance at Post-Chaucer Chaucer, or Chaucer's editors, translators, and imitators in Shakespeare's era and beyond. Further, we'll discuss resources and research skills for Early Period literary studies, and we'll practice reading from Chaucer manuscripts, but no prior knowledge of Middle English is necessary.

Seminar expectations include regular class participation with occasional short exercises or responsibility for leading discussion (~20%). The main graded assignments are planned as opportunities to practice three forms of professional writing: a very brief

proposal (such as would be submitted in response to a conference's Call for Papers), ~20%; a 20-minute in-class presentation for our mini-conference, ~25%; and a final paper prepared as if it were a journal article, ~35%.

558

The Fiction of Charles Dickens

Robert Lougy

T 3:30 PM – 6:30PM; TBA

This course will examine various novels by Charles Dickens. Dickens wrote sixteen novels (one of them, The Mystery of Edwin Drood, not completed) and we will most likely read around six of them. We will begin with his first novel, The Pickwick Papers (1836), the novel in which Dickens becomes a novelist, and then one novel from each decade of his career. Dickens did not write short novels, but in order to make it possible for us to read a relatively wide range of his novels, we will probably read some of his shorter works (Oliver Twist and A Christmas Carol) as well as some of his longer novels, such as David Copperfield and Bleak House, two novels that must be read in a seminar devoted to Dickens. We will also read Dickens's preface (s) to his novels, since, like Henry James's prefaces, they often provide important insight into the genesis of the novels. Some secondary material will be assigned, but because of the length of Dickens's novels, it will not be extensive.

The course will consist of various oral reports presented by members of the seminar on the novels we are reading, extensive class discussion and inquiry, and a final paper, to be turned in at the end of the semester. The focus of this paper will be worked out between the student and the instructor.

561

The Romantic Sublime

Anne McCarthy

W 12:20 PM – 3:20 PM; TBA

Few literary movements did more to shape our understanding of the aesthetic category of the sublime than Romanticism. This seminar examines sublime experience in Romantic poetry, prose, and philosophy, paying particular attention to the ways in which British writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Percy Bysshe Shelley qualify the sublime of Kantian idealism. Although the Romantic sublime has traditionally been understood as an extension of Kant's narrative of inhibition followed by the reassertion of reason's superiority over nature, this seminar will trace the implications of a sublime that, as Coleridge claims, consists in "the suspension of our comparing powers." Readings will also include texts by Edmund Burke, William Godwin, John Keats, and Thomas de Quincey, as well as selections from recent scholarship and theory in Romantic studies.

564

Pro-seminar in Nineteenth-Century American Literary Studies

Sean Goudie

T 12:20 PM – 3:20 PM; TBA

This course is designed as a professionalization seminar in nineteenth-century American literary studies. Thus we will read widely and broadly in the long nineteenth century and treat works authored by familiar and less familiar figures. A major preoccupation of the course will be to situate our readings in relation to urgent critical concerns and debates that are reshaping the field, including (but not limited to) queer and gender studies, hemispheric studies, book history, and ecocriticism. Course requirements include extensive weekly reading assignments, regular short response papers, in-class presentations, and a conference-length final essay.

565

Post-Bellum/Pre-Harlem

Shirley Moody-Turner

M 12:20 PM – 3:20 PM; 103 Ferguson

Long considered to be the "nadir" of African American social, political and cultural life, the decades between 1880 and 1920 are undergoing a critical re-evaluation. In this course we will engage new paradigms for re-reading African American intellectual and artistic achievements during these critical decades. Drawing from studies in visual and print culture, transnationalism and diaspora studies, critical race studies, and gender studies, we will consider how the nation's political backsliding as related to the status of African Americans was met by resurgence in African American literary and cultural production. We will interrogate how race, gender and class functioned during this period to mark social difference and influence aesthetic and representational protocols, and we will explore how writers grappled with issues related to citizenship, racial ideologies and practices, US imperialist expansion, racial and gender violence, uplift efforts, mobility, and new forms for expressing African American subjectivities. We will read primary works by authors such as Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Angelina Grimke, Frances Harper, Anna

Julia Cooper, Pauline Hopkins, Charles Chesnutt, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Sutton Griggs, W.E.B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson and others. Certain events will also figure prominently in providing a framework for the course, including the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and the Paris Exposition of 1900. Course requirements include primary and secondary research and readings, a student presentation, five short written response pages, an abstract, and an in-class conference-style presentation that students expand into a 15-20 page seminar paper.

574

Hemingway: Author and Icon, Texts and Contexts

Sandra Spanier

T 9:05 AM – 12:05 PM; TBA

Ernest Hemingway occupies a prominent place not only in the canon of 20th-century American literature, but in popular culture around the world. His homes in Key West and Oak Park, Illinois, are tourist attractions; his longtime Cuban home is a national museum; each year aficionados by the thousands follow in his footsteps to Paris and Pamplona; his name sells drinks and t-shirts to those who have never read his work. Hemingway made an indelible impact on modern English prose. Few writers have commanded such widespread interest or continually provoked such strong reactions. In this course we will begin by examining the modernist experiments of a zealous young apprentice in Paris in the 1920s, making his mark among the expatriate avant-garde in the short stories of *In Our Time* and in the novels that catapulted him to fame by the age of thirty: *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*. In the 1930s he continued his modernist experiments in nonfiction works like *Green Hills of Africa*, wrote regularly for the mass audience of *Esquire* magazine, and reflected the social and political upheavals of the decade in *To Have and Have Not* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. By the 1940s the legend of the writer had taken on a life of its own and the decade produced only one novel, *Across the River and Into the Trees*, widely considered his worst. We also will consider the work of Martha Gellhorn (1908-1998), whose identification as his third wife (1940-1945) long threatened to eclipse her own considerable achievements as a fiction writer and journalist. We will follow Hemingway through the Cold War, the awarding of the Nobel Prize in 1954, his decline and death in 1961, and into his prolific posthumous career, including *The Garden of Eden* (1986), a novel that unsettled long-established assumptions about Hemingway and gender and fueled a resurgence of interest in his work by a new breed of critics. His Paris memoirs, *A Moveable Feast* (1964 and the 2009 "restored edition") raise issues of textual scholarship and modes of self-representation, as does the publication of the Cambridge Edition of his complete letters, a long-term project headquartered at Penn State. Throughout the course, we will look at the ever-evolving responses to Hemingway and his work and will combine close examination of the texts themselves with a consideration of the shifting contexts--personal, literary, social, political, economic--in which they were created.

575

James Joyce

Mark Morrisson

T 12:20 PM – 3:20 PM; TBA

Come prepared to read a lot of Joyce. This class will focus on Joyce's major works, including *Dubliners*, *Portrait*, *Ulysses*, and portions of *Finnegans Wake*. We will explore Irish and international historical contexts of Joyce's writings with particular attention given to modernist debates about the nature and possibilities of language during the 1920s and 1930s. This course will map out the theoretical and critical terrain explored by Joyce scholars past and present to help us understand the impact of Joyce's oeuvre upon modernist scholarship.

577

Contemporary Literature: Graphic Medicine

Susan Squier

R 9:05 AM – 12:05 PM; TBA

Whether your focus as a scholar is literature of any period, rhetoric, cultural studies, or science studies, and whether you plan to write about comics in your dissertation or are merely curious about the medium, this seminar will introduce you to *graphic medicine*: comics that address issues of illness, disability, and medicine from the perspectives of patients, health care workers, caregivers and/or family members. The field of graphic medicine has its own international conference, to be held in early summer 2014 at Johns Hopkins Medical School, as well as its own book series and a range of publication venues, including an upcoming special issue of *Configurations* on Graphic Medicine. You will have an opportunity to write a review of or about graphic medicine, and (if you wish) submit it for that special issue. And you may also write your seminar paper with an eye to participating in the Hopkins conference if you wish. Because there is growing interest in graphic medicine in the medical humanities, this course also will introduce some of the foundational works in literature and medicine, an area of study that also has its own journals (among them *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.

So, to summarize: in this seminar we will read a range of the best works in graphic medicine, as well as several studies that present synoptic theories about the medium of comics in general and about graphic medicine in particular. And, 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 part 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 we will have covered:

- The basic lexicon of the health humanities.
- The basic lexicon of comics.
- The basics of storytelling, visual and verbal, in comics.

And you will have:

- 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 that contributes to the study of graphic medicine, and incorporates analysis of one or several comics (no longer than 20 pages).

583

Media Theory and Modernity

Brian Lennon

W 12:20 PM – 3:20 PM; 216 Bouke

A close and careful reading of major works of media theory understood as a branch of modernity theory, in liaison with questions of literariness and literary study. We'll begin with the work of Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan, as an effort to "unthink" Euro-Atlantic modernity, or shift it into reverse. Subsequently, we'll examine the extension, refinement, and repudiation of McLuhan's project, in the writings of Jean Baudrillard, Raymond Williams, Walter Ong, and Friedrich A. Kittler. If this array of "masocritical" conflict can be said to mark the struggle of Euro-Atlantic modernity with itself, can it point us to work to be done without its episteme? Main texts: Hansen and Mitchell, *Critical Terms for Media Studies* (2010); Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (1951); McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962); Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1974); Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982); Baudrillard, *Simulations* (1983); *L'échange symbolique et la mort*, 1976; *Simulacres et simulation*, 1981); Kittler, *Discourse Networks, 1800/1900 (Aufschreibesysteme 1800/1900, 1985)*; Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter (Grammophon Film Typewriter, 1986)*. Additional reading from the work of Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Benedict Anderson, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Frantz Fanon, Vilém Flusser, John Guillory, Martin Heidegger, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Timothy Mitchell, Brinkley Messick, Rosalind C. Morris, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Bernard Stiegler, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, among other possibilities.

584

Rhetoric's Sensorium

Debbie Hawhee

W 9:05 AM – 12:05 PM; TBA

This seminar will examine the moments when rhetoric comes to its (or the) senses. A sensuous account of rhetoric helps to upend the field's enduring emphasis on and assumptions about reason and rationality. Readings will focus on a mix of traditional texts in rhetorical theory ranging from Quintilian to McLuhan as well as recent treatments of salient sensuous concepts: sonic rhetoric, haptics, visual rhetoric and rhetorical vision, rhythm, gesture, style.

597A

The History of the Book in America to 1900

Hester Blum

R 9:05 AM – 12:05 PM; TBA

This class will provide an intensive introduction to material text studies, using as its readings American literary works through 1900 in a wide variety of genres and media, as well as critical works on book history. What is the difference between reading a book in magazine installments, or a pamphlet, or a bound volume? does the format, price, or popularity of a book change our experience of reading and understanding? why would we care about an author's personal history? While these questions may seem to have special urgency in our quickening digital age, they are not new concerns. In this class we will read some of the biggest bestsellers (and a spectacular bust or two) of nineteenth-century US literature in order to learn about the history of the book in America: how books were written, published, distributed, and read, and by whom. What factors helped make some works super sellers, while others (now celebrated) languished? In addition to the bound book we will also consider literary magazines, newspapers, annuals, pamphlet novels, and ephemera, and spend time in Penn State's Special Collections Library, handling nineteenth-century editions of the texts we'll read.

597B**Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Writing Research****Suresh Canagarajah****W 6:35 PM – 9:35 PM; 219 Willard**

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Writing Research

Are you gathering oral histories?

Are you collecting writing samples from your students?

Are you studying the rhetorics of online communities?

How to conduct meaningful, ethical research on writing is one of the most important skills that a researcher in literacy, composition, or rhetoric needs to learn. This course will help you learn those skills.

The course focuses on the study of writing through current empirical and textual approaches used in writing studies, including ethnography, teacher research, narrative analysis, grounded theory, and qualitative mixed methods. These methods are collectively labeled in the field as *empirical qualitative*. The course is influenced by the “social turn” in writing studies that values personal, ethical, holistic, and situated modes of research. In addition to an introduction to issues such as IRB protocols, research design, data analysis, and ethics, the course will guide students on their ongoing or projected individual projects. Readings from education, linguistics, literacy, and the social sciences will help inform our orientation to writing research. Students will be expected to participate in various data analysis exercises as well as complete a research design and literature review for a project proposal.

597C**Modernism and Sociability****Janet Lyon****F 9:05 AM – 12:05 PM; TBA**

Modernism is known to us as much for the fictional and biographical records of its social forms as it is for the legacy of its experimental aesthetics and immanent anti-progressive critique. In fact sociability’s centrality to modernism extends beyond its persistent thematization in literature and its abiding role as a structural mode of artistic exchange: one of the arguments on offer in this seminar is that modernist aesthetics develop within and alongside the exploration of new forms of sociability in the early twentieth century. Modernist sociability may be understood as a mode of modernist aesthetics, and those aesthetics—expressed in abstraction and collage, fragmentation, hyperrealism, indirection—are indebted in no small part to the cultivated experience of modern sociability within the social formations of modernity. We’ll try to nail down a theory of sociability—by way of Simmel, Maffesoli, Nancy, Derrida, Leela Gandhi and others—as we explore the work of sociability in writings by Virginia and Leonard Woolf, James Joyce, Mary Butts, E. M. Forster, Nella Larsen, Aldous Huxley, F. Scott Fitzgerald, André Breton, Gertrude Stein, Katherine Mansfield, Wallace Thurman, Marcel Proust and others. Seminar presentation, bi-weekly writings, and a term paper in two drafts.

597D**Visual Culture****Christopher Reed****R 3:30 PM – 6:30 PM; TBA**

“Visual Culture” is a new, but rapidly growing, area of concentration in language and literature departments. This course examines the growth of this field with emphasis on foundational and recent texts produced by scholars based in English departments. Topics will include theories of visual culture, “thing theory,” and the visual qualities of texts produced as books and in newer media. The course will also consider the institutionalization of visual culture within the history of interdisciplinary studies and in relation to other academic units, such as the museum.

Enrolled students with interests in a particular aspect of visual culture – including, but not limited to, topics in film and other visual media, the built environment, or the fine arts -- are welcomed to contact the professor during the Fall semester to ensure that the syllabus will address the interests of the students in the course.

597E**Digital Humanities****Stuart Selber****F 12:20 PM – 3:20 PM; TBA**

This seminar will investigate the theoretical and material landscape of the Digital Humanities, a new phrase for talking about both old and new practices, and for claiming and domesticating an academic domain, an impulse with both positive and not so positive implications. Our organizing questions will include the following: What is the Digital Humanities? What are its

assumptions and preoccupations? Its research methods? What is at stake in Digital Humanities work? How might I enter the conversation? Where are the resources? And, of course, So what? We will situate the Digital Humanities in rhetorical terms, mapping both local and global contexts in ways that illuminate audiences, arguments, and writing opportunities. The seminar will invite students to use their own interests as a prism through which to encounter the Digital Humanities, assuming each will inform the other in some shape or form. Students will also read an array of perspectives on the Digital Humanities, write about those readings, lead a class discussion or two, and prepare a project and paper. Students in all area groups are invited to enroll.

597F

The Muse is Music: Modernism and Postmodernism in Words and Music

Nielsen

W 12:20 PM – 3:20 PM; TBA

This seminar will address theoretical and practical questions of genre and periodicity by examining works that cross genre lines and trouble our preconceptions about modernism and postmodernism. We will take as a point of departure Lyotard's assertion that postmodernism is already present within modernism as its condition of possibility. We will study the unfolding of postmodernism from within the modern by organizing our discussions around texts that engage music either structurally or thematically. **NO TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC IS REQUIRED FOR THIS SEMINAR.** Readings will include poetry and prose; musical genres will include orchestral compositions, spirituals, jazz and popular song. In re-examining questions of genre and modernity, we will also talk about the often unacknowledged role of race and ethnicity in the evolution of international modernism and its others. Authors may include DuBois, Johnson, Williams, Stein, Baraka, Cage, Cortez, Coolidge, Mackey etc.