

English Graduate Courses Spring 2017

512 / Writing of Fiction

Elizabeth Kadetsky

T / 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

This semester's graduate fiction workshop will lead students through writing and readings organized around the theme of tackling big ideas while taking formal chances. Readings for the course include works by Rivka Galchen, Dan Chaon, Rachel Cantor, Helen Oyeyemi, and Joan Silber. The four story collections and one novel demonstrate varied approaches to idea-driven writing, whether through the absurd, the disrupted timeline, humor, the symbolic object-in-motion, or the fable. Students from the dual degree BA/MA program in creative writing, and elsewhere, will continue and hone their explorations into how to construct narrative fiction.

513 / Fasten to the Page the Voice

Julia Kasdorf

T / 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

How do poets develop voice—that is, how do we learn to write in a way that is distinctively and recognizably our own? In the words of Frank Bidart, “how to write down, how to fasten to the page the voice—and movement of the voice—in my head.” Most weeks students can expect to read a collection of contemporary poetry selected because it demonstrates an interesting approach to voice; to draft a poem every week; and to engage in presentations and workshop critiques that stress the development of writing technique. Final assessment will be based on participation in the seminar and a portfolio of revised poems.

540 / Studies in Elizabethan Prose and Poetry: The Culture of Manuscripts

Marcy North

F / 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

"The Culture of Manuscripts" explores the intersection of bibliography, literary criticism, and cultural studies. It introduces graduate students to early modern lyric poetry 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, Sidney, Raleigh, Queen Elizabeth, Donne, Jonson, Anne Southwell, Carew, Corbett, Suckling, Randolph and, of course, Anonymous?

To begin to answer these questions, we will need to 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 Alastair Bellany's *Stuart Libels and Harvard Library's Open Library*, and manuscript pages and facsimiles that the library houses. 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 who love to read poetry closely and to grapple with theoretical and material questions of authorship, authenticity, culture, and mediation 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. Most of these small assignments build toward and overlap with the student's research and completion of your final project. In working on their 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 their preferred periods.

543 / Literature and Religious Conflict in Early Modern England

David Loewenstein

W / 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. / 159 Burrowes Building

This graduate course will examine the powerful, unsettling, and creative impact of the Reformation on literary culture and national identity in early modern England. In particular, the course will examine the ways religious beliefs, a sense of religious community, and the Bible itself became intensely contested with the coming of the Reformation and as England changed in the course of the sixteenth century from a Catholic to a predominantly Protestant nation. The course will address a number of interconnected questions: How did anti-Catholic discourses and religious Protestant zeal help to forge a new sense of national identity? How did religious conflict fuel the apocalyptic imagination in early modern England? How did writers respond to religious politics and the intense controversy over ceremonial worship? And to what degree did religious conflict also intersect with literary creativity among writers in the early modern period? In some cases, we'll focus on religious conflict or tension within specific writers. Where do we see evidence of both Catholic and Protestant elements in Donne's poetry or Shakespeare's plays? How does the starkness of Calvinist theology, with its emphasis on human depravity and sinfulness, generate acute anxiety in Donne's religious poems? How do George Herbert's poems explore the arduous spiritual battle between God and the Protestant sinner? In what ways do they represent the religion of the heart and the agony within? How does Herbert explore the tension between an all-powerful God and the sinful poet's agency? We'll consider these questions as we study key writers and texts from both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: these include Anne Askew's extraordinary heresy examinations (1546); selections from John Foxe's major and influential Protestant martyrology, *Acts and Monuments* (1563-83); substantial selections from Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596); one or two plays by Shakespeare (e.g., *Hamlet* in which the Ghost evokes a Catholic world, while *Hamlet* evokes a Protestant sensibility); George Herbert's prose and his exquisite religious poetry; Donne's religious sonnets and verses; the recusant or Catholic poetry of Robert Southwell (executed as a Jesuit priest in 1595); Richard Crashaw's high church poetry; Robert Herrick's poetry of religious ceremonialism; and Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1643), a text that responds to the deepening religious conflicts and religious zeal of the English Revolution. The radical writing and startling biblical interpretations of Gerrard Winstanley (1648-52) will enable us to examine the impact of religious conflict from a different perspective: the clash of orthodox Puritanism and religious radicalism in a period of enormous religious and political upheaval.

Ultimately the course will consider how writers struggled with and made creative uses of religious conflict and diversity in the early modern period. We'll also consider issues of religious ideology and polarization as they represented in early modern literary texts. Although our focus in this course will be on religious conflict and difference in early modern literature and culture, at times we will reflect on religious conflict generated by the Reformation in relation to religious division in our world today. (**NB:** Milton will not be stressed in this course because his writings are regularly taught in another graduate course mostly focused on his career and work.)

545 / Chaucer: At Home and Elsewhere in Place, Time, and Media

Caroline Eckhardt

W / 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

ENGL 545, Chaucer: At Home and Elsewhere in Place, Time, and Media. This seminar will study Chaucer both as an immensely important figure in early British literature, and as one of the world's most enduring and revisited writers. As we read the major Chaucerian works in their British medieval context, we will also consider (a) *Chaucer international*, recognizing his affiliations with the pan-European literary circulation of classical and vernacular texts and translations, genres, social and philosophical ideas, etc.; (b) *Chaucer transtemporal*, looking at the way his works challenge conventions of literary periodization, and also at Chaucerian afterlives from the fifteenth century and early modern period until today; and (c) *Chaucer intermedial*, considering adaptations into performance media, as well as Chaucerian textual transmissions from manuscripts to digital media. The balance among these elements can be partly determined by the interests of members of the seminar, so students are invited to send suggestions to Caroline Eckhardt (e82@psu.edu). Course expectations: active participation and contributions in class, and a project developed over the course of the semester as first a brief proposal in the form of a conference-session abstract, then a conference-style presentation, and finally, at the end of the semester, a journal-article draft or an alternative writing project or portfolio if approved.

554 / Race, Environment, Enlightenment

Carla Mulford

T / 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. / 159 Burrowes Building

Our preoccupation, in this course on British American Atlantic writings, will be to examine and account for the different ethnic and racial constructions created by settlers, Natives, and Africans in America and the Caribbean in light of the then-competing standards of ethnicity, race, and culture in written and visual media. Among our concerns will be an investigation of how eighteenth-century natural scientists employed an environmentalism derived from their own “enlightened” racist standards. Students will also learn about how recent challenges to “top-down” Enlightenment studies have enabled scholars to look at these materials from interesting and new vantage points.

Students interested in late seventeenth and eighteenth-century constructions of race, science, nature, and culture will likely find our readings of interest.

562 / Studies in the Literature of Victorian England

Lisa Sternlieb

M / 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

This is a course on neo-Victorian literature. In the last quarter century hundreds of novels and plays have been set in the long nineteenth century. A new genre has been identified, the neo-Victorian. In the last decade dozens of monographs have been published on the subject, and in 2008 The Journal of Neo-Victorian Studies was launched. We will read neo-Victorian literature alongside of the fiction and poetry to which it pays homage. Authors may include: Margaret Atwood, Jane Austen, Jo Baker, The Brownings, A.S. Byatt, Wilkie Collins, Charles Darwin, Charles Dickens, Michel Faber, Richard Flanagan, Kate Grenville, Matthew Kneale, J.S. Mill, Florence Nightingale, Will Self, Tom Stoppard, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Sarah Waters, and Oscar Wilde.

564 / One Hundred Years of American Poetry

John Marsh

R / 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

In this seminar, we follow the history and development of American poetry, beginning with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s “A Psalm of Life,” which appeared in his 1839 collection *Voices of the Night*, and ending, one hundred years later, with the radical poetry of the Great Depression. In between, we will read the other Fireside poets; Edgar Allen Poe; the Transcendentalists, including the underappreciated (as a poet) Ralph Waldo Emerson; Lydia Sigourney and other antebellum women poets; Walt Whitman; Emily Dickinson; some poetry of the Civil War; Paul Laurence Dunbar and other nineteenth-century African American poets; Stephen Crane; Ezra Pound; Robert Frost; Carl Sandburg; T.S. Eliot; William Carlos Williams; Wallace Stevens; Mina Loy; Marianne Moore; and, finally, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and other poets of the Harlem Renaissance. The seminar is designed for those who plan to work in the fields of nineteenth- or twentieth century American literature or those who want to improve at reading and writing about poetry. Our discussions will mostly focus on the poems themselves, while your seminar paper will dive into the existing scholarship with the hope of surfacing with a publishable article.

567 / Performance Studies and the Black Stage

Iyunolu Osagie

R / 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

ENGL 567: Thematic Studies in African American Literature.', 'Performance Studies and the Black Stage', 'Description: This is a survey course in the history and performance of black drama. Why is performance a useful tool for examining culture, politics, and history? We will examine themes of conquest and resistance and how the politics of space and location accentuate the dramatic techniques and the cultural forms employed by black playwrights from the 19th century to the 21st century. According to DuBois, black theatre should define, inscribe, and authenticate the enduring presence of a culturally black subjectivity. To what extent does the inter-textual nature of theater affect the production of a culturally specific black identity? The course will engage the development of performance theory and will examine performance as a cultural studies phenomenon and how theatre is producing meaning within this conversation. Playwrights may include William Wells Brown, August Wilson, Wole Soyinka, Suzan-Lori Parks, Lynn Nottage, Langston Hughes, Lorraine Hansberry, Amiri Baraka, Tyler Perry, Femi Euba, and Ntozake Shange.', 'Requirements: Class participation, two five-page papers on specific plays, and one eight-page paper on performance theory.'

574 / Studies in 20th-Century American Literature: Modernist Duet: Ernest Hemingway and Kay Boyle

Sandra Spanier

W / 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

For two writers occupying such different positions in the canon and who never met, Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) and Kay Boyle (1902-1992) have much in common. After World War I, both were among the literary expatriates in Paris in the 1920s. As zealous young modernists aiming to “make it new,” they published their experimental early works in the same avant-garde little magazines, and both were recognized as especially promising talents of the so-called Lost Generation (a term they both disparaged). While most of the “exiles” returned to the United States after the heyday of that legendary era, these two lived abroad for most of their adult lives: Boyle in Europe, Hemingway in Cuba. Committed to opposing fascism in the 1930s and 1940s, after World War II both writers became suspect as “premature anti-fascists,” and the Cold War would make its impact on their lives and work. Both were active participants in and astute observers of their times, bearing witness in their art.

Awarded the 1954 Nobel Prize in Literature, Hemingway not only occupies a prominent place in the literary canon, but remains a globally recognized icon of popular culture. Boyle was well known for the scores of short stories that appeared in magazines ranging from *This Quarter* and *transition* to the *New Yorker* and *Saturday Evening Post*. She also published more than 40 books (only one a bestseller.) In terms of honors and awards, her pedigree as a distinguished writer is impeccable, but while she continued to write into the 1990s, she never achieved the widespread recognition that her contemporaries assumed would be her due. Both writers are important and interesting for their distinctive contributions to modern American literature, and they provide a case study in the politics of literary reputation. We will examine their treatments of expatriation and their textual experimentation; we will compare their narratives of “initiation” in Hemingway’s Nick Adams stories and Boyle’s female Bildungsromane; we will examine their treatment of overtly political and social themes in light of the modernist phobia of “sentimentality”; and we will explore the effects on the artist of celebrity and the lack of it. Throughout, we will balance a close examination of their texts with a consideration of the shifting contexts in which they were created.

576 / 20th Century American Fiction

Michael Anesko

W / 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

In his pivotal study, *The Liberal Imagination*, Lionel Trilling identified a pervasive (and potentially crippling) dichotomy in the American understanding of “reality,” basing his conclusions (at least in part) on the critical reception of two major American authors, Theodore Dreiser and Henry James. Students in this seminar will reexamine the premise and implications of Trilling’s sobering diagnosis, beginning with works by the two writers who provoked it. Besides Dreiser (*Sister Carrie*) and James (*The Ambassadors*), other writers on the syllabus will include Edith Wharton (*The House of Mirth*), Willa Cather (*The Professor’s House*), Ernest Hemingway (*The Sun Also Rises*), F. Scott Fitzgerald (*Tender Is the Night*), Sinclair Lewis (*Elmer Gantry*), William Faulkner (*Light in August*), Erskine Caldwell (*God’s Little Acre*), Nathanael West (*Miss Lonelyhearts*), and Richard Wright (*Native Son*). One or two significant works of criticism will be assigned in tandem with each novel.

In rotation, students will take the lead in presenting analytical redactions and commentary on the methodological approaches employed in the criticism, as well as their own readings of the literary works. Each student will write a substantial research paper - ideally focussing on one of the assigned texts and one other (of the student’s choice) by the same author.

583 / Theories of Desire and the Social

Claire Colebrook

R / 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

This course studies theories influenced by, and critical of, psychoanalysis and the extension of the concept of desire to account for social formations. Three problems will run through the course and be addressed, in different ways, to all of the readings. What is the relation between desire and politics? Is human desire different in kind from need or life drives? Do theories of desire still have anything to offer in the wake of the series of materialist, inhuman and realist turns of twenty-first century theory?

Texts to be covered will include (pdf copies of sections required for reading will be provided):

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*

Jacques Lacan, *Seminar VII: Ethics of Psychoanalysis*

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*

Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire*

Bernard Stiegler, *The Re-Enchantment of the World*

Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*

Achille Mbembe ‘Necropolitics.’

589 / Race, Rhythms and Resistance: Radical Poetries in Contemporary America

Aldon Nielsen

M / 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

Race, Rhythms and Resistance: Radical Poetries in Contemporary America', ", 'Radical in both the aesthetic and the social sense - *Casa de colores* is the title of the initiative announced by America's Poet Laureate, Juan Felipe Herrera, a good friend to Penn State as it happens. Herrera is the first Latino poet ever to hold the honor, and is arguably the first poet from the more aesthetically adventurous end of the spectrum to serve since William Carlos Williams, who proved too radical to serve. In the summer of 2015, a furious debate broke out within America's poetry community in response to two "Conceptual Poetry" projects by white artists that were widely deemed to be racist. In the ensuing arguments, many questioned the relationship between "experimental" poetry and issues of race and racism. In fact, there is a long history of Asian American, Latino/a, African American and Native American poets making major contributions to the evolution of modern and postmodern poetics, but this tradition has often been rendered nearly invisible by mainstream critical practices. In this seminar we will read some of America's most significant poets and important works of criticism addressing issues of "minority" discourse in U.S. poetry. Writers may include John Yau, Amiri Baraka, 'Claudia Rankine, Juan Felipe Herrera, Timothy Yu, Rodrigo Toscano, giovanni singleton, 'Dorothy Wang, Dawn Lundy Martin, etc.

597.1 / Awakening to the Within

Richard Doyle

M / 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. / 159 Burrowes Building

In collaboration with students, this seminar will catalyze a much needed encounter between contemporary rhetoric and traditions of eloquence (often influenced by Sanskrit) oriented less to persuasion than to awakening. Recent neuroscience (e.g. The Mind and Life Institute) has focused on these contemplative traditions as both descriptions of and techniques for transforming brain function, but contemporary "mindfulness" (Kabat-Zinn, 1979) has perhaps only begun to plumb the archives of inner directed rhetorical practice influenced by Sanskrit texts and practices. Working with texts in translation as we focus in on some key Sanskrit phrases and concepts, this seminar will offer a rhetorical analysis of Sanskrit "Alankara Shastra" literature, as well as more recent texts influenced by these involutory rhetorics, as a suite of techniques for self-transformation through the interface of language. Students interested in rhetorical theory, the rhetoric of neuroscience, and self-transformation will discover a rich archive of techniques for the rhetoric of the within.

597.2 / Techno-Culture and Literature Politics

Matthew Tierney

R / 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. / 159 Burrowes Building

Competing claims mark literary approaches to the study of technology and communication. For some, literature is a medium like other media, and like those should strive toward ever clearer communication of its messages. For others, literature is not in the business of communication at all—and even when it does communicate, its messages are clouded by noise, nonsense, fancy, and experimental form. Bringing together major writings in media theory with important interventions in literary politics, this course will measure the technological ideal of transparency against the poetic ideal of opacity, as each ideal lends itself to the tasks of cultural critique and political contestation. Texts will include readings in anti-racist poetics, feminist technology studies, queer and trans activism, tactical media studies, postphenomenology, and other fields. Texts will include poetry and fiction (by Whitman, Russ, Delany, Mackey, Hong, et al.) as well as theories of techno-culture (McLuhan, Haraway, Mattelart, Stiegler, Raley, Galloway, et al.) and of literary politics (Nancy, Lecerle, Riley, Deleuze, Johnson, Moten, et al.).

597.3 / Rhetoric and Mobility

Xiaoye You

W / 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. / 010 Business Building

The centrality of movement in the modern era, experienced and enacted on a continuum from ease of passage to incarceration, provides the backdrop for a wide range of studies investigating how movements of people, objects, ideas and information constitute social and material realities. In rhetorical studies, mobility has long been a concern because it deeply underpins and mediates everyday communication. In ancient Greece, for instance, the travel of the Sophists across city states shaped how the Greeks conceptualized and conducted public discourse. The itinerant strategists in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (771-221 BCE) helped to establish the parameters of political persuasion in China. In imperial and colonial expeditions, the flow of people, products, and ideas across borders gave rise to contact zones where cross-cultural negotiation of meanings became imperative. This course will trace the connections between rhetoric and mobility from ancient times to the present. We will try to understand how rhetoric facilitates, impedes, and moves along with the movement of people, objects and ideas, and how rhetoricians have conceptualized and studied mobilities in their work. At the present, there is a growing demand among teachers and researchers for pedagogical and methodological approaches that account for the complexity of communication activities and practices across situations. In light of these converging concerns, this course will also examine the viability of mobile theories and research methods for understanding movements of people, things, texts, languages and literacies across time, media, educational and occupational institutions, material and digital spaces, and cultural and geopolitical borders.