

## English Graduate Courses Fall 2019

### **501 / Materials and Methods of Research**

**Tina Chen Goudie**

**W / 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. / 105 Wagner Building**

ENG 501 will introduce first-year graduate students to the study of literature in its methodological and professional dimensions. I have four major goals for the course:

- 1) to introduce you to the resources, opportunities, and culture of the PSU English department;
- 2) to show you how to strategize your graduate school experience;
- 3) to professionalize you;
- 4) to teach you a set of skills necessary to perform research, both practically and theoretically.

As such, we'll be thinking 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. Frequent 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 and rhetorical studies. We will meet with many members of the department and at the end of the semester, you will develop a personal strategic plan that will help you figure out how to maximize your graduate school experience and position yourself to enter the academic profession.

### **502 / Theory & Teaching of Comp: Contemporary Composition Theories and Practices**

**Cheryl Glenn**

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

The goal of this seminar is to introduce you to some of the major conversations—and controversies—in rhetoric and composition, scholarship that will invigorate your work as a teacher of writing during graduate school and as you move into your career. Over the course of the semester, we will explore such topics as (rhetorical) approaches to the teaching of writing, writing processes, inclusive pedagogies (i.e., anti-racist/anti-sexist/anti-ableist/anti-homonormative pedagogies), digital composing, multi/translingual issues, teacher ethos, student engagement/resistance, responding to student writing, literacy, assessment, and writing program administration (writing centers, writing-across-the-curriculum [WAC], and first-year writing programs).

Whether you find yourself teaching first-year writing, advanced academic writing, creative writing, literary studies, WAC faculty, in a writing center, in the digital humanities, or in some other venue that calls for you to know how to guide writers and writing, this seminar will support that work.

### **511 / Thesis Workshop & Professional Writing**

**Kathryn Hume**

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

Advanced students in all disciplines of the university, preferably working on their PhDs, use this course to develop a clear, professional, prose style. In addition to style, we will discuss organization, mechanics, formats, and any special problems pertaining to writing in your specialties. We will workshop ongoing projects that you are writing—proposals, thesis chapters, reports, articles. In addition, we will do a case, and will discuss difficult writing situations that arise in your professional activities during that semester. Some participants have wished to try out on the class letters of recommendation, letters related to job applications, CVs, and any example of professional writing that might be improved. The basic project though is one that the student is already working on, not something written from scratch for the course.

Grades are based on writing through the semester, a test, and a case. The course can count as thesis supervision.

Text: HANDBOOK OF TECHNICAL WRITING by Alred, Brusaw, Oliu (any recent edition) and a packet.

## **512 / The Writing of Fiction – The Art of Novel Writing**

**William Cobb**

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

This graduate-level creative writing course will be focused primarily on the art of novel writing. As far as technique goes, we will try to understand and master the demands of sustaining longer narratives: the need for organic, multifaceted characters, captivating locations for the action, dramatic event as the cornerstone of plot, and the role of scintillating detail in conveying a vision—part of the dynamic that Vladimir Nabokov describes as “combination and inspiration.” On a less analytical level, it will also focus on the kaleidoscopic possibilities (and magic) of the world, a chaotic place peopled with fossil collectors, angry dental hygienists, suspicious DirecTV repairmen, morbid elementary school teachers, convenience store artists, perverted bankers, bad grandmothers, good cousins, and that high school coach who scared the bejesus out of everyone. With nothing more than a collection of highly charged words we will attempt to create new worlds and identify new wrinkles and new understandings of our own. Students will be required to write several pieces of fiction during the semester, which should culminate in three short stories or chapters, and to give it their all. The guiding principle will be Have Fun With It. Create a world that surprises you, and your readers. Put everything you have into it, and make it strange. You will be encouraged, but not required, to work on a novel—a short story is often the fetus of a novel, and a good place to cut one’s teeth on narrative. Readings will be a selection of three (or more) recently published novels to be decided at a later date, but student favorites in recent years have been Per Petterson’s *Out Stealing Horses*, Gillian Flynn’s *Gone Girl*, Dave Eggers’s *The Circle*, Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead* and *Lila*, Karen Russell’s *Swampland!* and Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*. I’ll likely go “Old School” and require a classic as well, for a nice touch of *Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been*. All but the classic choice will most likely be 21<sup>st</sup> century novels, with emphasis on works in the last few years.

## **513 / The Writing of Poetry – Lyric Methods**

**Julia Kasdorf**

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

“Poetry arises from the desire to get beyond the finite and the historical—the human world of violence and difference—and to reach the transcendent or divine,” Ben Lerner cribbs Allen Grossman’s take on Caedmon, the first English poet whose name we know. And therefore, says Lerner in his booklet essay *The Hatred of Poetry*, “Poetry isn’t hard, it’s impossible.” And yet, we persist. In this workshop, we will read three lyric giants of the last century (Bishop, Brooks, Roethke) alongside a number of contemporaries, including Eduardo Corral, Terrance Hays, Li-Young Lee, Tyler Mills, and Jill Osier, to appreciate and learn from their different methods. During the course of the semester, students can expect to write a new poem each week, read a collection of poetry almost every week, and to commit a couple of poems to memory. Class is largely conducted as discussion—either of published texts or student drafts—in workshop tradition.

## **515 / Writing Nonfiction**

**Charles Thompson**

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

English 515, the nonfiction workshop, 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 five-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.

### **535 / Studies in Jewish American Literature**

**Benjamin Schreier**

**F / 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.**

This course offers students a working analytical familiarity with the history of Jewish writing in the United States (in North American context) and with both the history and the current state of professional study of it. Attention will be paid both to dominant and alternative narratives of this literature.

Major historical topics include the earliest, pre-19th century Jewish writers in America; 19th century Jewish American writers; writers of the great Ashkenazi immigration wave of 1881-1924; interwar proletarian and modernist writers; postwar writers of assimilation; the mainstreaming of Jewish American literature in the 1950s and 1960s; post-breakthrough Jewish American writers; and 21st-century Jewish American literature and the new immigration.

The course analyzes the development of the professional field of Jewish American literary study, including its prehistory and origins in Wissenschaft-based historicism; the professionalization of the field in the Viet Nam era; the growing dominance of so-called New Jewish Cultural Studies of the '80s and '90s; and new theoretical approaches of the first decades of the 21st century.

Finally, the course examines the key debates and faultlines in the field today, including the divide between historicist and critical approaches; differences between English Department-based and Jewish Studies-based Jewish American literary study; the situation of Jewish American literary study vis-à-vis Americanist literary study and English Department-based literary study more generally; Cultural Studies-based approaches to the field vs. Literary Studies-based approaches; Comparativist approaches vs. non-Comparativist approaches; the move toward interdisciplinarity; and the ongoing struggle to theorize the field.

### **540 / Ideas of the Renaissance**

**David Loewenstein**

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

How did Renaissance writers themselves contribute to competing conceptions and dimensions of the period we think of as the "Renaissance"? This wide-ranging seminar will consider and test a number of key concepts that have at various times been thought to define the Renaissance as an intellectual or cultural phenomenon and period. The course will encourage students to think about the intellectual, philosophical, and literary achievements of the Renaissance in a broader European and international context. One aim of the course is to enrich the intellectual and literary perspectives of students focused primarily on the English Renaissance. Some of the concepts we will consider include: the state as a work of art; redefinitions of the human and the individual; the re-conception of antiquity; display and self-fashioning; the role of curiosity in legitimating knowledge claims; inwardness and skepticism; and the expression of human free will in the contexts of the religious Reformations. As we address these concepts we will test or examine both long-standing and more recent conceptions of the Renaissance, especially beginning with Jacob Burckhardt's classic study of the period in Italy; additional major secondary readings by Ernest Cassirer, Peter Burke, Lisa Jardine, Anthony Grafton, and other scholars will be placed on reserve. Some of the key continental writers we will examine include Petrarch, Pico della Mirandola, Marsilio Ficino, Castiglione, Machiavelli, Erasmus, Luther, and Montaigne. We will also examine some of the concepts listed above in relation to such early modern English writers as Thomas More, Sidney, Elizabeth I, Rachel Speght, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson (especially selected masques), and Bacon.

Requirements for the course, in addition to active class participation, include one short essay (written in the first half of the course), a longer term paper, a book review, and in-class presentations.

### **543 / Studies in Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century Literature: Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama**

**Claire Bourne**

**T / 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. / 159 Burrowes**

This course will focus on the long textual histories of plays written to be performed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England—and the form(s) in which those plays survive in the historical record. We will focus primarily on the range of editorial theories and practices that have emerged from efforts to (1) parse what extant playtexts and related documents actually reveal about early modern dramatic authorship, genre, performance, publication, printing, and reading; and (2) make these texts legible to readers as plays (a very tricky prospect when it comes to plays). We will also discuss the ideological underpinnings of these theories and practices. Among other watersheds, we will address the anonymous seventeenth-century efforts to “perfect” texts for the press; the idiosyncratic typographic attempts of the oft-forgotten eighteenth-century editor Edward Capell to make non-verbal business visible on the pages; the overwhelming influence of Edmond Malone’s 1790 edition of Shakespeare on the subsequent editing of plays by his contemporaries; the varied (and frequently elided) editorial labors of women since the early nineteenth century; the New Bibliographers’ attempts to consolidate an editorial schema in the first half of the twentieth century; issues of censorship and emendation surrounding student editions designed for English, American, and colonial curricula; and the potential and limits of digital editions of early modern plays (for research and pedagogy) in the twenty-first. The syllabus will include plays attributed to Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Kyd, John Webster, and Ben Jonson. Readings and coursework will be tailored to books in PSU Libraries’ Eberly Family Special Collections Library and digitized copies available online, and students will have the opportunity to participate in an ongoing project to create an open-access edition of PSU’s copy of *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Gentlemen* (1647), a large folio collection of plays that the library recently digitized (<https://digital.libraries.psu.edu/digital/collection/emblem/id/5201/rec/4>). Students will leave the class well-versed in editorial theories and practices that will be useful outside the early modern period, and as such, students working in earlier or later periods are encouraged to enroll.

### **586 / Readings in Literature as Article Writing**

**Christopher Castiglia**

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

This course fulfills two complementary aims: to work early-stage articles into shape for submission and publication, and to provide participants with documents and discussion that will improve their understanding of the profession. The workshop part of the course is devoted entirely to writing and projects—articles, dissertation chapters, and other professional-level writing, while the professionalization part of the course focuses on readings about and discussions of issues in the profession (defined as the academic humanities).

### **597.001 / Postcoloniality, Rhetoric, Writing**

**Athelstan Canagarajah**

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

**Postcoloniality, Rhetoric, Writing:** encounters have engendered diverse rhetorics, literacies, and genres that straddle languages and modalities. We now have new understandings of being rhetorically effective; different varieties of English; and competing aesthetic values. Postcoloniality also raises new questions of access and voice, production and reception, and representation and negotiation. These developments compel us to go beyond the traditional divide between literature, linguistics, and composition in English Studies in order to engage meaningfully with texts. The readings in this course will help us examine some of the central theoretical and pedagogical constructs in English Studies from the perspectives of colonized communities and postcolonial discourses. This examination will also complicate postcolonial thinking, as we compare resistant discourses in diverse communities and scholars over time. After gaining some perspectives on the ways postcolonial discourses have been defined and applied in the humanities and social sciences, we will focus on attempts by scholars in rhetoric, literacy, and composition to engage with postcolonial conditions. We will conclude by situating English Studies in emergent geopolitical contexts to analyze necessary changes in orientation.

## **597.002 / Life on Planet Earth: From Biopolitics to Ecology in Nineteenth-Century American Studies.**

**Christian Haines**

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

This course focuses on two recent turns in the study of nineteenth-century American literature and culture: the biopolitical turn and the ecological turn. Each of these turns suggests the possibility of moving beyond the focus on language/culture in criticism and theory. They promise to renew the humanities through paradigm shifts that imply new objects of study (biological life, the environment, non-human matter). They ask questions such as: How do literary and cultural practices imagine new forms of life? What would it mean to think about literary texts as impressions of the earth, not unlike fossils? How does the category of humanity change in light of the possible extinction of the human species? At the same time, these new methods owe a debt (sometimes acknowledged, sometimes not) to nineteenth-century metaphysics, sciences, cosmologies, and literatures. They revive questions about life, matter, and nature that had been seemingly been settled during that moment we used to call postmodernism.

The course will divide its time between contemporary and nineteenth-century critical and literary texts. The emphasis will be not only on asking how current critical and theoretical concepts might help us to rethink nineteenth-century studies but also on considering how encounters with the nineteenth century might change our sense of the present. Students working in fields other than nineteenth-century American studies will be welcome to combine their interests/specialties with those of the course, including in the required assignments. The course should be particularly of interest to students working on nineteenth-century studies, American literary and cultural studies, biopolitics, posthumanism, environmental humanities, and the new materialisms.

Some of the writers we may read include: Sylvia Wynter, Herman Melville, Michel Foucault, Emily Dickinson, Kyla Schuller, Alexander Weheliye, Sarah Orne Jewett, Jason W. Moore, Martin R. Delany, Elizabeth Povinelli, Frederick Douglass, Anna Tsing, Dana Luciano, Kathryn Yusoff, Walt Whitman, Bruno Latour, Monique Allewaert, Henry David Thoreau, Britt Rusert, Gilles Deleuze, Elizabeth Grosz, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Lisa Lowe, Rob Nixon, Fred Moten.

## **597.003 / #MeToo, or The Reckoning: Feminism, Activism, Texts**

**Leisha Jones**

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

#MeToo, posted on Twitter by Tarana Burke in October 2017, has become a viral collective of mostly women, woman-identified, and gender queer people who call out the widespread abuses of sexual harassment and sexual assault they experience in their own lives. This course explores the #MeToo movement as a contested feminist site of activism and cultural production. We will trace the rise of #MeToo from its roots in the African American community, through its appropriation by Hollywood actresses staking claims against widespread abuses, #MeToo as a global movement, and the as shaper of contemporary discourse about power, gender, and systemic misogyny. We will also explore fractions within the feminist community of scholars concerning call-out culture, intergenerational divides, rape culture, sexual climate on college campuses, backlashes, futures, and in particular the role intersectionality plays in the experiences and adjudications of sexual misconduct. Texts under consideration include *Down Girl*, *The Logic of Misogyny* (2018) by Kate Manne, *The Power* (2017) by Naomi Alderman, *His Favorites: A Novel* by Kate Walbert, *Dietland* (2015) by Sarai Walker, *There are More Beautiful Things Than Beyonce* (2017) by Morgan Parker, *Heart Berries* (2018) by Terese Marie Mailhot, *Mean* (2017) by Myriam Gurba, and *Tender Points* (2016) by Amy Berkowitz. VSTUD 555 *Visualising Gender* (I wrote the course approved by the faculty senate). This course analyzes how gender identities relate to the creation, use, and analysis of visual artifacts and bodily practices. Visual texts condition and are conditioned by intersectional embodiments of gender. In an attempt to understand and critically evaluate the role visual culture plays in our gendered lives as a dominant conduit of knowledge and identity production, this seminar examines visual processes and objects as they are informed and shaped by a nexus of gender, race, sexuality, class, nationality, and other forms of identity. The visualization of gendered forms of identity involves codes that produce bodies as signifiers of chaos, order, beauty, disease, nature, culture, evil, and virtue, including actions bisected according to binaries of masculinity and femininity. The seminar employs analytical approaches to these dynamics, including feminist, queer, and critical race theories of the visual as ways of interrogating a range of visual artifacts and bodily practices. After surveying key foundational texts, the course predominantly engages contemporary works and practices along complex gender matrices, including new directions in visual culture from the 1990s onward.

**597.004 / Eighteenth-Century Fictions in Britain and America**

**Carla Mulford Conklin**

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

The way we use the word today, the word Romance refers to fiction that features themes of love and romantic relationships. But Romance, historically conceived, refers to a much older narrative tradition, where love shares space with dragons and heroic quests in an open landscape inhabited by larger-than-life human figures. In its traditional meaning, Romance was the dominant narrative mode of the Middle Ages in Spain, France, and England. Around the seventeenth century, fictional narrative tended to shift away from the supernatural people and events of the earlier era and move toward greater reliance on everyday experience. Even so, during the eighteenth century, on both sides of the Atlantic, novels and romances existed side-by-side, competing for readerly interest and attention. Our goal is to examine the distinctiveness but also the mutual indebtedness of the two narrative traditions. The narratives under our purview will likely include: Daniel Defoe, *Roxana* (1724); Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (1740); Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (1742); Horace Walpole, *Castle of Otranto* (1764); Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest* (1791); Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette* (1797); Susanna Rowson, *Reuben and Rachel* (1798); Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland* (1798); Anonymous, *The Woman of Colour* (1808). In addition to regular and spirited class discussion, you'll lead part of a class discussion with a talking point; write a book report (to be posted to a course folder and spoken VERY briefly in class); report on a chapter or two of a scholarly book; and prepare three formal written assignments: a proposal for your course paper and your course paper (full dress version 1 and final dress version 2). The final grade will be an average of four components: talking point and class participation (25 percent); proposal and book report (25 percent); paper version 1 (25 percent); paper version 2 (25 percent).