

Spring 2022 Graduate Course Descriptions

VSTUD 501 / Visual Cultural Theory and History

Christopher Reed

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

This course is required for the Visual Studies dual-title PhD program but is open to all graduate students. Topics will be developed to reflect the interests of enrolled students, and may include theories of the visual and visualization (including such traditional literary approaches as ekphrasis), as well as methodological models for the visual analysis of books (including graphic novels), material culture (from popular consumer culture through high-design fashions, photography, and the fine arts), the built environment, film, television, and other forms of performance in their historical contexts and in relation to literature. Throughout there will be an emphasis on effective ways to bring visual materials into publication and teaching.

512 / The Writing of Fiction

William Cobb

T / 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. / 132 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 to 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*, George Saunders’s *Lincoln in the Bardo*, Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead* and *Lila*, Karen Russell’s *Swamplandia!* 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 21st century novels, with emphasis on works in the last few years.

513 / The Writing of Poetry

Sara McCallum

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

This seminar is designed for students seeking to push themselves as poets, practicing in the art—students in the BA/MA program, students working on theses, and other students interested in developing their knowledge of and facility with poetic craft. Across the semester, students can expect to read 6-8 collections of contemporary poetry and engage in discussions &/or presentations of these collections, to write responsively to these collections (prose & 'imitation' poems), to draft at least one poem per week, to be continuously engaged in revision of their own poems, to provide written and oral critiques of their classmates' poems, and to memorize a poem or two of their own choosing. Final assessment will be based on participation in the seminar and a portfolio of revised poems, which will include a prefatory artist's statement.

542 / Middle English Lit.: Troy/Arthur/early drama (prefers)

Caroline Eckhardt

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

This seminar concentrates on two great secular and international narratives of the Middle Ages: The Arthurian legend, and the tales of the Trojan War with its diasporic aftermath that was claimed to have seeded subsequent European peoples and nations. These constructions of the past were iteratively repurposed for new contexts — as literary lineages, oral and written; as nostalgic precedents that incorporated counter-narratives, dissent, and critique; as ethical models for behavior, public and private; as political and nation-building origin tales (for example, London was known as New Troy); and as cultural documentation or propaganda that reveals attitudes towards race, gender, differences in ability, indigeneity, monstrosity, slavery, and imperialism. We will also read examples of late medieval drama as we consider how these performed Christian narratives relate to the secular Trojan and Arthurian traditions. Further, we'll look at afterlives, from early modern versions to the present. We'll become acquainted with ways to work with manuscripts, but no prior experience with manuscripts or with medieval literature or Middle English is necessary.

Readings, subject to adjustment according to members of the seminar, will include the two most important English Troy versions, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and Lydgate's *Troy Book* (selections), and major Arthurian works: the epic Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, chronicles (selections), and romances, such as *Gawain and the Green Knight*, the Stanzaic *Morte Arthur*, *Sir Tristrem*, and Malory's *Morte Darthur*. Excerpts from continental works, such as Guido delle Colonne's *History of the Destruction of Troy* and the Old Norse *Tristrams* saga, will provide comparative contexts. For drama we will read or view versions of the Abraham and Isaac episode, the *Second Shepherd's Play*, and *Everyman*. For post-medieval afterlives, we will include selections from Spenser, Arnold, Tennyson, Wagner (opera), and visual culture such as graphic fiction; members of the class are invited to suggest other choices. Discussions will consider topics such as literacy and authorship (who was producing, reading, or performing these works? – Lydgate was a monk, Malory a soldier, a prisoner, and perhaps a scoundrel); why these legends are still productive today; and how they might be taught in our times when "medieval" is often a pejorative term and medieval references have sometimes been deployed for purposes we would not endorse.

Course expectations: Class participation and brief exercises (30%); a short proposal prepared as a conference abstract (10%); a 15-20 minute conference-style presentation (25%); and a final project, your choice of (a) a research paper in the form of a journal article, or (b) a teaching portfolio, perhaps

especially useful for seminar participants who are not planning to specialize in early-period literature but may teach it in broader courses, use it in creative writing, or otherwise include it in their interests or plans (35%).

543 / Studies in Early 17th Century Lit.: Finding and Defining “Women Authors” in Seventeenth Century Literary Culture

Marcy North

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

This seminar introduces students to authors who are now regularly included in the teaching canon of early modern women’s literature such as Aemilia Lanyer, Elizabeth Cary, Mary Wroth, Margaret Cavendish, Katherine Philips, and Aphra Behn. However, it also invites students to explore and even discover the works of lesser-known authors who identified themselves or were identified as women and even the writings of authors whose sex cannot be determined historically. For instance, Constantia Munda’s 1617 defense of women, *The Worming of a Mad Dogge*, and the anonymous author of the pamphlet on cross-dressing, *Hic Mulier/Haec Vir*, will be on the reading list. The course will span much of the 17th century, and, for students who have taken the 16th century version of this course, the material should be mostly new.

Students in this course will consider critically and sometimes skeptically the traditional criteria for admission into the teaching canon of early women’s literature—early discovery, substantial print oeuvre, engagement with literary tradition, autonomous authorship, representation of women’s experiences, use of a distinctly female voice, class status, and level of literacy. We will ask what happens to the canon of women’s literature if we apply different admissions standards--if we include manuscript sources, anonymous works, collaborations such as letters dictated by women and memoirs mediated by husbands, women writing in the style of male authors, and authors whose sex is ambiguous? Can we expand the canon in these directions without losing the designation “woman writer?” What is at stake in our use of the term “woman writer”?

Interestingly, editors of women’s literature have been very liberal in their inclusion of non-literary genres in the canon of women’s literature such as letters, diaries, prayers, and mother’s advice manuals. For the study of male authors of the same period, this type of material is less often included in standard teaching anthologies and editions. Students in this course will have the chance to read genres such as debate literature, petitions, almanacs, devotional narratives, and familiar letters and to consider how the generic breadth of the canon of early women’s literature shapes our picture of women and their writing.

Archival sources will give us another way to look at canon formation. The body of women’s literature has been changing almost yearly because of new archival discoveries and recoveries. Many of these newly found works challenge previous canon formation criteria and redefine the social pressures that were long assumed to hold creative women back. But which new discoveries, we might ask, will find their way into the Norton Anthology or other early literature anthologies? In what ways do accessible digital archives change the shape of this literary corpus? Do we need to think in terms of textbooks at all?

Our critical perspectives will be feminist, cultural, and material, and we will also be employing intersectionality to understand how categories of race, class, and religion frame the literary work of early women.

Students in this course will engage in debates about the early modern women's canon and the definition of "woman author," explore new archival and digital resources available for the study of early women authors and pursue independent research projects that take into account both new and old discoveries. Assignments will include a review of a modern textbook or anthology, an archival sources assignment, a secondary literature presentation, regular participation in class discussion and in CANVAS forums, and a final project (that will include a bibliography, abstract, brief presentation, and complete project). The focus of the course will be from about 1590-1690, though students are invited to propose projects in adjacent periods, as long as they have the motivation and necessary expertise. This course is geared not only toward students who might specialize in early literature and gender but also toward students who want to teach women's literature in the future, who are interested in working with archives, and who have an interest in how theories of sex, gender, and authorship are developing within the larger field of English Literature.

548 / Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama

Patrick Cheney

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

English 548 examines the drama of the English Renaissance, reading thirteen plays spread across the dramatic genres of tragedy, comedy, and tragicomedy. The course will range from England's great first tragedy, Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* in the late 1580s, through one of England's most haunting tragedies, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, written by John Ford in the early 1630s. The seminar will encourage fresh research in Shakespeare's contemporaries in the English theater, focusing on Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, John Marston, Thomas Middleton, and John Webster, and including Elizabeth's Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam*.

568 / Gender Issues in African-American Lit.: Activist Archives of Late 19th/Early 20th Century Black Women Writers

Shirley Moody

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

This course examines ways to read in and through the print and digital archives of late 19th/early 20th century Black women intellectual and literary activists. Situating the archives as a space for locating the "shadow writings" of prominent literary figures, such as Anna Julia Cooper, Mary Church Terrell, Frances Harper, and Mary Ann Shadd Cary, students in the course consider the intellectual contributions and activist work of these ground-breaking authors, while also expanding and challenging our notions of "what counts" as literary productivity and intellectual production. Students will have opportunities to work across both print and digital archives and will work as a class to create a digital exhibit based on our readings, course work, and discussions. Critical works by Brittany Cooper, Saidiya Hartman, Martha Jones, Elizabeth McHenry and others, as well as visits from guest speakers and collaborators, will ground our intellectual inquiries.

(*This course will take place in collaboration with the Center for Black Digital Research's Black Women's Organizing Archive)

584 / Studies in Rhetoric: Rhetoric and Professional Writing**Ana Cooke****W / 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building**

This course introduces students to scholarship in professional and technical writing and considers current issues in the field's practices and pedagogies. We'll begin with readings that survey professional writing's historic foci, practices, and methods, and move on to explore contemporary issues, such as the field's "social justice" turn and engagement with issues of gender, race, ability, sexuality, and environmental justice. We'll also consider how the contemporary media environment complicates traditional distinctions between "technical" and "public" discourses.

This course is designed to invite a range of audiences: those interested in pursuing research in professional and technical writing; teachers of professional or technical writing; and those interested in exploring professional bridges to non-academic writing contexts. In addition to participating in seminar discussions and writing short analytic papers, students will pursue a longer inquiry tailored toward their professional goals. Examples of such an inquiry might include: creating a syllabus for a professional writing course and writing a critical justification for its pedagogy; analyzing particular organizational contexts or workplace genres; creating consulting or pedagogically oriented guides for topics or practices in organizational or professional writing; or developing a scholarly inquiry toward publication in professional and technical writing studies.

597.1 / Special Topics: Paperwork and Protest**Ebony Coletu****W / 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building**

This course explores the relationship between paperwork and protest. How has paperwork been used to rally mass mobilization against institutional policies? In what ways does paperwork respond to or deflect collective demands? Forms are often understood as a writing requirement that necessarily constrains the terms of aid, voting, education, healthcare, mobility, and labor, but there is another tradition of analysis that leverages paperwork to diagnose institutional harms while organizing applicants for battles over rights, resources, and recognition. The class is organized around campaigns protesting the terms of welfare, debt, policing, voter disfranchisement, sexual harassment, and immigration bans. The approach is methodological in that we develop an analytic repertoire over the semester that expands options for reading forms, their role in social movement strategy, and as a tool for analyzing the substance of institutional policy. Students interested in social movements, institutional history, critical race and ethnic studies, and writing in everyday life, would especially benefit from this course.

597.2 / Genders of Affiliation**Jonathan Eburne****Th / 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building**

Taught simultaneously with Professor Hil Malatino's WMNST 522: Gender and Sexuality

This course offers a cross-disciplinary approach to studying collective social and artistic movements organized by queer and trans culture workers. Employing a range of conceptual and disciplinary research methods and approaches including feminist, queer, and trans theory, decolonial critique, historical and sociological research, visual and print culture, and archival and subject-interview research,

this course explores key scenes in late 20th and early 21st century US queer and trans culture. It does so by examining the environments in which practices of queer and trans art, activism, and social life are created, funded, shared, exchanged, and elaborated. The course is organized around one central question: how have queer and trans people—artists, culture workers, activists, healers, friends—worked collaboratively to form new institutions and organizations for sustaining their lives and work, in addition to working with and/or against existing social or cultural institutions?

Genders of Affiliation will explore trans-disciplinary research methods in recent/contemporary movements by concentrating on five groups in particular: The Tennessee-based Kindred Spirits Traveling Medicine Show (which published the quarterly *Gender Quest*), the San Francisco-based Vanguard (which published *Vanguard*); the Ithaca, New York-based Lavender Hill commune; the global Radical Faeries movement; and the Minnesota-based Open Flame Theatre. Each of these collectives self-consciously engage both the political and spiritual dimensions of queer and trans world-making, and craft their divergent idiosyncratic ethos and collective praxis by drawing upon and re-working the innovations, interventions, and insights of historical avant-garde, punk, feminist, and leftist groups and organizations.

597.3 / Special Topics: Unsettling Fictions of Illness: Colonialism, Race and Disease in the Global Postcolony

Rosemary Jolly

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

I should like to teach a graduate seminar at the intersection of colonialism, race and disease, with a set of decolonial critical texts. The class looks at pandemic literary production in the historical and contemporary contexts of English settler colonialism in the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, with a conclusion that explores COVID as a literary experience through an intersectional (Crenshaw) critical approach.

Primary texts include *Seven Generations*, a graphic novel on the Plains Cree intergenerational experiences of sexual assault/alcoholism/smallpox; *Three Letter Plague*, Jonny Steinberg (HIV; South Africa, journalism); *Consumption* by Ian Patterson (Inuit; TB, substance abuse; self-harm; novel); Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria* (Waanyi Aboriginal, Australia, novel, substance abuse, self-harm, industrial 'accidents'); disease documents from the Carlisle residential school in Pennsylvania; Janet Haigh's *Heat and Light* (PA novel, substance abuse; environmental disease: Munchausen's by proxy); and the flood of pandemic COVID literatures, including journalism, are on the cusp of production (see, as an example, Ali Smith's *Summer*).

The course will look at relations between pandemic as recurring medical crisis and what it says about recurrent crises of (colonial) capitalism as this nexus is represented in fiction, journalism, diary and memoir. The question of race and disease as literary tropes is -- explicitly -- at the heart of this course. Specifically, I deploy Wynter's critique of the Genre of Man to place black and brown bodies at the very center of a non-anthropocentric, decolonial humanity.

While attending to graduate students' calls for attention to BLM and related movements for immigrant and Aboriginal affirmation, this course also delivers an education in meticulous methodology for the critical medical humanities, geared to prepare students to be able to expand their academic interests and work opportunities in this field. Subjects covered include critiques of the Social Determinants of Health and the specific use of literary texts to develop and aesthetics of structural violence. (I will take the students down to Hershey for a professional orientation in Bernice Hausman's Department and to be taught alongside medical students for a mini 'internship', COVID permitting.

597.4 / Special Topics: Modernism, Eugenics, and the Problem of Embodiment

Janet Lyon

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

Modernism may be understood as a vast project dedicated to the experimental formulations of what are known in disability theory as "alternative epistemologies." In its engagement with sensoria, perception, and affective registers of knowledge (Bergson's word for this was intuition), modernist art and literature set itself against bourgeois constructions of the body through the experimental creation of non-normative body minds. The "problem" of embodiment in modernism comes in by way of the racialized eugenic thinking that permeated the modernist era. Modernism may have positioned itself against philistinism, but it was soaking in ableism, which is foundationally bound up in racism. We will pursue a history of the eugenics movement from the rise of the so-called race sciences and the theory of cultural evolutionism in the nineteenth century into its popularization in the early twentieth century. Concurrently we will trace the significant tensions between modernist experimentation on the one hand, and on the other the dominant cultural codes of embodiment and mindedness that modernism both resisted and channeled.

597.5 / Special Topics: Arab American Lit

Benjamin Schreier

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

A critical examination of the Arab American literary field. A survey of Arab American writers, including significant figures, themes, and histories, with genealogical attention paid to the formation of the field, including major critics. Focus on the field's relationship to literary study more generally, including theorization of keywords like "ethnicity," "culture," "diaspora," "politics," and "identity."