2023 Graduate Course Descriptions

506 / The English Language
Scott Smith
F / 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

The course offers a seminar in the History of the English Language (HEL) with a focus on pedagogical development. We will generally examine how cultural and historical forces have driven language change over time. Specific topics include the development of early English, the politics of language and language use, longstanding debates over what constitutes Standard English, the power of institutional and educational forces, the impact of language pedagogues and guidebooks, the emergence of English as a global language, and the influence of recent technologies. The course primarily provides training for teaching History of the English Language at the undergraduate level: students will create syllabi, deliver lectures, and review potential course resources.

510 / Post-Colonial Theory
Cheryl Sterling
W / 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. / 370 Willard Building

The term post-colonial within itself has manifold meanings and implications. It is also considered a controversial term as many wonder exactly what is post to colonialism. In this class, we will explore colonial discourse theory, the roots of European imperialism and racism, and feminist constructions in relation to post-colonial theory. We will engage with and read critical theory, literature, and film to analyze the relations of power that (re)generate the roles of domination and dominated, and the in-between states of negotiation.

512 / Fiction Workshop
Elizabeth Kadetsky
W / 11:15 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. / 159 Burrowes Building

Craft topics: point of view. Why choose first or third person, what is the collective first (or “fourth person”), is it possible to sustain second person without sounding self-conscious? This graduation fiction course geared toward students in the BA/MA program will focus on generative aspects of the workshop model as well as reading from the stance of discovering and borrowing craft techniques used by successful authors. Students will engage in exercises to spur the writing process as well as regular short assignments to create first draft material, inclusive discussions of works in progress, and exploration of techniques for fostering creativity. The readings portion of the class will focus on the uses of different points of view to achieve desired goals in successful contemporary novels and short stories. Works consulted may include Joshua Ferris’s And Then We Came to an End, Stephen Millhauser’s Dangerous Laughter, Moshin Hamid’s How To Get Filthy Rich In Rising Asia, Erin Morgenstern’s The Night Circus Paperback, or Vikas Swarup’s Six Suspects.
513 / Writing Poetry
Shara McCallum
R / 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. / 132 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 graduate 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 of these texts, including attending readings & Q&As with several of the authors who will be visiting. Weekly, students will be writing responsively to the poetry we read, drafting and revising their own poems, and providing written and oral critiques of their classmates’ poems. Final assessment will be based on participation in the seminar and a portfolio of poems, which will include a prefatory artist’s statement.

515 / The Non-fiction Workshop
Toby 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 six-thousand word piece, due at the middle of the semester, and revised by the end, will be required. Or the student may choose to write a completely new piece for the second due date. Writing samples will be submitted and discussed on a bi- or tri-weekly basis.

Since this is a writing, not a literature course, readings will be assigned as the subjects they cover emerge in class; a rigid time frame for required readings is not practical. There will be no examinations. Grades will be based on writing assignments, readings (short written reactions to texts will be required) and class participation. Attendance at all classes is required.

Readings will include Mary Karr’s, The Liar’s Club, Ottessa Moshfegh’s My Year of Rest and Relaxation, Kathryn Harrison’s The Kiss, Harry Crews’ A Childhood, and other books.

542 / Middle English Lit.: Public Life and Private Life in Medieval England
Caroline Eckhardt
W / 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. / 159 Burrowes Building

We will investigate public and private life in two literary contexts: within texts, and in the social contexts that produced and consumed them. Readings will include prose, poetry, and drama that represent individuals primarily in public roles (as leaders in war, government, law, and religious life) in chronicle, epic, hagiography, and plays, displaying exemplary models but also satire or dissent; and other texts that emphasize personal bonds, as in some romances, or domesticity, intimacy, interiority, and the diversity of everyday experience in England’s multilingual and multiethnic communities, as in personal letters, lyrics of love and desire, travel accounts, or the remarkable personal narrative of near-madness attributed to Margery Kempe, or the meditations on Jesus’s body as female by the mystic Juliana of Norwich. We will also emphasize how medieval texts represent intersections between public and private, for example during times of environmental crisis, such as the climate-related famine and animal epidemic of 1315-22, and the bubonic plague a generation or so later. We’ll read canonical works and others that are not frequently studied.
For evidence of the production and consumption of literary works we'll consider several manuscript books, some produced as gifts (commodities) for public figures such as members of the royal family; others as personal items, such as the Thornton manuscript, an anthology made by a 15th-century landowner, or the family letters of Margaret Paston. Secondary readings will begin with Georges Duby's medieval volume of the History of Private Life and Nicholas Orme's studies of medieval childhood and education, and include subsequent analyses of England's demography, literacy, and other aspects of daily life. The semester's main assignment will offer two options: (a) a research paper that might become a journal article, drafted in stages and aimed at a specific journal; or (b) a pedagogical option, such as an online teaching portfolio, a media project, or an Open Educational Resources (OER) course module. You can also suggest other projects. Prior experience with Middle English language or other aspects of medieval studies is not needed.

549 / Shakespeare: Adaptation, Appropriation, Non-Adaptation
Garrett Sullivan
T / 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

This course will focus on six or seven Shakespeare plays in detail, with an eye to their engagement with early modern politics and culture; and will also take up a number of films that exist in explicit or oblique relation to those plays, as adaptations, appropriations or non-adaptations. The course will be divided into three sections, each of which will include plays and films. The first section will focus on adaptations; the second will take up appropriations; while the third will consider what Eric Mallin has termed non-adaptations: films that "unconsciously deploy and so do not merely repeat, produce, or aridly contest Shakespeare" and that "go about their business without constricting loyalty to or paralyzed reliance on canonical precedent." Throughout the semester, we will examine key texts for, and central issues within, the study of intertextuality and adaptation.

565 / Period Studies in African-American Lit.: Black Dawning: African Diasporic Writing before 1900
Aldon Nielsen
W / 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

Meets pre-1800 requirement.

Scholars of the slave narratives have called that genre the Rosetta Stone for an understanding of subsequent African American narrative form, and yet this would seem to beg such questions as how we understand other genres, including poetry and political tracts. For that matter, what is the Rosetta Stone that can serve as a hermeneutic for understanding the slave narratives themselves? This seminar will explore the earliest writings by Black authors in English and will then proceed into the 19th century of Abolitionist writings, Black poetry and philosophy.

574 / Studies in 20th-Century American Lit: Expatriate American Modernists
Sandy Spanier
T / 11:15 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

This course will focus on American expatriate writers between the World Wars. Many were born around the turn of the century and came of age during the Great War, which Malcolm Cowley described as "a watershed" that gave young writers "the feeling of having lived in two eras, almost on two different planets." Gertrude Stein called them a "lost generation"--a label most of its members contested. It was a time that engendered searching for values (many of the old ones having been shattered), acts of rebellion against social and literary complacency and conventions, and movements like the "Revolution of the Word" (dedicated, in Kay Boyle's words, to creating a "lively, wholly American, grandly experimental and furiously disrespectful school of writing"). We will revisit Paris in the Twenties, examining the fiction of such canonical writers as Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, along with their
less widely known contemporaries, such as Kay Boyle, Robert McAlmon, Zelda Fitzgerald, Nella Larsen, Claude McKay. We will look at other sites of expatriation between the World Wars as well (Katherine Anne Porter went to Mexico and Germany, Kay Boyle from Paris to Austria to England to Vichy France), and we will consider more broadly issues of expatriation and American identity. We will examine various writers’ experiments in genre and form. We will explore such issues as the politics of literary reputation and relationships between gender, race, and expatriate experience. And we will interrogate some of the long-held definitions and assumptions that have limited our thinking about modernism and excluded the work of some writers from serious critical consideration over the decades.

583 / Making a Field: Rhetoric’s Anthologies
Debra Hawhee
W / 11:15 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

Anthologies are efforts to constitute a discipline. As such, they provide opportunities to simultaneously study a field’s accounts of itself and to consider how such accounts are made. The primary texts of this seminar will be anthologies—including *The Routledge Reader of African American Rhetoric*, *Available Means: An Anthology of Women’s Rhetoric*, *The Rhetorical Tradition*, *Persuasive Acts: Women’s Rhetorics in the Twenty-first Century*, and *Global Rhetorical Traditions*. We will supplement the anthologies with readings on disciplinarity and selection. We will compare anthologies with corollary genres—handbooks, edited volumes, companions—and evaluate the group as tools for research and teaching. We will consider editorial theory as it relates to the field(s) of rhetoric and writing, or rhetoric and communication. For the final project, students will plan new anthologies, make sample selections, and compose sample headnotes for those planned anthologies. The seminar will also host at least two anthology editors as guest speakers.

Anthologies are expensive; funds provided by Ted and Tracy McCourtney will be used to help defray those costs.

597.1 / "Reading Capital"
Christian Haines
W / 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

This seminar pursues two questions: First, what does it mean to read like a Marxist? Or, rephrasing it, how does Marx read capitalism and how do we read differently after reading Marx? Second, what are the politics of reading? How has reading come to be recognized as having political stakes? How do we imagine the connections between reading practices and political practices?

The seminar serves as an introduction to Marxism, especially Marxist literary and cultural theory. We will read the first volume of Marx’s *Capital* in its entirety over the course of the semester, as well as portions of volumes 2 and 3. We will read canonical takes on Marx as a reader of capital. We will also examine how scholars in fields such as Asian American Studies, Black Studies, feminism, and queer theory read Marx/capital. Students will also be encouraged to share work in other fields in which they’re interested that also read Marx/capital in interesting ways. Finally, the course will also address ongoing debates over practices of reading - the post-critical turn and Marxist responses to it - asking why the activity of reading seems to have taken on renewed political interest in the present.

Authors we will likely read include, but aren’t limited to, Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Fredric Jameson, Sianne Ngai, Lisa Lowe, Iyko Day, Fred Moten, Lauren Berlant, Kevin Floyd, Anna Kornbluh, Jordy Rosenberg, and Silvia Federici.
597.2 / Colonial Power, Postcolonial Malaise and Decolonial Space/Time: A Global Postcolonial Literature Survey including Key Postcolonial Classics and Decolonial Theory
Rosemary Jolly
F / 11:15 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

This course will equip graduate students with a solid grounding in world literatures in English and their accompanying theory. It shall introduce key texts from settler and non-settler colonies: sub-continental India; Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, sub-Saharan Africa and Australasia. The course provides a solid grounding in postcolonial and decolonial criticism; critical race theory and Indigenous approaches that could fall outside a more traditional postcolonial graduate course. It will prepare students for world literature classes, postcolonial and decolonial criticism and a primer in Indigenous approaches and deal with the issue of critical race theory in practices of pedagogy, criticism, and contemporary creative literatures. Particular attention will be paid to the category of the human the postcolonial/decolonial world, and the question of “environment”. A great course for the postcolonial/Global Anglophone job market; and for those who are interested in postcolonial/decolonial cultures.

597.3 / Rhetorics and Technologies
Stuart Selber
M / 11:15 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. / 132 Burrowes Building

This seminar focuses on the rhetorical nature of literacy technologies, especially digital environments and contexts, in an effort to map this complex terrain for scholars and teachers in rhetoric and communication.