

## Spring 2016 Graduate Course Descriptions

### **ENGL 5311: Foundations of Rhetoric and Composition, Kevin Porter, M 6-8:50 pm**

This reading-intensive course offers an intellectual and institutional history of rhetoric and composition studies. Special attention will be given to the history and ethics of writing instruction; the (sometimes contested) importation of rhetorical theories into contemporary composition classrooms; the institutional formation of “rhetoric and composition studies” and its ongoing ambiguous status in the academy; and the major contemporary approaches to writing instruction. In short, we will ask: How has writing been taught and why? But we might also ask: To what extent can it or even should it be taught?

Of necessity for a course that must span roughly 2400+ years, we will read only a handful of the many essential texts on these topics, including works by Plato, Aristotle, I. A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, Chaim Perelman, and Robert Connors. I will provide brief lectures on selected topics to provide context and to fill chronological gaps, but I will encourage and expect students to contribute actively to class meetings by facilitating our discussions and presenting brief position papers or other reports.

### **ENGL 6360: Topics in Feminist Theory—Beauvoir to Bordo and Beyond, Penny Ingram, T 2-4:50 pm**

This course offers a survey of feminist thought of the twentieth and early twenty-first century. We will begin with Simone de Beauvoir’s foundational *The Second Sex* and work our way through the major feminist theories of the period. Topics will include language/discourse, authorship, body, sex, race, reproduction, transgender, class, motherhood, politics, environment, and ethics. This class is a requirement for the Women’s and Gender Studies Graduate Certificate.

### **ENGL 5380: The Future of Sin, Tim Richardson, W 2-4:50 pm**

“The Future of Sin” considers some of the ways we talk about the future as a site of indulgence or transgression. Taking seriously William Gibson’s claim that “the future is already here — it’s just not very evenly distributed,” we are most interested in how futures are figured, what these visions say about our own wants, and the means through which a future can give body to desire.

Readings will be various and may include work from literature, design fiction, psychoanalytic theory, and new futurism. All coursework will be born-digital — it’s the future — but no prior knowledge or ability in specific computer applications is required. Class time will be divided between seminar discussions and studio work and will consist of both solitary and collaborative projects, including several presentations.

### **ENGL 5326: American Romanticism and Nature, Neill Matheson, T 6-8:50 pm**

From its origins, the U.S. has been persistently imagined as “nature’s nation,” implying not only that early American wilderness was often contrasted with settled and civilized Europe, but also that many Americans imagined their national identity in terms of a unique relation to the natural

world. This course explores ideas about nature in nineteenth-century American literature, especially American Romanticism, often associated with new ways of thinking about and valuing the natural world, even as it was coming under pressure from an expanding human presence. We will read such writers as Thoreau, Whitman, Poe, and Melville, exploring the troubled boundary between nature and culture in their work. We will also consider some earlier American precursors, such as naturalists William Bartram and John James Audubon, including Audubon's extraordinary ornithological paintings (as well as other early American natural history artwork). One particular focus throughout the course will be the human-animal distinction, which we will explore in light of recent critical and theoretical work in animal studies. Nineteenth-century America was a period in which the very notion of species was up for debate, with profound implications for how people thought of themselves, and how they conceived of other humans and nonhuman animals. We will read Melville's novel *Moby-Dick* as an extended meditation on human attempts to make sense of animal otherness, and on the troubled, often violent history of relations between humans and nonhuman animals. We'll also read critical and theoretical texts relevant to these issues, including work in animal studies and posthuman theory.

**ENGL 5300: Theory & Practice, Tim Morris, W 6-8:50 pm**

This version of ENGL 5300 has two main goals. The first is to give MA and PhD students a strong framework for knowledge of world literary history. The second is to explore current trends in literary theory and current conversations in literary scholarship, via five literary texts: Shakespeare's play *Measure for Measure*, the stories of Jorge Luis Borges, the poems of Emily Dickinson, SE Hinton's novel *The Outsiders*, and a fifth that will be unique to each student and chosen in consultation with the class. Important secondary goals will be to explore how English and allied departments function in contemporary US higher education, and to demystify some of the institutional structures that channel the academic production of knowledge.

**ENGL 5337: Literary Pedagogy, Kevin Gustafson, W 6-8:50 pm**

The main goal of ENGL 5337 is to introduce key issues concerning teaching literature to undergraduates. The first part of the course will largely involve establishing (or at least vigorously struggling over) some parameters of "literature" and "literary education": How did literature come to be a field of study, anyway, and when and why did we decide it was important to teach it? We will then turn to some general treatments of major pedagogical modes and approaches (e.g. traditional versus critical pedagogy, active learning, service learning) as well as accounts of those approaches as applied to the teaching of a wide range of "literary" (see above) texts. The last part of the course will be more practical and individualized, as each of us develops materials—a syllabus, writing assignments, a research paper—related to a sophomore literature course of our own design. Grades will be based on one shorter paper; a seminar-length research paper; two presentations; and an individualized final project that will include a course proposal, a syllabus and sample assignments for that course, and a philosophy of teaching.

**ENGL 5389: Topics in Teaching Composition—Teaching Technical and Professional Writing, Yuejiao Zhang, Th 2-4:50 pm**

This graduate seminar offers students a theoretical and pedagogical foundation for teaching introductory courses in technical and professional communication. Students will survey current scholarship concerning the historical and theoretical bases for production of writing in scientific and technical industries. They will investigate various theories and trends concerning methods of instruction and participate in a curriculum development project. The semester's work will contribute to a teaching portfolio of syllabi, handouts, materials, position papers, and resources. Students will be able to apply knowledge into teaching in both face-to-face and online settings. English Department GTAs must pass this course in order to teach ENGL 2338: Technical Writing.

**ENGL 6370: Topics in Environmental Literatures—The Blue Humanities: Oceans in Literature, Film and Theory, Stacy Alaimo, Th 6-8:50 pm**

The sea has been cast as “alien” to the human yet the origin of all life; so immense as to be impervious to harm yet nonetheless in peril; too vast for comprehension and yet compressed into image and narrative. A once neglected area for humanities scholarship, the ocean is now receiving much-deserved attention, in literary studies, history, anthropology, science studies, media studies, animal studies, and environmentalism. This course introduces key questions, themes and topics in the blue humanities, from Shakespeare to contemporary literature, film, and digital media. We will begin with Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, a PDF of an early shipwreck narrative and selections from Steve Mentz's book, *Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization, 1550-1719*. We will definitely watch the fantastic surrealist films of Jean Painlevé, read Melville's classic novel *Moby-Dick*, and discuss the anthropological study *Alien Ocean: Anthropological Voyages in Microbial Seas*. We will also discuss selected poetry, novels, films, and theory (exact texts to be determined). The course will conclude with an examination of the digital images and films of the recent Census of Marine Life, followed by chapters from Nicole Starosielski's study, *The Undersea Network* along with her digital project, *Surfacing*: <http://www.surfacing.in>.

I believe that academic inquiry benefits from scholarly communities, so I try to foster such communities in my seminars. I am hoping that a few of the scholars whose work we will be reading will Skype in for discussions with the class (Mentz, DeLoughrey, Starosielski, for example) and that a few faculty in our department will visit the class as well. (And dissertators writing on related topics are more than welcome to visit.)

At the end of the semester, students will have the option of writing a standard seminar paper or of creating a digital project.

If there are topics, theories, genres or texts you would like to see included, feel free to email Dr. Alaimo before December 2015 with suggestions: [alaimo@uta.edu](mailto:alaimo@uta.edu).