

**Spring 2014      Graduate Course Descriptions**

**5300 Theory and Practice in English Studies**

**Day & Time:** W 2-4.50pm

**Dr. Ingram**

**DESCRIPTION:**

Core graduate course, introduction to graduate study in English. This course will cover a wide range of methodological and theoretical approaches to, as well as current issues in, criticism, rhetoric, and literary studies.

**TEXTS:**

*Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*

**English 5313: Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury (appearing in the schedule as Modern British Lit)**

**Thursday, 6-8:50 pm**

**Prof. Wendy Faris**

**Course Description:**

This course will study the influential group of literary and visual artists and intellectuals in early 20<sup>th</sup> century London known as Bloomsbury. Bloomsbury constituted a nucleus of literary and artistic innovation, and its texts mark the shift between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century cultures and styles, a shift that included the questioning of established ideas about sexuality and gender, the move toward non-objective painting, and experiments in narrative technique that ventured beyond realism in fiction.

Because the most important literary figure in Bloomsbury is Virginia Woolf, we will read several of her works. While our primary project will be to closely analyze Woolf's masterful and innovative fiction, in which she portrays life as a "luminous halo, a transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end," we will also follow a number of critical narratives that have grown up around her work, including psychoanalytical interpretations, feminist and postcolonial perspectives, cultural studies that describe the way Woolf's work reflects its age of mechanical reproduction, and trace the growth of a contemporary "Virginia Woolf Icon" (as one scholar has phrased it), in order to understand the imbrication of this work in modern and contemporary culture. Woolf's innovative fiction is balanced by the stylistically more traditional (yet sexually and intellectually adventurous) novels of E.M. Forster, whose Howards End and A Passage to India are masterpieces of late realism, and

reflect contemporaneous issues concerning gender roles, industrialization, and colonialism.

Leading members of Bloomsbury also made important contributions to other disciplines, so that as our study broadens out from these central literary figures, it becomes an interdisciplinary investigation of early 20<sup>th</sup> century British and European culture and society. Woolf's A Room of One's Own is a seminal contribution to modern feminist thought. Leonard Woolf's autobiography provides a polemical inside view of the work and problems of the final phase of colonialism in India. Lytton Strachey revolutionized the art of biography with his (often hilarious) and iconoclastic portraits of Eminent Victorians. The aestheticians Clive Bell and Roger Fry introduced the Post-Impressionist painters to England and theorized modern aesthetics, laying down the foundations for the formalism that contemporary criticism is now (partly) deconstructing. Those activities influenced the paintings of Bloomsbury painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, as well as Woolf's fiction. That painterly influence will allow us to engage in some interartistic work, comparing Woolf's fiction to the painting that influenced it.

Texts: Woolf, To the Lighthouse, The Waves, Orlando, A Room of One's Own, Moments of Being; Forster, Howards End, A Passage to India; Leonard Woolf, Growing; Strachey, Eminent Victorians; Coursepack.

**ENGL 5322**

**American Romanticism and Nature**

**Dr. Matheson**

**W 6-8:50**

**ENGL 5327**

**US Latin/a Autobiography**

**Dr. Arce**

**T 6-8:50**

**ENGL 5337**

**Literary Pedagogy**

**Dr. Morris**

**M 2-4:50**

We will study the theory and practice of teaching literature, with special attention to the questions "what is literature" and "why teach it." The main assignment will be the teaching of a short literary work to your peers, and the development of a professional paper in pedagogy centered on that experience. The reading list will consist of a few recent books, plus several scholarly articles and other sources.

Pierre Bayard, *How to Talk about Books You Haven't Read*

Paperback: Bloomsbury USA (September 29, 2009)

ISBN-13: 978-1596915435

Cristina Vischer Bruns, *Why Literature?*

Paperback: Bloomsbury Academic; 1 edition (May 5, 2011)

ISBN-13: 978-1441124654

Kuzmanovich & Diment, eds., *Approaches to Teaching Nabokov's Lolita*

Paperback: Modern Language Association, 2008

ISBN-13: 9780873529433

Joshua Landy, *How to Do Things with Fictions*

Hardcover: Oxford University Press, USA (August 3, 2012)

ISBN-13: 978-0195188561

John Williams, *Stoner*

Paperback: NYRB Classics (June 20, 2006)

ISBN-13: 978-1590171998

## **6330: Nineteenth-Century British Poetry**

Spring 2014: Tuesdays 2-5pm

Dr. Miller

We think of the nineteenth century as an age of prose. Yet the poetry published during this century was (and is) extremely culturally important. From Romanticism to Decadence, poetry challenged the literary and political conventions of the day. Along the way, it engaged with questions such as these: What is poetry? What is the relationship of poetry to prose and fiction? How do we understand poetry in print culture? How does poetry express our relationship to the past? To religion and doubt? To gender and sexuality? To art in general?

This class will survey the major authors and themes of nineteenth-century poetry and poetic theory, paying attention to important social, cultural, and historical developments of the period. We will also develop our ability to analyze formal elements of poetry, such as meter, sound effects, and structure. We'll encounter a wide range of poetic forms, including sonnets, ballads, odes, epics, dramatic monologues, children's poetry, and even a verse novel. Students will perform numerous close readings and short analyses, write a conference-paper proposal, present on readings and lead class discussion, and write a seminar paper.

## **English 6340, Spring, 2014. Metacritical Theory: Heidegger, Foucault, and Derrida.**

**W 6-8:50**

**Dr. Frank**

The present 6340 focuses on three still-contemporary thinkers indispensable to understanding the backgrounds and most invigorating currents of literary-cultural theory and criticism today: Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida—Heidegger for grounding what, in the hands of his “children” (Foucault and Derrida), would become known in part as post-structuralism and deconstruction; Foucault for anchoring post-structuralism definitively; and Derrida for carrying it to the varied extremes and unpredictable and fruitful openings that repeatedly earn for him the label “obstreperous.”

These three thinkers belong to one of the two approaches to knowing, the Continental and the analytical, into which Western philosophy has

remained stubbornly divided since the seventies, the Continental referring to continental European, and famously including thinkers from pre-classical and classical Greece and emphasizing, among others, the names Herder (who attempts to break the hold of a restrictive rationality), Nietzsche (who, a century later, unsystematically makes the break), Heidegger (who, again, *grounds* the break--the meaning of this cannot be overemphasized), Foucault (who, slightly before Derrida, further defines it and solidifies its philosophical position, canonizing its nineteenth- and twentieth-century originators when he insists: “Nietzsche and Heidegger, these are *the* two experiences I have had” [emph added]), and the Derrida described above.

The other of the two philosophical approaches to knowing, sometimes labeled “Anglo-American,” eschews emphasis on ancient-classical thought, though it reveres Kant, but also, and among others, Husserl, Wittgenstein, and Austin, and with these latter two, contemporary language use especially.

The Continental movement has in general proved a richer source of potential understandings of literature and culture than the analytical, spawning innumerable epigones whose substantial achievements may nonetheless pale in the brilliance of the three who are this course’s foci.

Texts examined here include Heidegger’s magnum opus, *Being and Time*, and his *Parmenides*, plus references to selected essays; Foucault’s *Order of Things* (be sure you’re lying down when you recognize the originality of this work) and his *History of Sexuality* (a slender and amazing text that successfully displaces what Foucault had planned as an effort extending to a full dozen volumes); Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* (the text that brought him his first fame and would situate him for attempting to “overcome” aspects of Heidegger) and his *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, plus references to selected essays.

Students will want to be aware that, especially in the case of Derrida, a course such as this can provide but the slenderest ideas of his horizontal range and vertical heights and depths, and his variety. He at least *appears* to remain untethered, something Foucault posited as unlikely for a human in any culture.

Course requirements include students’ writing and oral presentations of a series of extended, single-spaced one-page papers.

## **ENGL 6350—001: Rhetoric and the Law**

**Dr. Krajewski**

**T 2-4:40**

Is legal discourse just one of several normative disciplinary discourses? The law, if one can pinpoint its origins — and that will be one theme of the course — is as old as the story of the binding of Isaac. The law has something to do with binding discourse, discourse that is supposed to be obeyed, that one cannot escape, the prison-house of language revisited. It is arguably rhetoric in its most potent form.

>> Kathleen Eden makes a case that legal proof can be linked to Greek tragedy and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. At almost every turn in law's history, the law is entangled with theater, religion, philosophy, politics, and rhetoric.

>> Robert Coover, one of our subjects for study, points out the ways in which the law justifies violence. A judge says something, and someone suffers, goes to jail, is forced to turn over possessions, is possibly executed. Think of Solomon splitting the baby. Why do people obey judges & judgments?

>> Legal language is often opaque, esoteric, though justice, many will claim, is supposed to be exoteric. That is, we should be able to recognize justice when we see it, & be able to explain to others how justice came about (a story). Yet, one well-known image of justice is a blind(ed) woman.

>> The course will take up legal hermeneutics, which has a rich and troubled history from the Code of Hammurabi to Spartacus to Carl Schmitt. As part of our study, we will explore crime fiction and film in addition to more traditional non-fictional texts.

**TEXTS** (other texts will be added)

Peter Goodrich/"Antirrhesis: Polemical Structures of Common Law Thought"

*The Last Policeman*, Ben H. Winters

*The Making of Law*, Bruno Latour

*Sherlock Holmes: Complete Novels & Stories, Vol 1*, Arthur C. Doyle  
*Sherlock Holmes: Complete Novels & Stories Vol. 2*, Arthur C. Doyle  
*The Panopticon Writings*, Jeremy Bentham  
*Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault  
*Strangers on a Train*, Patricia Highsmith  
*I Wear the Black Hat*, Chuck Klosterman

**ENGL 6350-002: Rhetoric of the Future**

**Dr. Richardson**

**M 6-8:50**

Charles F. Kettering, in perhaps the greatest display of deliberative rhetoric ever, famously argued, “We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.”

Rhetoric of the Future will consider some of the ways we talk about the future, how we argue for and describe it in order to better understand what sorts of arguments are successful and what “successful” means. Taking seriously William Gibson’s claim that “the future is already here — it's just not very evenly distributed,” we will be most interested in how the future is figured and what we can learn of the motivations and assumptions behind those descriptions.

Readings will be various and may include work from rhetorical theory, design and human/computer interface theory, literature, design fiction, and new futurism. Some of the authors whose work we will consider are Rachel Armstrong, Ian Bogost, James Bridle, Jamais Cascio, Warren Ellis, Kevin Kelly, and Bruce Sterling. All coursework will be born-digital, but no prior knowledge or ability in specific computer applications is required. Class will be divided between seminar discussions and studio work and will consist of both solitary and collaborative projects, including several presentations.

**ENGL 6370: Environmental Literature**

**Science Fiction and Posthumanism in the Anthropocene**

**Dr. Alaimo**

**R 6-8:50**

**Course Description:** The course begins with a strange, forgotten, German SF novel from 1913, but most of the course will focus on recent science fiction that

embodies themes, theories, and problematics pertaining to environmentalism, sustainability, posthumanism, and the anthropocene. The readings will challenge us to rethink the category of “nature” within a world where everything has been transformed by human practices. The readings will also challenge us to reconceptualize “human” life within biopolitical, posthumanist, new materialist, and other frames. What happens to human identity, desire, ethics, and politics when the “human” merges with nonhuman animals, technologies, aliens, and the material world? And what sorts of methodologies should the humanities develop to become more relevant to our posthumanist anthropocene era?

**Readings** may include, *Lesabéndio: An Asteroid Novel*, Paul Scheerbart; Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Wild Shore*; Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl*; Kiji Johnson, *At the Mouth of the River of Bees*; Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*; Joan Slonczewski, *A Door into Ocean*; Peter Watts, *Starfish*; Larissa Lai, *Salt Fish Girl*; Geoff Ryman, *The Child Garden: A Low Comedy*; Cary Wolfe, *Beyond the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame*, essays by Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, Stefan Helmreich, Bruno Latour, Eva Hayward, Claire Colebrook, Stacy Alaimo, Sheryl Vint, Robert Proctor, and Paul Alberts; other essays in Claire Colebrook’s edited “Living Book,” *Extinction* [http://www.livingbooksaboutlife.org/books/Extinction#The\\_Anthropocene](http://www.livingbooksaboutlife.org/books/Extinction#The_Anthropocene). We will also discuss *Avatar* and at least one other film the students will select.

**Course requirements:** weekly papers, two presentations on readings, one seminar paper and a presentation of the seminar paper.