

English Department

Fall 2011 Course Descriptions

ENGL 500-01 (CRN 11780)
CALLANAN, LAURA

AIMS AND METHODS
MW 4:30-5:45

The primary goal of this course is to provide incoming graduate students with an extensive introduction to the methods and tools of literary scholarship. We will discuss how to develop a plan for graduate study, create goals for the program, and understand the institutional pressures and structures at work in the field. More specifically, we will explore what it means to research thoroughly and completely, conduct productive presentations, and refine analytical writing. Class meetings will consist of discussions of both practical and abstract topics culminating in each student's presentation of a thoroughly prepared annotated bibliography and critical history on an individual literary work.

ENGL 507-61/607-61 (CRN 15992/16345)
BRANNEN, ANNE

MEDIEVAL LITERATURE
R 6:00-8:40

This course provides a survey of English literature, from the 13th through the 15th centuries, in a variety of texts: both sacred and secular, in prose and in poetry, by men and by women, from several of the most popular medieval genres. Most will be in Middle English; a few will be in translation. We will continually seek to understand the literature in context, connecting our own context in when we can, noting our differences when we cannot. By the end of the semester, students should be able to discuss medieval English literature coherently, identifying major issues in the works, and using correct terminology; they should also be able to read pieces of Middle English aloud, while sounding like they know what they're doing. In order to reach that goal, students will, besides enthusiastically and thoughtfully participating in class discussions, produce well-written research papers in the area, at either undergraduate or graduate levels, as is appropriate; and answer difficult and interesting questions with (again) coherent essays. This class relies heavily on discussion, though I will provide lectures as necessary; come to class with the entire scheduled selection read, so that you can participate fully.

ENGL 519-61/619-61 (CRN 16373/16374)
KURLAND, STUART

SHAKESPEARE AND GENDER
W 6:00-8:40

What does it mean when Hamlet says, "Frailty, thy name is woman"? Or when Macbeth declares that he will "do all that may become a man; / Who dares do more is none"? For these Shakespearean characters, and any number of others, what is gender—and why does it matter? This course will focus on gender issues that emerge repeatedly in Shakespeare's works, issues that perplexed his society and continue to preoccupy our own, including sex-gender systems and gender roles in society, law, and economics; family structures; sexuality, reproduction, and the body; love and desire; and sexual identity.

Readings will include a range of works in various genres, both well known and relatively obscure, from throughout Shakespeare's career as a writer, possibly including *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Richard III*, *Henry VIII*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, along with selected Dramatic Poetry and Sonnets. We will also read broadly in recent theoretically-informed scholarship and criticism representing a range of approaches, particularly materialist and cultural (e.g., feminist studies, queer theory, and New Historicist/Cultural Materialist, anthropological, and psychoanalytical studies). Class will be structured around discussion, for which class members will bear primary responsibility. Tentative course requirements will include two or more oral presentations, an annotated bibliography, and a substantial final essay informed by significant research. Significant graduate-level experience in related areas (e.g., Shakespeare, English Renaissance drama, early modern history, feminist theory) is welcomed but not required.

ENGL 539-61/639-61 (CRN 15995/15994)
WATKINS, DAN

19TH CENTURY BRITISH POETRY
M 6:00-8:40

The principal objective of this course is to introduce students to some of the major and minor poetic texts of nineteenth-century Britain and to examine them within the context of the political, economic, and cultural contexts of the century. The primary focus will be on the canonical poets-- Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, the Brownings, Arnold, and Hardy. But considerable attention will also be given to lesser known poets, such as Hemans, Baillie, Christina Rossetti, and others. The approach will be historicist, though ample attention will be given to questions of poetic form as well. Where possible, we will examine volumes of poems, rather than individual poems out of context.

ENGL 558-61/658-61 (CRN 15584/15589)
ENGEL, LAURA

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN AND BRITISH DRAMA
M 6:00-8:40

This course will investigate drama in America and Britain from 1970 to the present. Considering a variety of materials including dramatic texts, performance histories, performance theory, and archival materials (visual and narrative), we will explore some of the political, aesthetic, theoretical, and cultural threads that characterize the diverse body of works produced in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. We will also hopefully take advantage of the rich dramatic scene in Pittsburgh by attending plays and hosting visits from working playwrights, actors, directors, and dramaturges in the area. Readings may include works by playwrights such as Maria Irene Fornes, Sam Shepard, August Wilson, David Henry Hwang, Anna Deveare Smith, David Mamet, Tony Kushner, Susan Lori Parks, Tom Stoppard, Caryl Churchill, Alan Ayckbourn, Sarah Kane, and Allen Bennett. We will also consider the work of performance theorists such as Judith Butler, Peggy Phelan, Jill Dolan, Richard Schechner, and others.

ENGL 564-61/HC 664-61 (CRN 11794/14943)
FONTAINE, JEANNINE

MODERN ENGLISH GRAMMAR
M 6:00-8:40

This course will delve into a full range of issues in modern linguistics, emphasizing topics that have particular relevance for the English language. Areas to be covered will include phonology (sound systems), morphology (word forms), and syntax (phrase and sentence patterns), as well as the sociolinguistic and pragmatic considerations that affect everyday usage. Participants will explore topics of immediate social relevance, such as the relationship between language and gender, the status of non-standard dialects, the growing global presence of English, and the emergence of creole varieties based on English. Elements from the history of English will be covered selectively as they relate to the topics listed here. Implications for the teaching of English, as both first and second language, will be regularly incorporated into our discussions; participants with a special interest in literature will be encouraged to explore applications of linguistic concepts to the analysis of literary works.

ENGL 568-01/668-01 (CRN 14604/15590)
MICHAEL, MAGALI CORNIER

FEMINIST LITERARY THEORY
TR 4:30-5:45

This course will introduce students to feminist methodologies and offer students an opportunity to explore how these methodologies might be useful to the reading and analysis of literary texts. The course will begin with a brief historical survey of primarily Anglo-American feminist thought since the Enlightenment and trace various strains or traditions such as cultural, Marxist, Existential, Freudian, and radical feminisms. The early feminist texts will establish the historical and intellectual context within which second wave feminist theory has been produced during the past forty years. Although the course will focus on Anglo-American feminist theory (because of time and availability of texts), some attention will be given to French feminist theory and postcolonial theory since it has had a great impact on all feminist theory. Essays published during the last forty years will be organized around major issues in contemporary feminism. The class' exploration of feminist theory is intended to enhance the students' experience and skills of critical reading and writing about literature. Class meetings will be spent discussing critical/theoretical essays, seminar style, and will require active intellectual engagement and exchange among all participants.

ENGL 695-61 (CRN 15996)
KINNAHAN, TOM

AMERICAN LITERATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
T 6:00-8:40

This course will survey representations of the American landscape in a wide range of literary texts, with occasional forays into artistic and scientific discourses as well. We will focus on modes of geographic perception and literary representation, exploring the intersections of nature and culture in a variety of landscapes and literary contexts. Our emphasis will be on notions of wilderness, the frontier, and the “middle ground” of American pastoralism, but we will be attentive to urban and suburban landscapes as well. We will examine both the aesthetic and ideological dimensions of how these landscapes are represented in American fiction, poetry, and non-fiction prose, with particular attention to the relationship between environment and identity.

Our reading list will emphasize colonial and nineteenth-century texts, although several twentieth-century works will be included. Likely authors include Mary Rowlandson, James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Willa Cather, William Faulkner, Gary Snyder, and Linda Hogan. We will also briefly survey canonical critical texts by Henry Nash Smith, Leo Marx, Phillip Fisher, Annette Kolodny, Roderick Nash, Myra Jehlen, and Lawrence Buell, and we will read selections from *The Eco-criticism Reader*.