

English Department

Graduate Course Descriptions

Spring 2015

ENGL 503-01 (CRN 23415)/ 603-01 (CRN 23416)

T 6:00-8:40pm

**Chaucer
Wright, S.**

For centuries Chaucer has been celebrated as the father of the English language. His contemporary Thomas Hoccleve called him the “firste fyndere” of English, and John Lydgate later described him as the “lodesterre...off our language.” In this class we will read a selection of Chaucer’s oeuvre in Middle English, including *The House of Fame*, *The Legend of Good Women*, and *The Canterbury Tales*. We will ride in an eagle’s talons, experience some of history’s most tragic love stories, and travel from London to Canterbury with some of England’s greatest story-tellers. We will also examine a series of intertexts—texts that influenced Chaucer and texts that Chaucer influenced (including works by Virgil, Ovid, and Shakespeare)—and read the criticism of leading scholars in the field who offer us new frames for reading and understanding Chaucer.

ENGL 549-61 (CRN 23419)/ 649-61 (CRN 23418)

W 6:00-8:40pm

**19th Century American Literature
Kinnahan, T.**

The course will offer a survey of major American novels and short fiction from the nineteenth century, with particular attention to the romantic and early realist periods. Featured authors will likely include James Fennimore Cooper, Catherine Maria Sedgwick, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry James and others.

ENGL 558-01 (CRN 23143)

M 3:00-5:40pm

**Literary and Phil. Modernisms
Eyers, T.**

This class will address the contested categories of 'modernity' and 'modernism' through the close reading of literary and theoretical texts. Taking a comparative perspective, the course will address the emergence of the theme of modernity in the poetry of Baudelaire and Mallarmé, in the narrative fiction of Henry James and Virginia Woolf, and in the theoretical and critical writings of Benjamin and Adorno, Heidegger and Derrida, Auerbach and Fredric Jameson. In the context of a supposed move to 'postmodernity', how are we to understand the urge to periodize in literary history, and how might the categories of modernity and modernism, in particular, dramatize that more general desire to categorize artistic and social change?

ENGL 559-01 (CRN 23381)
African Novels 1960-Present
Mirmotahari, E.

TH 6:00-8:40pm

Chinua Achebe and his peers posed a question at the 1962 African writers' symposium in Makerere, Uganda—what is African literature? “Was it literature produced in Africa or about Africa? Could African literature be on any subject, or must it have an African theme? Should it embrace the whole continent or south of the Sahara, or just black Africa? [...] Should it be in indigenous African languages or should it include Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Afrikaans, and so on?” This seminar will explore novels produced by African authors across language spheres (in translation) in the twentieth and twentieth first centuries—Arabic, Portuguese, English, French, etc. The seminar will arrive, not at typology or definitions, but at an understanding of the critical and pedagogical questions that have framed the study of African fiction in the west. Novels include Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Camara Laye's *L'enfant noir*, Naguib Mahfouz' *Midaq Alley*, Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo's *Las Tinieblas de tu Memoria Negra*, and Mia Couto's *Um Rio Chamado Tempo*.

ENGL 566-01 (CRN 20642)
Literary Theory
Barnhisel, G.

TTH 4:30-5:45pm

“Literary theory” is the catch-all name for the assumptions and approaches we bring to literature: what literature is, how it works, what makes it different from other communication, what makes it important, what is important within a literary text, how literature reflects and affects the societies and individuals and communications technologies that produce and disseminate it. In this class we will look at literary theory from the Victorian era to the present (with a quick glance back to Plato and Aristotle) and attempt to delineate the basic assumptions and methodologies of approaches such as the New Criticism, structuralism, deconstruction, Marxism, feminism, queer theory, the new historicism, and book history. Assignments will include several critical response papers, an oral presentation on one of the readings, and a term paper that will apply several of the theories we have studied to a text of the student's choosing.

ENGL 572-01/672-01 (CRN 23638/23639)
Writing Digital Media
Purdy, J.

MW 4:30-5:45pm

Digital writing and reading are now arguably the cornerstone of our communicative lives. How can we best prepare for such work? This course will address opportunities for and challenges of writing for digital spaces. Through studying—and participating in—the creation, circulation, and reception of digital texts, we will examine theoretical, ethical, and practical issues related to digital writing. Course topics will include digital literacies, remix practices; social media; deep, shallow, and machine reading; and online identity. Students will both analyze existing and produce their own digital texts. (No prior experience is required.)

ENGL 692-01/WGS 529 (CRN 23665/23400)

M 6:00-8:40pm

Seminar: Eighteenth-Century Drama and Material Culture

Engel, L.

Fans, gloves, patches, swords, muffs, china, feathers, and wigs, these are just some of the things represented in the theater of the long eighteenth century. This course will take a close look at the intersections between performance, gender, and material culture from 1660-1830. Considering texts (plays, memoirs, letters, pamphlet, periodicals), images (portraits, drawings, caricatures) and material artifacts (costumes, furniture, accessories), we will explore the complex relationship between things and subjects. The course will pay particular attention to the ways in which objects and accessories relate to the creation and materialization of gendered identities and constructions of sexuality during this period. We will read current scholarship on eighteenth-century consumerism, celebrity, fashion, and theater history as well as essays on performance theory, “thing” theory, gender theory, and the analysis of material and visual culture. Authors may include: Aphra Behn, William Wycherley, George Etherege, John Gay, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Hannah Cowley, Frances Burney, and Joanna Baillie.