

# English Department

## Graduate Course Descriptions

### Spring 2014

**ENGL 528-01 (CRN 28387) \ M/W 3:00-4:15pm**  
**Late Eighteenth Century British Literature**  
**Howard, S.**

This is a survey course that introduces students to the literature of Britain published from 1750-1800. We will read poetry, prose essays, travelogues, letters, diaries, plays, and novels with an eye to understanding the aesthetics of the period and additionally how what was going on in politics, society, and religion affected what people were writing. We will read the poetry of Gray, Thomas Warton, Yearsley, Barbauld, Burns, and Blake; the travel narratives of Boswell and Johnson; Burke's writings on the French Revolution and aesthetics; essays by Collier and Wollstonecraft; plays by Cowley and Goldsmith; novels by Burney, Walpole, and Godwin; letters from Talbot and Carter, Lennox and Johnson; the court journals of Frances Burney; and Equiano's autobiography. **This course has a 1.5 credit option available: ENGL 628-61 (CRN 28388)**

**ENGL 537-01 (CRN 27347) T/TH 4:30-5:45pm**  
**The Personal Essay**  
**Callanan, L.**

The Oxford English Dictionary defines an essay as an "action or process of trying or testing." In this class we will explore the significance of this definition for crafting the *personal* essay in particular. Not a memoir and not a critical essay, the personal essay brings together the two genres by creating a bridge between our individual experiences and the world around us. How do our experiences reflect something larger about our communities, our identities, or our political controversies? How can we understand ourselves as both an individual and as someone who is part of many overlapping larger structures and groups? And how can we explore those linkages—try or test them—in writing? These will be our challenges for the semester.

**ENGL 562-61 (CRN 21926) M 6:00-8:40pm**  
**Introduction to Linguistics**  
**Sowards, R.**

Why can you say *I am sleepy* and *I'm sleepy* but not *Donna is sleepier than I'm*? Why is *thirteen* pronounced *thirTEEN* in *I'm thirteen* but *THIRteen* in *I have thirteen goats*? How do we know these facts without having been taught them? In this course, we will answer such questions about our linguistic abilities through an introductory exploration of linguistics, the science of language. Our topics will include the structure of sentences and words, the sounds of language, and linguistic meaning, with an emphasis on fundamental theoretical issues. Time permitting, we may also explore the relationship between language and the brain, the mechanisms of learning a first language, and the role of language in society. **This course has a 1.5 credit option available: ENGL 662-61 (CRN 28389)**

**ENGL 558-61 (CRN 27306)**

**TH 6:00-8:40pm**

**Masculinity and American Fiction since the 1950s**

**Michael, M.**

This course will introduce students to American Fiction since the late 1950s, with an emphasis on issues of masculinity. Texts will be considered individually as well as in relation to their larger cultural, historical, and intellectual contexts. Some critical/theoretical reading will be required. In addition to the focus on masculinity, the course will examine recent American fiction's engagement with difficult issues such as violence, race, ethnicity, class, and gender more broadly as well as the position of the U.S. in the world—issues that are usually intertwined, that have dominated globally at the turn of the twenty-first century, and that have become increasingly visible to Americans since 9/11—and the difficulties fiction faces in engaging such issues in the wake of the questioning of representation and language that has characterized twentieth century fiction. The course is also intended to enhance the students' experience and skills of critical thinking, reading, and writing about literature. Active oral participation will be required: the course will be structured to emphasize engaged intellectual exchange among all participants and thus will take the form of seminar-style discussions.

The class will read selections from scholarly work on masculinity such as Michael Kimmel's *Manhood in America* and Guyland, R.W. Connell's *Masculinities*, Tim Edward's *Cultures of Masculinity*, Susan Jefford's *The Remasculinization of America*, Susannah Radstone's "The War of the Fathers," as well as fiction such as Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), Robert Coover's "The Babysitter" (1969), Tim O'Brien's *Going After Cacciato* (1975), Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007), Jess Walter's *The Financial Lives of Poets* (2010)—selection of texts has not been finalized. **This course has a 1.5 credit option available: ENGL 658-61 (CRN 27570)**

**ENGL 571-61 (CRN 28372)**

**M 6:00-8:40pm**

**20<sup>th</sup>-Century American Women Poets**

**Kinnahan, L.**

Is the use of gendered categories like "woman poet" still critically important, and if so, why and how? Within historical and theoretical frameworks, this course will seek to understand the critical history of this category and the range of poetics produced over the century by women writers attentive to the gendering of poetry and "the poet" by critics, poets, and general readers. How have American women poets intervened in or responded to both the denigration and the celebration of the "woman" as "poet"? What cultural work is imagined from a gendered standpoint by women writers? How are concepts like subjectivity, identity, creativity, and power imagined and explored within gender-marked poetry by women? How does poetry become a form of social or political expression for women? What experiments in writing do these poets and/or their readers link to gender? How do race, ethnicity, or class register in complex intersections with gender in poetry of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by women? The course will organize itself around such questions as we read three chronological clusters of poets: 1900-1940; 1940-1980; and 1980-present (moving into the "long 20<sup>th</sup> century"). We will read certain poets in more depth, and certain poets through shorter selections grouped with other poets, but we will encounter women such as Marianne Moore, Mina Loy, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Lola Ridge, Amy Lowell, Gwendolyn Bennet, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Genevieve Taggard, Muriel Rukeyser, Lorine Niedecker, Gwendolyn Brooks, Sylvia Plath, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Linda Hogan, Harryette Mullen, Sandra Cisneros, Kathleen Fraser, and others. **This course has a 1.5 credit option available: ENGL 671-61 (CRN 28377)**

**ENGL 566-01 (CRN 21927)**

**M/W 4:30-5:45pm**

**Literary Theory**

**Suh, J.**

This course will familiarize you with key terms and works of literary theory. We will consistently and actively engage debates concerning the role of the intellectual, the place of literary studies in society, and the boundaries between literary studies and other disciplines. To these ends, questions for the course include the following: What does cultural production do? What should it do? How does literature shape perception? What is the relationship between literature and human experience, individual or collective? What discoveries in other disciplines have contributed to the modern study of cultural production?

**ENGL 690-61 (CRN 28373)**

**T 6:00-8:40pm**

**Seminar - The Premodern Condition: Modernity, Neomedievalism, and Medieval Texts**

**Adams, A.**

This course will examine the vital connections between medieval literature and culture, contemporary critical theory, and a fascination with all things medieval that Umberto Eco and others have claimed characterize a renewed concern with 'premodernity' in the postmodern West. We will explore these connections through readings of Middle English literature and medieval political and philosophical writings, alongside contemporary discussions of spirituality, modernity, the nation-state, postcolonial studies, aesthetics, and medievalism in popular culture. Possible texts will include selections from Chaucer, the *Gawain*-poet, *Piers Plowman*, and medieval mystics, as well as Bataille, Panofsky, Eco, Holsinger, Strohm, and Powys. No previous experience with medieval literature is required.