

English Department

Graduate Course Descriptions

Spring 2016

ENGL 510-61/613-61 (CRN 24174/24175)

Special Studies: English Renaissance Drama

W 6:00-8:40 pm

Kurland, S.

William Shakespeare is just the best known and most influential of an extraordinary group of playwrights who flourished in London during the English Renaissance. Arbitrarily excluding Shakespeare himself (except for a brief foray into *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which will be produced this semester by The Red Masquers), this course will explore plays in various genres by writers who influenced Shakespeare, like Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe, and writers whom he in turn influenced, notably Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton. We will focus this semester on relationships between plots and places, real and imagined, including rural and small-town England, the dynamic metropolis of early modern London, and recognizably "foreign" locations like Italy. Particular attention will be paid to the historical, theatrical, and cultural contexts in which these plays were written and first performed. Class will be organized around discussion. For graduate students taking the course for 3 credits, grading will be based primarily on a series of analytical essays of increasing length and complexity, including a substantial final paper incorporating outside research. Essays will be supplemented by individual and group projects and presentations. For graduate students taking the course for 1.5 credits, grading will be based primarily on individual and group projects and presentations. No specific knowledge or preparation is assumed, though previous exposure to Shakespeare is, of course, highly desirable.

ENGL 533-61/633-01 (CRN 24299/24474)

Romanticism in Philosophy and Literature

M 6:00-8:40 pm

Eyers, T.

Romanticism remains a highly nebulous term in both literary studies and philosophy. Simultaneously taken to denote an historical period and a generic set of characteristics, romanticism is conventionally understood to involve various aesthetic attempts to heal the rift between humanity and nature opened up by historical modernity. In this course, we will read together the distinct traditions of late 18th Century and early 19th Century British Romantic poetry and German Romantic aesthetic theory, with a view to pursuing a more unsettling, less ameliorative vision of the romantic project, one that attends as much to the disturbing figural ambiguities of literary romanticism as to its political ambitions and historical import. Poets read will include Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Mary Robinson and William Blake; German thinkers studied will include Hölderlin, Novalis and Schlegel.

Framing this comparative pursuit will be the more contemporary question of why and how romanticism became, in the late 20th Century, the genre of choice for a school of theorists determined to overturn historicist and organicist conceptions of literature. Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman and, to a lesser degree, Harold Bloom all alighted upon romanticism in order to revolutionize from within formalist, New Critical and historicist assumptions about poetic form and artistic expressivity more generally. Why is romanticism so often the vehicle for these attempts to interrupt literary-critical and philosophical orthodoxies?

ENGL 536-61/636-61 (CRN 24170/24171)

Victorian Literature: The One and the Many

Gibson, A.

T 6:00-8:40 pm

This graduate class will introduce you to many of the key features of Victorian literature, with a particular focus on the major literary forms of the period (including the multiplot novel, the dramatic monologue, serial installments, and sensation and detective fiction). Our subtitle – “the one and the many” – ties together many of the texts we will be reading this semester. Consequently, our questions might include the following: What is the relationship between the individual and society in Victorian literature? Is the individual conceived as one contained self or as many interrelated components? How do we understand a whole text or a single installment in relation to a novel’s many serial parts? How do the plots of a multiplot novel relate to one another? How does this era consider its relationship to an increasingly expanding evolutionary past?

Our reading method in this class will be a little unusual. We will begin the semester in the 1840s with Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and Robert Browning’s dramatic monologues and end the semester in the 1890s with science fiction. In the middle, we will read like the Victorians: serially. Our central texts will be George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* and a Wilkie Collins sensation novel (*The Woman in White* or *The Moonstone* depending on the class’s preference). We will read both novels in installments simultaneously, along with some short excerpts from contextual non-fiction from the period, contemporary reviews, and critical pieces. Along the way, we will reflect upon the experience of serial reading, evaluating how attention to publication and reception impacts our understanding of literary form.

You will write regular reading responses, present on a contextual topic related to the course material, and write a final paper of 15-20 pages. We will dedicate one class towards the end of the semester to a “mini conference,” in which you will each present a short conference-style version of / section from your final project to receive feedback on your work-in-progress from the class.

ENGL 539-61/639-61 (CRN 24172/24173)

19th Century American Poetry

Barrett, F.

TH 6:00-8:40pm

This course will focus on a field that some scholars are calling the “new poetry studies,” a long overdue consideration of the extraordinarily rich and varied body of poetry written in the US from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century. In our readings, we will resituate Whitman and Dickinson in their contemporary discursive contexts in order to understand the ways that they are very much connected to their own time; further, by reading widely from the work of other poets, we will explore just how complex, varied, and innovative the broader field of poetry is in this era. Over the course of the semester we will consider three larger questions: first, how does the entrance of growing numbers of women into the literary marketplace shape poetry’s formal, thematic, and political commitments? Second, how do poets use their work to endorse and/or challenge mid-nineteenth century gender roles? Third, how does poetry shape debates about abolition and racial difference across this era? In pursuing these three larger questions, we will also ask, why might women writers and writers of color have been drawn to the genre of poetry in particular? What does this genre offer them that other genres cannot? How does the genre of poetry change the profession of authorship in this era? Since the study of nineteenth century American

poetry has been fundamentally shaped by the work of feminist scholars, we will read widely from the debates about the recovery of non-canonical writers. Readings for the course will include the poetry of Dickinson, Whitman, Lydia Sigourney, George Moses Horton, Frances Harper, Dave the Potter, Phoebe Cary, Sarah Piatt, Herman Melville, and Henry Timrod among others. We will situate these readings in the context of the popular song, journalism, and visual culture that shape these writers' aims.

ENGL 566-01 (CRN 20642)

Lit Theory

TR 4:30-5:45 pm

Wright, S.

This course will provide an overview of literary theory, with a particular emphasis on current debates and discussions in the field. We will discuss the assumptions and methodologies of New Criticism, structuralism, Marxism, feminism, queer theory, and new historicism; and explore emerging fields including ecocriticism and disability theory. In so doing, we will discuss what literature is, how it works, and why it matters, while questioning the role of the intellectual and examining the relationship between societies, individuals, and literary texts. Assignments will include short response papers, presentations, and a seminar paper that will apply literary theory to a text of the student's choosing.

ENGL 568-01 (CRN 24476)

Public Writing and Writing Publics

MW 4:30-5:45 pm

Stinnett, J.

This course will address public writing as both a practice and a topic of study. We will explore how rhetorical construction of a "general public" shape and are shaped by the form, content, delivery, and circulation of texts intended for that public. Course materials and assignments will take up questions like: How do we define public writing? Who constitutes the public for which such writing takes place? How does a particular view of the public call forth specific kinds of texts? How might texts create the public? To what extent does a particular idea of "the public" limit the rhetorical potential of public debate and how is this expressed in public texts? What are the possibilities for texts to create new publics or even "counter" publics? Students will address these questions and others both by examining existing public texts and producing texts intended to speak to and shape what constitutes *the public*.

ENGL 695-61 (CRN 24371)

Spst: Joyce and Faulkner

M 6:00-8:40 pm

Barnhisel, G.

Dubliner James Joyce and Mississippian William Faulkner created the most ambitious, most experimental, and arguably greatest works of twentieth-century fiction. In this course we will read major works by both of these writers in order to analyze how they operate as aesthetic objects, how they advance the modernist project, and how they comment on their times and

places. We will read (by Faulkner) Absalom, Absalom!, The Sound and the Fury, “The Bear,” and portions of Go Down, Moses; (by Joyce) selected stories from Dubliners, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and Ulysses in its entirety.

ENGL 700-01 (CRN 241758)

Thesis – English

TBA

Engel, L.

ENGL 701-01 (CRN 21385)

Dissertation – FT

TBA

Engel, L.

ENGL 703-01 (CRN 22064)

Expanded Research Paper

TBA

Engel, L.

ENGL 710-01 (CRN 20643)

Readings

TBA

Engel, L.