

CORNELL UNIVERSITY
Department of English
Graduate Courses
Fall 2018

Graduate

6000 Colloquium for Entering Students 2 credits.

M 2:30 -4:25

Mann, Jenny

An introduction to practical and theoretical aspects of graduate English studies, conducted with the help of weekly visitors from the English department. There will be regular short readings and brief presentations, but no formal papers. The colloquium is required for all entering PhD students; MFA students are welcome to attend any sessions that interest them.

6110 Old English 4 credits. (Also ENGL 3110, MEDVL 3110, MEDVL 6110)

MWF 11:15 -12:05

Hill, Thomas

In this course, we will read and discuss some of the earliest surviving English poetry and prose. Attention will be paid to (1) learning to read the language in which this literature is written, (2) evaluating the poetry as poetry: its form, structure, style, and varieties of meaning, and (3) seeing what can be learned about the culture of Anglo-Saxon England and about the early Germanic world in general, from an examination of the Old English literary records. We will begin by reading some easy prose and will go on to consider some more challenging heroic, elegiac, and devotional poetry, including an excerpt from the masterpiece *Beowulf*. The course may also be used as preparation for the sequence ENGL 3120/ENGL 6120.

6180 The Imaginary Jew: Roots of Antisemitism in Medieval England 4 credits. (Also JWST 4180, MEDVL 4180, MEDVL 6180, ENGL 4180)

R 12:20 -2:15

Zacher, Samantha

When did anti-Semitism begin? The medieval period invented shocking fictions about Jews--that they killed and ate Christian babies; that they desecrated the Host; that they were the murderers of Christ. In manuscripts Jews were visually compared to beasts, devils, and perverts. By law, Jews were forced to live in ghettos, wear distinctive dress, abstain from certain professions, and suffer exile. Beginning with Shakespeare's Shylock, we will work our way back through visual and literary treatments of Jews in the Middle Ages, reading texts by Chaucer, chronicles, miracle stories, crusader romances, and mystery plays. Drawing on recent theories of the other we will also consider how medieval representations of Jews and other minorities were used to construct medieval communal, religious, and political identities.

6190 Chaucer and Gower 4 credits. (Also MEDVL 6190)

W 12:20 -2:15

Galloway, Andrew

Chaucer: founder of English Literature. Gower: who that? "Friend of Chaucer"? The most famous non-famous founder of English Literature? A dull moralist, or a brilliant literary interlocutor with Chaucer? This seminar is intended to introduce both of them, or, for those who know something of them, offer opportunities to think further about them in new ways, and in either case use their known interactions to think about literary communities, literature and its social setting, and literary "debates." The seminar will not require prior knowledge of Chaucer or medieval English literature, but we will arrange an additional weekly hour or so to practice reading and understanding fourteenth-century London English. We'll also read some modern anthropological theory, some readings of sources, and a selection of critical writing.

6390 Studies in Romanticism: Wordsworth, Keats, and Critics 4 credits.

R 2:30 -4:25

Chase, Cynthia

This seminar will be a close encounter with the poetry of Keats and Wordsworth, occasioning an exploration of how to write and read literary criticism. Some questions we'll consider: How can we think about poetry in terms of its reception—how it fits into a social, literary, and cultural history—and also in terms of its stunning gratuitousness, its inexplicable production? How did Keats and Wordsworth each achieve a recognizable voice and (eventually) cultural authority, while radically altering poetic diction and offending class-inflected taste? As well as reading some recently written critical essays that are especially far-reaching or especially problematic, we will read Keats's and Wordsworth's own critical writing. Requirements: oral presentations in class, plus the drafting of two critical papers and completion of one.

6525 Modernism, Media, and Mediation 4 credits.

T 10:10 -12:05

Braddock, Jeremy

What was the position of literary writing among the new media technologies that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century? How did modernist writers respond to a social and political situation in which access to media and information was at once widely distributed, and consolidated by corporations and the state? This class pursues continuities between past and present, against today's claims of heroically disruptive innovation and new crises for literature. Reading a range of key media theorists, it examines the way specific means of storage and transmission (radio, wax cylinder and gramophone, photography, film, and several forms of print) were both represented and employed by writers including Pound, Hughes, Dos Passos, Rukeyser, Fearing, N. West, O. Welles, MacLeish, Kay Boyle, and Bob Brown.

6556 Rethinking Trauma Theory
4 credits. (Also COML 6556)

W 2:30 -4:25

Caruth, Cathy

This course will serve as an introduction to trauma theory as it (re)emerged near the end of the 20th century as well as a rethinking of its fundamental terms in light of new theoretical developments and global perspectives. We will explore questions of temporality, inscription, archive and erasure in psychoanalytic, post-structuralist, techno-mediatic and politically-inflected thinking about trauma (including new ideas of futurity and event in nuclear and environmental criticism). Central to the course are problems of traumatic address as they emerge in literature, film, performance and new media (and encompass questions of the human and the animal, gender and race). We will also reconsider the problem of conceptualizing trauma across languages, cultures and periods and in new modes of 21st century catastrophe.

6620 Captivity and Poetics of the Undocument
4 credits.

T 12:20 -2:15

Brady, Mary Pat

How does captivity structure belonging? How does captivity torque assemblage, citizenry, and structures of refusal such as maroonage? Captivity rebounds across and through U.S. literary history beginning with slave narratives and captivity tales and moving forward with the rise of labor and internment camps, reservations, boarding schools and onward to detention and deportation. How then does captivity inflect contemporary literature? In addition to early captivity and slave narratives, we will explore contemporary texts that ruminate on captivity including Fred Moten's *Huston's Tavern*, Deborah Miranda's *Bad Indians*, Melissa de la Cruz's *Something in Between*, José Mateo's *Migrante*, Junot Diaz's *Oscar Wao* as well as theoretical work by Christina Sharpe, José Rabassa, Eduard Glissant, Christina Beltran, Katherine McKittrick, Dionne Brande, and Manuel de Landa.

6707 Theory and Method
4 credits.

R 12:20 -2:15

Anker, Elizabeth

This course investigates the state of criticism and theory today, in relation to the long history of that intellectual tradition. We'll ask about whether theory can be identified by distinctive styles or structures of reasoning (whether attention to metaphor, or paradox, or suspicion), and we'll explore whether and why recent debates question or challenge those orientations. In so doing, we'll read more classic or canonical texts and thinkers (Nietzsche, Freud, Ricoeur, Derrida) alongside contemporary developments (affect theory, Latour, postcritique, biopolitics). We'll pose a series of intentionally wide-ranging questions: how should we define theory as an intellectual formation? Does theory entail a particular account of the subject, of modernity, of politics, of aesthetics/poetics? How does theory influence our methods of reading texts?

6725 Aesthetics and Politics of Touch: From Phenomenology and Postcolonial Theory to Immersion and Interactivity
4 credits. (Also COML 6920)

T 12:20 -2:15

Murray, Timothy

The course will consider the aesthetic and politics of "touch" in dialogue with critical, artistic innovations.. Emphasizing differentiations between interactivity and immersion in art and theory, the course will discuss renewed critical emphasis on the legacy of phenomenology (from Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze to affect theory) in dialogue with recent writings on global critical race and sexual theory (Mbembe, Stoeber, Ganguly, Lalu, Moten, Spillers, Cardenas). Designed as an archive-based course, students will be invited to shape the second part of syllabus around works featured in the Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art and in the 2018 CCA Biennial on "Duration: Passage, Persistence, Survival" with the aim of staging a theory/practice final exhibit/performance based on conceptual approaches to "touch."

6733 The Future of Whiteness
4 credits. (Also ENGL 4733)

R 10:10 -12:05

Mohanty, Satya

How should anti-racist people respond to the new racialized white identities that have emerged recently in Europe and the United States? What alternative conceptions of whiteness are available? How can we form cross-racial progressive coalitions? How should we understand the nature of our social identities and what they make possible? This course is a wide-ranging introduction to these questions with readings drawn from social and cultural theory, as well as literature and film. Films include *Get Out* and *I Am Not Your Negro*, as well as such Hollywood classics as *Imitation of Life*. Texts by such writers as James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Danzy Senna and Dorothy Allison, as well as relevant anthropological and social-theoretical work (*Strangers in Their Own Land*, *Whiteness of a Different Color*) and memoirs of anti-racist activists. A central text will be the recent book *The Future of Whiteness* by the Latina feminist scholar Linda Martin Alcoff.

6774 Queer Time in Contemporary Fiction
4 credits.

M 12:20 -2:15

McCullough, Kate

What might it mean to queer time, and why might a fiction writer want to do so? In this seminar we will address these questions, reading both theory and fiction to explore the relationships among sexuality, time, and narrative form. We will track queer temporality both at the level of the stories authors tell and at the level of the formal strategies and structures they use to tell them and will ask what sorts of queer world-making possibilities are produced from these uses of queer time. We will begin by tracking the debate between the Utopian and the Antisocial strains of queer theory's work on temporality, reading such theorists as José Esteban Muñoz, Elizabeth Freeman, Lee Edelman, Judith Halberstam, and others; we will also consider work emerging from queer literary theory. Fiction under consideration may include texts by Alison Bechdel, Marusya Bociurkiw, Carol Rifka Brunt, Tony Kushner, Mia McKenzie, Achy Obejas, Monique Truong, and Craig Womack.

7800 MFA Seminar: Poetry
5 credits.

T 2:30 -4:25

Hutchinson, Ishion

Required course for MFA poetry students only.

7801 MFA Seminar: Fiction T 2:30 -4:25 **Morgan, Robert**
5 credits.

Required course for MFA fiction students only.

7850 Reading for Writers: Revolution R 2:30 -4:25 **Vaughn, Stephanie**
4 credits.

This course will look at writers, living and dead, whose work does something so unusual—in the form it defines for itself, in its choice of subject, in its construction of voice, or the conversation it initiates with other art forms—that it may alter the way we think about what fiction can do or be. Readings will include short stories (including some flash, sudden or minute fiction) and novels (plus an occasional foray into poetry) and may include works by Donald Barthelme, Jamaica Kincaid, Willa Cather, Junot Díaz, Edgar Allan Poe, Lydia Davis, W. G. Sebald, Italo Calvino, Denis Johnson, Elizabeth Bishop, Seamus Heaney, and W. G. Sebald.

7960 Placement Seminar
3 credits.

This seminar will help prepare graduate students for the academic job market. Though students will study sample materials from successful job applicants, much of the seminar will function as a workshop, providing them with in-depth feedback on multiple drafts of their job materials. Interview skills will be practiced in every seminar meeting. The seminar meetings will be supplemented with individual conferences with the placement mentor, and students should also share copies of their job materials with their dissertation committees.

Courses Originating in Other Departments

6766 Practicum in Performance Criticism and Dramaturgy MW 2:55 -4:10 **Gainor, Ellen**
4 credits. (Also PMA 4866/6866, ENGL 6766)

The function of the theatre critic is well understood, but the role of the dramaturg remains mysterious in the American theatre. Yet theatre critics and dramaturgs use many of the same research, analytic, and writing skills, and need the same knowledge of history, literature, and culture to perform their duties effectively. This practicum, designed for advanced undergraduates and graduate students, allows participants to develop skills central to these complementary professions. The course includes units on writing effective performance reviews, working with student playwrights on script development, preparing materials for directors, designers and actors, writing program essays for audiences, and selecting/preparing translations for production. While our focus will be on the theatre, students with interest in applying these skills to film/television/media or dance contexts are welcome.

6785 Linguistic Theory and Poetic Structure TR 1:25 -2:40 **Bowers, John**
4 credits. (Also LING 2285, LING 6285, ENGL 6785)

Poems are among the most highly structured linguistic objects produced by human beings. While some of the devices used in poetry are arbitrary and purely conventional, most are natural extensions of structural properties inherent in natural language itself. This course explores the ways in which poetry is structured at every level, from rhyme to metaphor, and shows how certain results of modern linguistics can usefully be applied to the analysis and interpretation of poetry. After introducing some basic linguistic concepts, we'll look at how literary notions such as rhyme, meter, enjambment and metaphor can be formally defined in linguistic terms. These results will be applied to the analysis of particular poems and shown to yield novel and interesting insights into both their structure and interpretation.

ASIAN 6621 Literary Stricture M 9:00-11:00 **Admussen, Nick**
3 credits. (Not cross listed with English)

This course argues that modern literary strictures - such as market forces, censorship, and new media forms - are contiguous with and interpretable in the same way as more traditional literary strictures like meter, rhyme, and tonal regulation. It asks how we can come to a more thorough understanding of contemporary art by treating its sociological and political context as a source of generative restraint. Theoretical texts will range from Foucault to Vaclav Havel; primary texts will be drawn from contemporary Chinese fiction, poetry and film. All texts will be made available in English for non-Chinese speakers.

GERST 6315 Posthumanism, Cybernetics, Systems Theory W 12:20-2:15 **Gilgen, Peter**
4 credits. (Not cross listed with English)

This graduate course provides an in-depth exploration of the recent emergence of Posthumanism as a new theoretical paradigm in cultural and literary studies. Hardly a unified theory, Posthumanism draws on a wide variety of precursors and inspirations—in the natural sciences, the philosophy and history of science, the social sciences, and different theory paradigms in the humanities—all with the intention of transcending a world view that is exclusively premised on human needs and measures. Thus, posthumanist theorizing in the widest sense includes many recent additions to the critical canon, such as eco-criticism and animal studies. It is the underlying hypothesis of this course that much posthumanist thinking is recapitulating—consciously or unconsciously—many of the insights of cybernetics and systems theory, and that tracking this genealogy helps in clarifying the stakes and challenges of posthumanist theory.