Graduate

6000 Colloquium for Entering Students
2 credits.
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.

6155 Theory and Analysis of Narrative
4 credits. (Also COML 6793)
Study of short stories and a novel that self-consciously foreground questions of narrative form and technique and the process of reading. Authors to be read include Balzac, Borges, Calvino, Coover, Cortazar, Kafka, Kincaid, and others selected by the students. We will also read theoretical essays on the analysis of narrative by Barthes, Bakhtin, Genette, Fludernik, Pratt, Altsman, Lanser, and others, focusing on questions about relations between plot and narrative discourse, the discrimination of narrators, the role of gender, and interpretive frameworks for thinking about narrative. Short exercises, an oral report and a longer paper.

6225 What is Writing?
4 credits.
A myriad of texts bear witness to the emancipatory power of writing: the autobiography of Frederick Douglass and Virginia Woolf's *Room of One's Own*, to name just two. This course will explore how scholars and theorists (Juliet Fleming, Chris Johnson, Greg Ulmer, Walter Ong, Bernard Stiegler, Catherine Malabou) have approached writing since Derrida first proposed the (impossible) science of grammatology and identified writing as a *pharmakon*. We will return to some of the texts that were key to post-structuralist theory, Plato's *Phaedrus* and Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*; and we will also consider how media theory has inflected our approaches to writing. To keep after the question of what writing is (even if we cannot ever know its ends), we will also look to literary works that have tried to address that question; here, authors may include Christine de Pizan, Philip Sidney, Herman Melville, Franz Kafka, James Joyce, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Ishmael Reed.

6285 Early Modern Translations
4 credits.
Translation is a cultural, conceptual, and political problem. It lies at the heart of the literary itself. Methodological discussions of "world" literature hinge on it, and Renaissance culture is unthinkable apart from it. The Renaissance—defined in terms of transmission and reception of ancient texts—is itself, in a way, translation. Tied to philosophical and theo-political problems of origin and copy, Truth and falsehood, fidelity, heresy and betrayal (as the Italian maxim *traduttore, traditore* attests), translation raises questions of sameness and identity, originality, authority, property, sacredness and evil. The seminar explores these questions in texts from Luther, Cervantes and Montaigne, through Benjamin, Derrida and Agamben. Particular focus is on the early modern as template and groundwork for the complexity and centrality of translation to life.

4 credits.
This course will explore postwar US poetry through the lens of what might be called micro-periodization. Taking the decade as a privileged frame of reference, we'll ask what recognizable shifts in style, institutional placement, and cultural value occur as we move from the 50s to the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s. These temporal modulations will serve as an alternative to the spatial demarcations that have typically shaped accounts of postwar poetry—e.g., by region, school, movement, etc. We'll consider, for example, how the loosely paratactic style that emerges in the 50s (Ginsberg, Lowell, Bishop) gives way in the 60s to a lyric mode that blends epiphany and epigram (Merwin, Wright, Creeley), yielding in turn to a more discursive style in the 70s (Ammons, Ashbery, Rich).

6635 Literature of the Civil War
4 credits.
The works we will read this term imagine and embody a nation's survival when it faces war within its own boundaries. With a primary focus on poetry and novels, we will also look at photographs, political cartoons, recruitment posters, and trading cards—items that give a visual resonance to the iconography of national violence. Asking about gendered and racialized embodiments associated with the national project on both sides of the conflict, we will want to find out how gender, race, and nation are written into 19th-century North America.
Things Fall Apart has been translated into over 50 languages but has not yet been translated into Igbo, the author’s mother tongue. Heart of Darkness would be a close equivalent if it had never been translated into Polish. How can it be that Africa’s most famous book does not yet exist in Igbo? By looking at the growth and standardization of English first in England and then its implementation through colonial education in Africa, you will get a good grasp of the relationship between language, identity, and decolonization as a contradiction within the English metaphysical empire. We will therefore be exploring philological debates in Romantic England and post-colonial Africa.

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.

This course will examine Giorgio Agamben’s recently completed nine-volume Homo Sacer project. Beginning with Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (1995) and ending with The Use of Bodies (2015) we will follow Agamben’s thought as it addresses such topics as biopolitics, the legal order, political theology, oikonomia, work and inoperativity, form-of-life, and others. We will also read Agamben in relation to a number of his influences and interlocutors, such as Arendt, Benjamin, Benveniste, Derrida, Foucault, Heidegger, Kantorowicz, and Schmitt.

The course will explore the philosophy, psychoanalysis, and politics of sound along the artistic interface of cinema, video, performance, and new media art. From analysis of synchronization of sound and image in the talking movie to its disruption in experimental music, video, new media and sound art, we will consider the prominence of sound and noise as carriers of gender, ethnic and cultural difference. We also will explore the theory of sound, from tracts on futurism, feminism, new music, and sampling, to more recent acoustic applications of eco-theory in which sound merges with discourses of water and environment. In addition to studying a wide range of artistic production in audio, sound, new media, and screen arts, we will discuss the dialogical impact of theoretical discussions of sound in psychoanalysis and aesthetics, as well as the phenomenal growth of digital acoustic horizons in the Pacific Rim.

This course will examine cosmopolitanism as a cultural, moral, and political concept both historically, with reference primarily to the eighteenth century, and theoretically, in contemporary debates. The aim will be to elaborate critically the universalist and egalitarian premises of the Enlightenment notion of cosmopolitical subjects and to evaluate what progressive or ideological functions this notion continues to play in discourses on sovereignty, human rights, religious tolerance, and cultural dissemination and aesthetic community. Works by Cicero, Hobbes, Adam Smith, Rousseau, Kant, and Marx will be read with those by Arendt, Balibar, Derrida, Foucault, Heidegger, Kantorowicz, and Schmitt.

Required course for MFA poetry students only.

Required course for MFA fiction students only.
7850 Reading for Writers: Pleasure and Complexity
4 credits. (Also ENGL 4850)

In this seminar, we'll read poetry and fiction with attention to aspects that recount or impart the experience of pleasure. We might venture into Epicurean philosophy, “happiness studies,” the aesthetics of complexity theory. How do emergent structures contribute to a reader’s satisfaction? How do difficult works create a vertiginous sublime or resonant ambiguity? Why do elegies or stories of suffering afford pleasure? When reading poetry, we’ll consider the immanence created by excess, near non sequitur, emotional valances. Reading fiction, we’ll think about tension, characterization, language, closure, cultural relevance. Though pleasure is a variable, we’ll explore elements that create it. In addition to assigned texts, students will offer works that give them joy. Not limited to writers; all advanced undergraduates and graduate students are welcome.

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.

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