Graduate

6120 Beowulf 4 credits. (Also ENGL 3120, MEDVL 3120, MEDVL 6120)  
Beowulf is about monsters, dragons and heroes and is the longest and most interesting Old English heroic poem. In this course we will read the poem in the original and discuss the critical and scholarly problems which the poem presents. Some knowledge of Old English is appropriate, but the class is open to beginners in Old English who will be provided with tutorial help in preparing and reading assigned passages. Among the topics we will discuss are the relationship of Beowulf to “pagan” practice and belief, the related question of “Christianity and Paganism” in the poem, “Beowulf and the tradition of Germanic heroic poetry”, “Orality and Christian Latin learning” and “Beowulf, Tolkien, and the modern age”. The course will be open to student initiatives, if students wish to explore such topics as Beowulf and archeology or the historical context of the poem.

6270 Advanced Seminar in Shakespeare 4 credits. (Also ENGL 4270)  
Henry V, Richard III, Macbeth… Shakespeare created riveting, lively, provocative drama when he laid creative hands on the chronicle histories. How does this dramatized history speak to us? What does it say about human agency, material circumstances? These plays debate political philosophy, political theology; they ask compelling questions about rulers and subjects, authority and subversion, dissent and rebellion, women and power. Dramatizing events of the past, with an eye toward contemporary concerns, Shakespeare gives us solemn reflections, violent actions, and witty and entertaining episodes. He invites us to ponder the stakes of history itself, the meaning of historical events, the shaping roles of rhetoric and emotional expressiveness. We will read the plays with chronicle selections, secondary material, and consider the place of cinematic adaptations.

6325 The Counter-Human Imaginary 4 credits.
Making a world for human purpose and understanding is a collective power that defines “reality.” Does that power rule out those counter-intuitive, contrapuntal, or polyphonic realms that humans represent as “nonhuman”? In the “massive consensus” of the modern cultural imaginary, where are material objects? where is climate, ecology, geology? where are animals? Everywhere. The “human” cultural imaginary should also be seen as a “counter-human” imaginary: as a world-making that embraces those realms that are contrapuntal to the human, and not subject to human definition. This course seeks to conceptualize the counter-human imaginary and to develop a critical apparatus for the counter-intuitive or the polyphonic, in literary culture from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century. Readings include Defoe, Swift, Sewell, Auster, Murakami, habermas, Anderson, Ghosh.

6480 Forms of Knowledge in the 19th Century 4 credits.
What kinds of knowledge does Victorian literature make? Attending to representations of small scales of interiority as well as vast living systems, we will consider when and how novels and poems enfold the knowledge practices of ethics, biology, sociology, psychology, and philosophy. Raymond Williams writes of a naive nineteenth-century realism, “We thought we had only to open our eyes to see a common world,” but we will examine how Victorian literature creates as well as distorts images of a common reality as it reimagines practices of knowing. We will also evaluate the consequences of recent accounts of the novel as information, and of critical efforts to forge methods for interdisciplinary scholarship. Likely authors include Austen, Gaskell, Tennyson, Dickens, Eliot, Carroll, Hardy, and Stoker; theorists include Moretti, Gallagher, Poovey, Jameson, Foucault, Daston, Deleuze, and Thacker.

6495 Black Aesthetics in the Long Nineteenth Century 4 credits.
This course will examine the development of a self-conscious black aesthetic and literary criticism in the long 19th century, beginning with Phillis Wheatley’s Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects (1793) and ending with W.E.B. Du Bois’s Souls of Black Folk (1903). We will give special attention to form (particularly seriality), black performance (through the Colored Conventions movement) and affect (through black religious traditions). How have print culture methodologies and changing understandings of the “archive” changed the way we construct African American literary histories? What is the relation between black artists and Western aesthetics, a tradition that remains hostile to black expressive culture? In that sense, we will simultaneously probe early black aesthetic discourse and situate it within and against aesthetic discourse(s) more broadly.

6535 Literature and the State: Spies, Diplomats, Bureaucrats 4 credits.
This class will survey 20th century writers who simultaneously worked in the service of state information networks as spies and civil servants. How might participation in cultural-political institutions of the Cold War have conditioned late modernism both ideologically and formally? We will assess key genres of the period—spy novel, campus novel, structuralist code-work, memoir of state service—and see what writers did when modernist tropes of cross-cultural contact become the mediated province of state offices in the mid-century. This class will examine novels, poems, memoirs, as well as a range of theories of how literature interacts with the bureaucratic state.
Exploring a genealogy of Latinx, Afro-Latinx, Black, Indigenous, and Chicana/o/x theorizations of modernity and identity, the course asks, what is the decolonial? Is it a space between the colonial and post-colonial? Is it a creative process, an intellectual theorization, or a historical period? Is it a performance, intervention, or embodied experience? Tracing a historical trajectory of the decolonial in poetry, performance, installation, and visual art, the course examines decolonial modes of making and being in the early and mid-twentieth century, as well as twenty-first century applications. Artists and authors include Gloria Anzaldúa, Chela Sandoval, Nao Bustamante, Luis Alfaro, Emma Pérez, José Saldívar, Rupert García, Tommy Pico, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Regina José Galindo, James Luna, Adál Maldonado, Coco Fusco, Nelson Maldonado Torres, and many other decolonial producers who are concerned with existence and resistance in the western hemisphere.

7100 Advanced Old English
4 credits. (Also ENGL 4100, MEDVL 7100)
Wisdom literature is the literary expression of the received ideas that define the religious, cultural, and political ideals of a community. It is rich, interesting, and sometimes very strange. It is also one of the best attested genres preserved in Old English. We will read some poems that are explicitly sapiential, such as the *Exeter Maxims* which gather gnomic statements, proverbs and “sentential statements.” Others, such as *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*, are poems of lament and reflection, but include extensive wisdom passages. In addition to wisdom poetry as such, there is an extensive corpus of vernacular riddles in Old English and riddling poetry is closely related to wisdom poetry. In Proverbs 1:6 wisdom texts are described as the riddles of the wise. And finally, the corpus of Old English law, which is the only surviving corpus of early Germanic law in the vernacular, preserves a great deal of wisdom literature as well as more explicitly “legal” texts. Previous knowledge of Old English is not required.

7810 MFA Seminar: Poetry
5 credits.
Required course for MFA poetry students only.

7811 MFA Seminar: Fiction
5 credits.
Required course for MFA fiction students only.

7890 Pedagogical and Thesis Development
4 credits.
This is a required course for students pursuing an MFA degree in Creative Writing. The course will focus on the pedagogical methodology and philosophical approaches to teaching creative writing. The workshop format will include readings, guest speakers, lesson plan development, and the vetting of syllabi. Graduate students in both poetry and fiction will share ideas on teaching and thesis development.

Courses Originating in Other Departments

7775 LAW - Critical Perspectives on Law
3 credits. (Also No ENGL offering)
Over the last few decades, numerous strains of legal scholarship have leveled sweeping critiques of law. Scholars have criticized law for deep-seated failures involving class, gender, sexual orientation, race, citizenship, etc. This course explores the history of these critique-based movements and approaches, while also examining their contemporary status. It focuses on Critical Race Theory, Critical Legal Studies, the Law and Economics Movement, and Feminist and LGBT Jurisprudence. Our goals will be not only to understand the genesis of these important grounds for critiquing law and to consider how they may intersect, but also to question the potential limitations confronting such critique-based perspectives on law.

Interested students will need to complete the Non-law Student Course Request form found on our website at [https://support.law.cornell.edu/students/forms/Non-law_student_course_request.pdf](https://support.law.cornell.edu/students/forms/Non-law_student_course_request.pdf). The form should be sent to the Law School Registrar at law.registrar@cornell.edu.