

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

SPRING 2016

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<http://english.buffalo.edu>

ENG 524: TASTING BEAUTY: 18TH CENTURY BRITISH AESTHETICS

PROF. RUTH MACK

Friday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 23238 (B) 23239

When Henry Fielding begins his novel *Tom Jones* with a “Bill of Fare,” or menu, he jests about what was quickly becoming a commonplace in eighteenth-century Britain: aesthetic judgment—frequently referred to as “taste”—might not be so far from the experience of savoring a piece of mutton. In this course, we will consider how this came to be, in the dramatic turn from rationalism toward the empiricist notion that judgments of beauty are like all other experiences through the senses: universal and immediate.

Writers of an experiential aesthetics might take the road of high philosophy or, as Joseph Addison did, a common periodical. In many senses, this is an aesthetics of the people. Moreover, it is a social aesthetics, concerned with the organization of society and with its improvement. Unlike later Kantian aesthetics, which separated the moral from the aesthetic, eighteenth-century empiricist aesthetics sees judgments of taste as judgments of virtue. Thus, we will ask: how is this new focus on aesthetics bound up in the new commercial society of the period? What does it entail for theories of society? What, indeed, is society’s status as an aesthetic object? Moreover, writers in our aesthetic tradition are often unclear about whether the aesthetic is entirely psychological or whether it can be traced back to something in the object itself. What does this entail for our thinking about the definition of the subject and its relation to the object world?

We will read the major philosophers and theorists of the period: Shaftesbury, Addison, Hutcheson, Hogarth, Reynolds, Hume, Burke, Reid—and, finally, Kant. But we will also be concerned with the way these ideas about beauty—and, later in the century, the sublime—are developed in literature and writings about society. Thus, we will also read poetry by (among others) Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Elizabeth Carter, Charlotte Smith; novels by Henry Fielding, Sarah Scott, Samuel Johnson, Sophia Lee.

ENG 527 – DIGITAL HUMANITIES: METHODS AND MODELS**PROF. NIKOLAUS WASMOEN**

Wednesday 3:30-6:10, Cooke 114

Registration Numbers: (A) (B)

Too often the scope of digital scholarship in the humanities is reduced to a mere question of increased efficiency or scale: the digital humanities as a set of tools for doing more of the same, with a minimum of theoretical or critical friction to established disciplinary practices and paradigms. What would a truly *critical* digital humanities look like? In this course, we will explore the potential of the digital humanities to suggest new paths for research and fresh opportunities within existing programs of study or ongoing scholarly projects. Each week we will review an active digital humanities site in light of readings selected from a wide variety of interdisciplinary perspectives on digital scholarship. Through a series of collaborative workshops, students will be equipped to design and execute digital projects that significantly contribute to active debates within their own academic field(s) or areas of interest. Workshops will address not only the building of digital resources such as editions, archives, and datasets, but also the analytical and creative methods through which cultural documents and information can be made available for impactful digital scholarship, including data modelling, text analysis, mapping and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), data visualization, and techniques for the processing of visual images, among others. No previous knowledge or technical skills required or assumed. We will discuss ways for students to pursue their interests beyond the bounds of the seminar, in support of which efforts we will also discuss how grant and publication processes affect the way that digital projects are proposed and evaluated, especially with regard to opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Students will be assessed based on workshop projects, reflection papers, and weekly response posts to the class blog. Undergraduate students may choose to pursue an independent project proposal in lieu of one of the reflection papers. Graduate students will additionally choose to complete either an independent project proposal or a longer position paper.

ENG 529: PAIN—AND THE VICTORIAN NOVEL**PROF. RACHEL ABLOW**

Thursday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 1032

Registration Numbers: (A) 23240 (B) 23241

“In the very word feeling, all that is implied in the word Consciousness is involved”

--- James Mill, *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* (1829)

“Are you in pain, dear mother?”

“I think there's a pain somewhere in the room,” said Mrs. Gradgrind, “but I couldn't positively say that I have got it.”

--- Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1853)

The past few years have seen an enormous increase of critical interest in the study of feeling. Whether they define it in terms of physiological sensation, emotional response, or perception, *tout court*, literary, cultural, and political theorists have begun to re-examine feeling as something much more than the abjected “other” of reason. As David Hume insisted in his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), “Reason is, and ought to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.” Recently, critics as diverse as Gilles Deleuze, Lauren Berlant, and Veena Das have started investigating the vast political, social, and psychic implications of this and related notions.

This course seeks, first, to provide an introduction to recent theoretical debates about feeling and affect. What exactly is feeling? How do I know what I know, what I believe, what I desire, and what I feel? How do I know that what I am feeling is real? How do I know that what I am feeling is mine? Specifically, we will be focusing on the nature, status, and consequences of pain. Pain is often taken as the limit case for considerations of the subject: it is the one thing about which we cannot help be certain, and as such it effectively defines the boundaries between human beings. This course will seek to put pressure on this equation of pain with privacy and begin to think about what alternative accounts might look like.

The second goal of this course is to examine how these questions are formulated and addressed in the context of Victorian fiction. These questions are central not just to understanding the stakes involved in contemporary debates about feeling, but also to any study of the Victorian novel. Hence, alongside the theoretical questions we will be asking feeling, we will also be asking literary-historical questions about the development of certain aspects of the novel form.

Theorists for the course will include some or all of the following: Lauren Berlant, Stanley Cavell, Veena Das, Gilles Deleuze, Julie Ellison, Brian Massumi, Sienna Ngai, Adela Pinch, Elaine Scarry, Eve Sedgwick, Susan Sontag, Rei Terada, Raymond Williams. Victorian writers will include: Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, Thomas Hardy, John Stuart Mill, John Henry Cardinal Newman, Anthony Trollope.

ENG 541: FICTION INTENSIFYING: The Rhetoric of Fiction in Public Discourse

PROF. DIMITRI ANASTASOPOULOS

Monday 7:00-9:40, Clemens 436

Registration Numbers: (A) 20611 (B) 20612

Patrik Ourednik writes of his novel *Europeana* (a history of the 20th century) that “the primary question [of the book] wasn’t to know what events, what episodes were characteristic of the twentieth century, but which syntax, which rhetoric, which expressiveness belonged to it.” Ourednik’s fiction is concerned primarily with information rather than critique or historical analysis. In this spirit, the book addresses many topics—from philosophy to psychology, the moon landing to Barbie dolls, the death of humanism to the ethics of Amish people and a rise in popularity of pets, etc.—which subject the reader to torrents of sheer information, and which

expose the question behind Ourednik's political and historical narrative: how does information/data produce meaning?

Our work in this course is twofold. First, we will consider Ourednik's assertion that the history of the 20th century can be examined primarily as an experience of language. Second, we will attend to the work of critics who argue that fields outside literature—science, economics, finance—have increasingly embedded or exploited the language of fiction within their own rhetorical operations.

In politics, for instance, Jonathan Culler has noted the frequent use of omniscient narration during the George W. Bush presidency. In economics, journalist John Kay has argued that fictional narratives rely on a suspension of disbelief to overcome detailed examinations of financial facts: "Arguments based on faith are impossible to refute: if magic fails, it is because we do not believe enough in magic; if credibility fails to bring about the desired outcome, it is because our commitment is too weak to establish credibility." Critic Jeffrey Nealon has likewise noted that "the practices of economics are these days becoming more overcoded by the language of poetics than the other way around (even the value of your home is a bardic "performative" rather than an objective "constative" entity)." In his conception of Post-Postmodernism as it relates to literature, Nealon argues that the intensification of fiction is now a feature of everyday life.

While we take our cue from these writers and critics as they examine the growth, intensification, or mutation of fictional techniques in the operations of politics, economics, and culture, we'll try to reverse the literary habit that renders texts (especially novels) into "equipment for living." Instead, we'll read fictions that already incorporate the rhetoric of information and meaning production into themselves, therefore drawing few distinctions between fiction inside the book and fiction outside. In other words, the status of these novels and fictions as alternative models of (and guides to) reality will be examined along with the ways in which they rhetorically deploy public or political discourse within the language of fiction.

Possible Texts & Excerpts: Felix Feneon's *Novels in Three Lines*, Teju Coles' Twitter (Drone tweets and others), Anais Nin's *Diary*, Peter Handke's *Sorrow Beyond Dreams*, Walter Abish's *How German Is It*, Don DeLillo's *Mao II*, Ourednik's *Europeana*, Percival Everett's *Erasure*, Max Frisch's *Man in the Holocene*, Karen Tei Yamashita's *I Hotel*, Christine Brooke-Rose's *Amalgamemnon*, Bruno Latour's *Aramis, or the Love of Technology*, Julio Cortazar's *fantomas versus the multinational vampires (an attainable utopia)*, and/or Antoine Volodine's *Post-Exoticism in 10 Lessons, Lesson 11*.

For secondary sources, we will read essays from Nealon's *Post-Postmodernism*, Franco Moretti's *Distant Reading*, Mary Poovey's *Genres of the Credit Economy and History of the Modern Fact*, John D'Agata's *Lifespan of a Fact* (also part of *About a Mountain*), Daniel Rosenberg's "Data before the Fact," Markus Krajewski's "Paper as Passion," Jenny Holzer's LED poems, as well as assorted opinion pieces and blog essays.

ENG 545: LIKE HELL IT IS: SAMUEL BECKETT'S HERE AND NOW**PROF. DAMIEN KEANE**

Tuesday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 1032

Registration Numbers: (A) 23242 (B) 23243

It is society, and society alone, which dispenses, to different degrees, the justifications and reasons for existing; it is society which, by producing the affairs and positions that are said to be "important," produces the acts and agents that are judged to be "important," for themselves and for the others – characters objectively and subjectively assured of their value and thus liberated from indifference and insignificance. There is, whatever Marx may say, a philosophy of poverty, which is closer to the desolation of the tramp-like and derisory old men of Beckett than to the voluntarist optimism fundamentally associated with progressive thought...[W]hat is expected of God is only ever obtained from society, which alone has the power to justify you, to liberate you from facticity, contingency and absurdity; but – and this is doubtless the fundamental antinomy – only in a differential, distinctive way: every form of the sacred has its profane complement, all distinction generates its own vulgarity, and the competition for a social life that will be known and recognized, which will free you from insignificance, is a struggle to the death for symbolic life and death...The judgment of others is the last judgment; and social exclusion is the concrete form of hell and damnation. It is also because man is a God unto man that man is a wolf unto man.

Pierre Bourdieu, "A Lecture on the Lecture"

what is not beyond my powers known not to be beyond them song it is required therefore I sing

Samuel Beckett, *How It Is*

It has become increasingly common to find Samuel Beckett invoked as the artist of our moment, as the author whose uncompromising turn from the world as it is offers a guide to how we might again think the conditions of our tomorrow, after the bollocksing we've gotten today, and yesterday. At the same time, Beckett's face has famously been used in an Apple print ad that required of us to "think different," while the webinar- and tattoo-friendly words "Try again. Fail again. Fail better" now serve as devotionals in the start-up revolution. How to go on, or to school even, when the possibility, in a word, of the world, so called, being remade is at once, but also always, or almost, about to happen everywhere, or thereabouts?

This course will not attempt to answer that question in any holistic way, but will instead function as an introduction to Beckett's works, while also considering the historical and political conditions in which they were produced and the social and institutional formations in which they were received. In doing so, the seminar will additionally provide an entry-point to some of the more recent methodological questions that have transformed the field of modernist studies. We will read selections from each period of his writing career and of most of the genres in which he wrote: novels (*Murphy*, *Watt*, the earlier "trilogy" [*Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*], *How It Is*); shorter fiction (*Texts for Nothing*, *The Lost Ones*, *Fizzles*, and the later "trilogy" [*Company*, *Ill Seen Ill Said*, *Worstward Ho*]); drama, for the stage, radio, and television (*Endgame*, *All That Fall*, *Happy Days*, *Play*, *Eh Joe*, *Not I*, *Footfalls*, *Rockaby*, *Catastrophe*, and *What Where*); and some of the poetry and translations (several entries in Nancy Cunard's *Negro: An Anthology*). Throughout the semester, we will examine Beckett's acute attention to the particular; to the details of physical, habitual, constrained existence; and to the social materiality of the here and now.

Critical readings may include works by: Theodor Adorno, Alain Badiou, Pierre Bourdieu, Pascale Casanova, Steven Connor, Gilles Deleuze, Terry Eagleton, John Frow, Lisa Gitelman, Clement Greenberg, John Guillory, Jean-Michel Rabaté, Jonathan Sterne, and Raymond Williams, as well as more recent historical, genetic, and media-related scholarship on Beckett's writings.

Course requirements for all registered students will include one fifteen-minute (about two single-spaced pages) oral presentation; and, for intensively registered students only, either a final research essay (twenty pages) or a conference-length paper plus a bibliographic essay. The expectations for the final project are realistic, meaning there will be no incompletes granted for the seminar. In addition, it is mandatory that potential auditors contact me before the start of the semester.

Lastly, students are asked to familiarize themselves prior to the start of the semester with the biographical details of Beckett's life. Highly recommended is the short, illustrated primer: Gerry Dukes, *Samuel Beckett* (2002).

ENG 548: CREATIVE WRITING FICTION

PROF. NNEDI OKORAFOR

Wednesday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 1032

Registration Number: 21651

Description not yet available.

ENG 550: POETRY

PROF. MYUNG MI KIM

Wednesday 7:00-9:40, Clemens 538

Registration Number: 21652

This studio seminar invites thinkers and makers of poetry to consider the heterogeneous condition of poesis.

To open the semester, we traverse disciplines, genres, mediums to read, see, hear, observe the making of making. Among other texts, objects, thinkers, and artists, we will engage the work of On Kawara, Christian Marclay, Cixous' *The Writing Notebooks*, Agnes Varda's *The Gleaners and I*, and the archives of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha.

We then turn our attention to the interarticulation of poesis and poetics in the work of Lorine Niedecker, Susan Howe, Robert Duncan (and others). Seminar participants will be asked to formulate an archival project they wish to pursue in relation to the Duncan holdings at the Poetry Collection.

Students will share weekly critical and creative posts as well as individual projects in poetry writing with emphasis on dialogic, attentive, and collaborative exchange. By the end of the semester, participants will have a substantial body of writing (creative/critical) that may translate to a set of essays and/or a manuscript of poetry.

This seminar is dedicated to the practice of making and in particular, to the radical potential for the transformative in the practice of poetry.

ENG 576: LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

PROF. JOSEPH VALENTE

Tuesday 3:30-6:10

Registration Numbers: 24621 (A section) and 24622 (B section)

Disability in Modern Literature

Modernism must be counted a seminal moment in the cultural representation of disability. Indeed, it is not an overreach to hazard that the mentally challenged in particular first become visible as full-fledged literary subjects under the modernist aegis. That is to say, although the figure of the “idiot,” “imbecile,” “natural,” or “feeble-minded” populates a notable cross-section of the nineteenth century canon—from Wordsworth’s “The Idiot Boy” to Gaskell’s “Half a Lifetime Ago” to Bronte’s *Villette* to Dickens’ *Little Dorrit* and *Barnaby Rudge*[1]—modernism was the first literary movement or assemblage to consistently give us both physical and cognitive disability as not just an object of derision or pity, sentimentality or paternalism, high racial anxiety or *fin du monde* panic, as something more too than a convenient mirror or metaphor for broader, tangentially related social concerns, but additionally as a distinct estate or cluster of conditions that subtends a legitimate alternative perspective on and experience of the everyday. I say “not just” and “additionally” here because far from disappearing, those received stereotyping attitudes towards the disabled persisted in experimental twentieth century literature alongside an increasingly affirmative identification with them. The result is a complex double-image of disability, differentiated by type, whose innovativeness, like that of so many high modernist artifacts, resides in its staging of an agon between conservative, even reactionary impulses on one side, and progressive, even revolutionary impulses on the other. During the semester we will examine this dichotomy as triangulated by constructs of gender and nationality historically specific to the modernist epoch: Texts will include *Dracula*, *The Secret Agent*, *The Return of the Soldier*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *Nightwood*, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, *The Well of the Saints*, *My Left Foot*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, *Other Voices*, *Other Rooms*.

[1] Patrick McDonagh, *Idiocy: A Cultural History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008).

ENG 581: AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE: BLACK ORIENTALISM**PROF. JANG WOOK HUH**

Thursday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 436

Registration Numbers: (A) 23246 (B) 23247

At the dawn of the twentieth century, W. E. B. Du Bois declared, “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line.” When Du Bois cast race as a worldwide

issue, he was envisioning the global solidarity of people of color, including not only Africans and Caribbeans but also Asians. Du Bois's writings on "Afro-Asian" connections gave rise to a variety of other African American literary works that reimagined the meaning of racial emancipation and black radicalism through representations of Asia. On the one hand, these black writers idealized Asians as their comrades against white supremacy. On the other, they resisted the force of "Black Orientalism," or fetishized portrayals of Asians, calling attention to racial dissonances within Asia. This course explores how African American writers read and re-read Asia in seeking to unveil the global racial line and imperialism. Questions to be considered are: How do narrative tropes play a critical role in making visible global politics? How do black writers seductively develop "Black Orientalism," and at the same time, self-reflexively revise it? How does "Afro-Asia" function as a critical category to identify and critique hidden forms of racism and imperialism? How do African American writers' engagements with Asia across the Pacific resonate with, and depart from, their cultural exchanges across the "Black Atlantic"? Readings may include work by Frederick Douglass, Du Bois, Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, Patricia Powell, Paul Robeson, George S. Schuyler, and Richard Wright; and secondary scholarship by Kate Baldwin, Brent Edwards, Paul Gilroy, Lisa Lowe, Bill V. Mullen, Vijay Prashad, Edward Said, Michelle Ann Stephens, and Etsuko Taketani. No prerequisites are required.

All seminar participants will make a fifteen-minute oral presentation and write bi-weekly response papers. Seminar participants who are registered intensively will write a research paper (18-25 pages).

ENG 584: POETICS: The Political Economy of Affect

PROF. JUDITH GOLDMAN

Tuesday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 21653 (B) 21654

They took enjoyment in those who owed them something. We love you to stay this way, poor, working for us, they said, we want to be your Patrons. – Lorine Niedecker, "Uncle"

This course aims to traverse a vast and complex body of portrayals and theorizations of affect, feeling, emotion with special focus on our contemporary social-political-cultural dispensation: the current disjunctive convergence of accelerated neoliberalism, biopolitics, environmental extremity, and new media/ubiquitous computing. As we engage with the poetics of feeling – the grounding conditions, formal qualities, and potentially non-linear processes bound up with affective ontology and phenomenology – we will be concerned with its politics, how feelings shape and are shaped by material and ideological relations among asymmetrical social positions: in other words, how they form a *political economy of affect*. As we work towards understanding feeling as always historically contextual, transpersonal, and differential, we will especially hone in on and question protocols of affective legibility, assignation, and propriety, as well as logics of affective entitlement/privilege and affective exploitation.

This course is also addressed to the *affects of political economy*—from new forms of affective labor; to the potent affective fabric generated through precarity, massive inequality, and debt; to the production of "bare life" as "human waste" (people rendered permanently "extraneous" to capitalist

economic relations); to the traumatic fallout of resource-motivated, postcolonial necropolitics; to the perma-fear basis of the unfathomably expensive US security state. Other topics may include new media circulation/transmission of affect; disability, affect, sexuality, and caretaking; race/ethnicity as affective comportment, race and performance; affect under and “after” slavery; the gendering and queering of affect; microaggression; relational art and its critiques; the affect of environmental disaster; music and affect (especially contemporary forms of personalized consumption and modes of mimicry and fandom); affect in sports; sub-personal affect and the body; vulnerability studies and the affect of the state of exception; Occupy-; military affect; practices of national memorialization and reconciliation. Affect theorists we’ll cover potentially include Plato, Aristotle, Smith, Hume, Freud, Lacan, Klein, Riviere, Kristeva, Abraham and Torok, Tomkins, Sedgwick, Butler, Deleuze, Massumi, Ngai, Berlant, Ahmed, Muñoz, Puar, Moten, Hardt and Negri, among others. In light of critical events/patterns of violence in the last few years, we will devote special attention to tangled, pressing matters of injured identity and affect-based politics. There will also be two special topics in feeling: melancholia and grudge-holding/vengeance.

Throughout this course, our study will be greatly informed by weekly readings in contemporary (mainly North American) poetries – themselves perspicuous critical inquiries into, as well as operators, performers, and circuits of, affect. Poets/works may include:

CA Conrad’s somatic poetry	David Wolach, <i>Hospitalogy</i>
Robert Kocik and Daria Bain’s Phoneme Choir	Rob Fitterman, <i>Holocaust Museum</i>
Lauren Shufan, <i>Inter Arma</i>	Shane McCrae, <i>forgiveness forgivene</i>
Leslie Scalapino, <i>The Dihedrons Gazelle-Dihedrals Zoom</i>	Sarah Dowling, <i>Down</i>
Claudia Rankine, <i>Don’t Let Me Be Lonely</i> and <i>Citizen</i>	Cassandra Troyan, <i>Kill Manual</i>
Ed Roberson, <i>City Eclogue</i>	Trisha Low, <i>The Compleat Purge</i>
Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, <i>Hello, the Roses</i>	Laura Elrick’s video poem <i>Stalk</i>
Dawn Lundy Martin, <i>Life in a Box Is a Pretty Life</i>	Anne Boyer, <i>Garments Against Women</i>
Lonely Christopher, <i>Death & Disaster Series</i>	Jennifer Tamayo, <i>You Da One</i>
Trish Salah, <i>Lyric Sexology, Vol. 1</i>	Rob Halpern, <i>Music for Porn</i>
Danielle Pafunda, <i>Natural History Rape Museum</i>	Christine Wertheim, <i>mUtter—bAbel</i>
Nathanaël, <i>Je Nathanaël</i>	Cathy Park Hong, <i>Translating Mo’um</i>
Mira Gonzalez, <i>i will never be beautiful enough to make us beautiful together</i> ; etc.	

Readings in the theory of language as carrier of affect (Kristeva; Blasing; Riley), translation theory, and theory of lyric will sharpen our focus on poetic form.

Finally, we will also work with other media, including music, visual art, novels (possibly Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, or Kincaid’s *Annie John*), and film and video (possibly Trecartin; Denis’ *White Material*; Black’s *Life and Debt*; Muniz’ *Waste Land*; Chang-dong’s *Poetry*; Oppenheimer’s *The Act of Killing*.)

ENG 585: DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP AND PEDAGOGY

PROF. ALEX REID

Monday 4:10-6:50, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 23248 (B) 23249

This course considers the effects of emerging media technologies on scholarly practice and teaching in English and across the humanities. If your scholarly interests include digital humanities or media study, if you are seeking pedagogical expertise with technology, or if you are simply interested in exploring the effects digital media are having on our profession, then this course will be of interest to you. In part the course will have a practical dimension, affording students the opportunity to experiment with various applications and software as they are used for scholarly publication and for teaching (no particular technical expertise required). However the course will also investigate three broad questions.

1. How are literacy and rhetorical practice shifting in the digital age? What are the implications of this for English studies in particular?
2. How are digital media changing scholarly genres and shaping the communities academics form? What kinds of digital expertise will scholars who are not explicitly in the digital humanities or media studies need to acquire?
3. What are the challenges digital media present to pedagogy from the top-down corporate-institutional moves of technologies like MOOCs (massive open online courses) to the in-class concerns of teaching students with their laptops and smartphones?

Planned readings include Kathleen Fitzpatrick *Planned Obsolescence*, Elizabeth Losh *The War on Learning*, Katherine Hayles *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis*, Mark Hansen *Feed-Forward: On the Future of Twenty-First Century Media*, Sarah Arroyo *Participatory Composition: Video Culture, Writing, and Electracy*, Jody Shipka *Composition Made Whole*, Brian Rotman *Becoming Beside Ourselves: The Alphabet, Ghosts, and Distributed Human Being*, and other related essays.

Students taking the course intensively will choose between writing a conventional seminar paper and pursuing a digital project (which may be done collaboratively). Intensive and extensive students will be expected to participate in online discussion and make an in-class presentation.

ENG 587: EMILY DICKINSON, in Editorial and Cultural Contexts

PROF. CRISTANNE MILLER

Monday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 1032

Registration Numbers: (A) 23250 (B) 23251

This course will have Dickinson's nearly 1800 poems as its primary point of focus, but we will approach those poems through three primary lenses:

- 1) the editorial history of Dickinson's poetry and the question of why she chose (?) not to publish—with particular focus on the extent to which editorial activity is interpretive and provides often unarticulated framing implications affecting how one reads the poetry; we

will also talk about Dickinson's own framing decisions, to the extent that we can understand them from the manuscripts she has left us;

- 2) the cultural context of her writing—including brief attention to some of her peers (Whitman, Longfellow, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning) and to some of the primary events of her lifetime—most significantly, the Civil War;
- 3) and the focus of recent criticism on Dickinson's oeuvre, both letters and poetry.

My teaching of this course coincides with the publication of my own new edition of Dickinson's "complete" poems, and students will be asked to use this edition (which I may have to provide in photocopy or in pre-release publication copies: stay tuned!). The most useful comparative edition will be R. W. Franklin's 1-volume *Poems* (1999).

This is an exciting moment in Dickinson studies. Students will be encouraged to submit papers for a June 2016 Emily Dickinson International Society (EDIS) conference in Paris, focusing on Dickinson's multiple "performances" or aspects of the performative in her work (other topics are also welcome). EDIS also offers a fellowship for graduate student work on the poet—a dissertation chapter or essay in progress. A biopic (starring Cynthia Nixon) will soon be released, perhaps together with a (more accurate?) documentary. Recently, almost all ED's poetry manuscripts have been put on line (edickinson.org) and there have been a flower show at the NY Botanical Gardens featuring ED, a conference in China on ED and Translation, and multiple new critical publications. While much has been written on Dickinson, there is crucial and exciting work to be done, and in this seminar we will talk about many of those new directions of potential exploration and understanding.

ENG 606 – NATIONALISM AND BRITAIN (Studies in the Middle Ages)

PROF. RANDY P. SCHIFF

Tuesday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 23252 (B) 23253

As the recent, heatedly contested referendum on Scottish independence from the United Kingdom makes clear, multiple modes of nationalism circulate within the modern British nation-state. The principal strains of nationalism competing directly with British identity (namely, English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish) often invoke deep ethnic, regional, and historical roots. Our course will survey general theories of nationalism; will examine particular brands of nationalism attached to Britain (with special attention to English, Scottish, and Welsh variants); and will survey key pre-modern literary works in direct dialogue with current nationalist agendas. We will engage with seminal theories of nationalism that address its temporality, including those who argue for the modernity of the nation-state (such as Anderson, Gellner, and Smith) and those who argue for its antiquity (such as Chatterjee, Gat, and Hastings). We will engage with influential studies of British and intra-British nationalisms, reading work by analysts such as Colley, Davies, and Kumar. While exploring key medievalist work on race, geography, and nation (by critics such as Cohen, Davis, Heng, Ingham, and Lavezzo), we will survey vital

literary texts that allow us to assess the temporality of the nation. Arthurian works such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, Marie de France's *Lanval*, and Malory's *Morte D'Arthure* will allow us to set notions of empire against particular strains of ethnic identity within a multicultural, multilingual, pan-British literary tradition. We will also look at seminal texts associated with Scotland (Barbour's *The Bruce*) and Wales (*The Mabinogion*), in order to consider the continuity of modern and premodern identities. All students taking the course will make one formal seminar presentation; students taking the course intensively will write a seminar paper of 15-20 pages.

ENG 610: SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

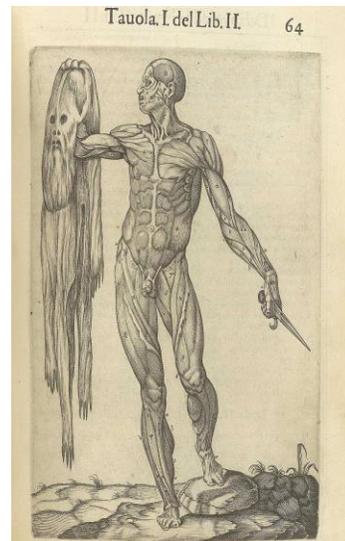
SHAKESPEARE AND THE SCIENTIFIC IMAGINATION

PROF. CARLA MAZZIO

Thursday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 23254 (B) 23255

Description: Shakespeare's London was veritably exploding with new technologies, discoveries, ideas and debates about the natural world and the place of scientific knowledge in culture and society. This seminar will explore Shakespearean plays and poems in terms of social and philosophical issues related to early modern cultures of experiment, attitudes toward ecology and environment, the changing status of intuitive and abstract knowledge, the making of artificial life and miniature worlds, and questions about material cultures and scientific mentalities. In the process of opening up new avenues of inquiry into early modern approaches to the study of nature (with possible attention to optics, alchemy, anatomy, medicine, cartography, physics,



horticulture, cosmology, meteorology, craft-based or artisanal knowledge and early forms of "life science"), we will focus on close and careful analysis of the plays and surrounding cultural texts to explore imaginative dimensions of science and the scientific dimensions of poetry and drama. **Goals:** This seminar has three central goals. First, it will serve as an introduction to the study of Shakespearean drama and poetry at the graduate level, with attention to new directions in Shakespeare Studies as of 1616 (four hundred years after the death of Shakespeare, which will be marked by heightened attention to both Shakespeare on local, national, and international stages). Second, the course aims to introduce seminar participants to historical, cultural, and theoretical issues at stake in developing new approaches to Shakespeare in relationship to the history of science, science studies, and the history of the book and technology. Third, and most generally, it aims to open up questions about the contemporary status of the humanities in relationship to the sciences, introducing

participants to some hotly debated issues at present about Shakespeare and “scientism, the digital humanities, and the future of literary and humanistic study in the 21st century.

ENG 651: QUEER BLACK PERFORMANCE

PROF. HERSHINI YOUNG

Thursday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 436

Registration Numbers: (A) 23256 (B) 23257

The class will be on **Queer Black Performance** and will focus on current theorizations of raced sexuality, particularly though not exclusively through the lens of performance studies. Texts that we will be reading from include:

1. Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures by L.H. Stallings
2. Nobody is Supposed to Know: Black Sexuality on the Down Low by C. Riley Snorton
3. Excerpts from Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings by Juana Maria Rodriguez coupled with Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique by Roderick Ferguson Introduction and Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics by Jose Esteban Munoz
4. Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human by Alexander Weheliye.
5. Citizen: An American Lyric by Claudia Rankine
6. Against the Closet: Identity, political longing, and Black Figuration by Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman
7. Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology by Michelle Wright
8. Extravagant Abjection: Blackness, Power, and Sexuality in the African American Literary Imagination by Darieck Scott (Introduction)
9. Territories of the Soul: Queered Belonging in the Black Diaspora by Nadia Ellis
10. Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects by Christina Sharpe (excerpts)
11. Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates
12. Crip Theory: Cultural signs of Queerness and Disability by Robert McRuer
13. Blackness and Disability: Critical Examinations and Cultural Interventions by Christopher Bell

ENG 653: ENVIRONMENTALISM WITHOUT GUILT

PROF. ELIZABETH MAZZOLINI

Monday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 1032

Registration Numbers: (A) 23499 (B) 23500

Contemporary environmentalism often takes the dismal form of exhorting people to buy certain products. That’s only the tip of the (melting) iceberg, though—so many aspects of humans’ relationship to nonhuman nature seem to be tied up in individual action and guilt. In this course we will inquire into how this situation came to be, and into attempts at alternative configurations. That is, we will try to draw out the ways contemporary environmentalism, both popular and

academic, is predicated on guilt, and then we will read attempts to reconfigure the human relationship to nonhuman nature outside of this paradigm. Our inquiry will include reading literature, theory and scholarship from three primary areas: the environmental humanities, feminist science studies, and critiques of contemporary liberalism. Within this triangulated area, we will map how concerns with nonhuman nature locate themselves with respect to broad humanistic traditions, as well as more recent developments in academic thought.

With all this in mind, some of our discussion will no doubt coalesce around such questions as: What are the benefits and costs of using the term “anthropocene”? What are the capacities of academic environmentalism regarding non-normative bodies and identities? How do artistic and theoretical contributions from the global south shift the ground of the environmental humanities? How does the central humanism of environmental scholarship hold up under the so-called materialist turn?

We will begin with Nietzsche, Bataille and Foucault, but then move quickly to more contemporary work. Other possible or likely authors include Stacy Alaimo, Eli Clare, Donna Haraway, Vicky Kirby, Bruno Latour, Stephanie Lemenager, Jeffrey Nealon, Rob Nixon, Richard Powers, Catriona Sandilands, Indra Sinha, and others. Students will write weekly response papers, an abstract, and a research paper, as well as make a short presentatio

ENG 653: CRITICAL THEORY: THEORIES OF THE GIFT

PROF. STEVEN MILLER

Wednesday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 1032

Registration Numbers: (A) 17751 (B) 17752

One of the great paradigms of 20th century thought—acting as an interdisciplinary switch point between the anthropology, sociology, political economy, psychoanalysis, Marxism, feminism, and literary criticism—is the theory of the gift. This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to this vast field of inquiry. We will spend time on a series of fundamental texts by Marcel Mauss, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Georges Bataille, Marshall Sahlins, Lewis Hyde, and C.A. Gregory. And then in the second half of the semester, we will examine the precise ways in which the theory of the gift plays a formative role in the work of Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, and feminist theorists such as Gayle Rubin, in addition to considering how it might retroactively orient transformative readings of Marx and Freud. At every stage of our investigation, of course, we will not fail to notice that questions of literature inevitably enter into this field of inquiry.

ENG 682: DOCUMENTARY PRAXIS**PROF. BRUCE JACKSON**

Monday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 610

Registration Number: 23569

The key difference between documentary work grounded in the real and artistic work grounded in the imagination is this: artistic work grounded in the imagination has no accountability save to its own internal coherence. If there is magic, and it makes sense in the narrative, then it is perfectly legitimate. Documentary work always has an external accountability. It strives to represent something, but it is accountable to the reality of it. James Agee, in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, referred to the difference in his writing and the people about whom he wrote: the real people had, he said, a “weight” in the world that his words and Walker Evans’ photographs could only approximate.

This is a seminar for people documenting aspects of ordinary life in visual, aural and print media. It is not a class for people learning how to use their hardware; it’s for people who know how to use it and who are engaging or who are ready to engage the quotidian with it. Participants will be expected to define a project, to present work in progress and to talk with other members of the seminar about it and listen to their responses to it, and to have, at the end of the semester, a body of work worth presenting to other people. We’ll talk about the ethical issues involved in such work. My ideal final session will be one open and public in which everyone shows something finished and edited or something in progress that is nonetheless interesting. Participants will also do a presentation for other members of the seminar about the work of a documentary artist chosen from a list I will provide or agreed on by us.

ENG 689: POETICS OF TEXTUAL PHYSIOGNOMY**PROF. MING-QIAN MA**

Tuesday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 436

Registration Numbers: (A) 23258 (B) 23259

International in coverage and (roughly) chronological in approach, this seminar will focus on a poetic art that has often been covered by the umbrella label of visual poetry. Following a discernable and yet arguable genealogy, it will study pattern poetry from “once upon a time”

(Higgins) to the 1900, modern/avant-garde visual poetry from 1900s to 1950s, concrete poetry from 1950s to the 1970s, and the visual-concrete-experimental (Jackson, *et al*) poetry and the “new concrete” from 1970s to the present.

As indicated by the phrase “textual physiognomy,” this seminar will look into diverse aspects of the visual-formal innovations manifested on the page and inquire into their significances as well as implications in the context of visual culture at large, past and present. Issues to be addressed in the seminar will include, but not limited by, the historical and theoretical discontinuity between pattern poetry and visual poetry, the functions of poetries as such, the logic of vision, formal/spatial/visual aesthetics, artistic paradigms of the constructivists and the expressionists, relations between visual and non-visual languages, the pictorial vs. the imagistic, the look/view/vision/visuality dynamics, the role of physicality/materiality, concrete vs. “dirty concrete” (McCaffery), among others.

A tentative reading list of some of the major texts for the seminar would include the following:

Willard Bohn. *The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry: 1914-1928*

----- *Modern Visual Poetry*

----- *Reading Visual Poetry*

Dick Higgins. *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature*

Hill, Crag. *The Last Vispo Anthology: Visual Poetry 1998-2008*

K. David Jackson and et al, ed. *Experimental-Visual-Concrete: Avant-Garde Poetry since the 1960s*

Mary Ellen Solt ed. *Concrete Poetry: A World View*

Tullett, Barrie. *Typewriter Art: A Modern Anthology*

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