

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GRADUATE
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
FALL 2015

ENG 501 – INTRODUCTION TO SCHOLARLY METHODS

PROF. CARRIE BRAMEN

Tuesday 9:30-12:10, Clemens 1032

Registration Numbers: (A) 18010 (B) 20589

All new students in the English Department's Masters Program are required to take English 501, which is designated *Introduction to Scholarly Methods*. Doctoral students are also welcome to take this course as its main concern is relevant to all of us: How do you write compelling and engaging academic prose? Why is the professionalization of academic writing often accused of being dull? And for whom do we write when we write an academic essay?

This course is methodological---a composition course at the graduate level—but it is also polemical. We will discuss challenging issues that do not have easy answers: Should academic writing be clear or difficult? What is the case that each side makes in defending a distinct academic stylistics? We will read Wayne Booth's *The Craft of Research* (2nd edition), in addition to Helen Sword's *Stylish Academic Writing* (Harvard 2012) and Jonathan Culler and Kevin Lamb's collection *Just Being Difficult: Academic Writing in the Public Arena* (Stanford 2003).

The writing will involve various genres: a book review, a conference proposal, a conference paper, and finally a seminar paper. The latter will be synergistic, in that the seminar paper will develop from one of your other seminars and we will work on the assignment in our course. The final paper, in other words, will serve a dual purpose: it will satisfy the final requirement for our seminar as well as for your other intensive seminar.

This course is divided into two sections, A and B, which have different formats: the A section is a conventional seminar, whereas the B section does not have a common meeting time, but instead consists in individual advisement tailored to your specific needs. All new M.A. Program students must enroll in the A section, and full-time students should also enroll in the B section. (Full-time students can enroll in the A section on-line, and they will be automatically enrolled in the B section.)

English 501 A is intended to enhance our familiarity and facility with the kinds of questions literary scholars ask today and their strategies for answering them. We will study various critical approaches and gain a grounding in research methods.

(Please note that while the A and B sections of this course can count toward your eight-semester requirement for the M.A. and while the A section is required for all new M.A. students, neither the A nor the B section of this course counts toward the four intensive seminars required for the degree.)

ENG 502 – INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL THEORY

PROF. SUSAN EILENBERG
Friday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 1032
Registration Number: 19067

Description not available.

ENG 507 – OLD ENGLISH

PROF. JEROLD FRAKES
Registration Numbers: (A) 23712 (B) 23736

Graduate students will meet with Eng 302 (see listing below) and do the same language-learning work as the undergraduates. One extra meeting (time to be arranged) per week is required of graduate students, in which more advance work appropriate for the graduate level will be done.

ENG 302 – OLD ENGLISH

Tuesday/Thursday, 11:00-12:20, O'BRIAN 210

Old English often has a bad reputation, as if the course itself were as dark and ghoulish as the monsters that Beowulf has to fight. Well, it doesn't have to be like that. Most students who get turned off by Old English have been forced to read *Beowulf* as if it were as easy and accessible as a rerun episode of 'The Big Bang Theory.' Well, the bottom line is that it isn't so very accessible, and learning to read Old English does in fact require some work. But it is possible, even in a single semester, and it is quite rewarding and can also be a lot of fun, because there is a great deal of interesting material in Old English that you won't find elsewhere and that has nothing to do with swords and ogres and dragons (although there is some of that, too). Some students may find that Old English looks like a foreign language, but if you as speakers of modern English are briefly trained to recognize consciously what you already know about English, then suddenly Old English is, well, not exactly immediately like reading the *Spectrum*, but with some patience a whole new culture does in fact open up for you. Try reading the following sentence. *His linen socc feoll ofer bord in thaet waeter and scranc.* Yes, you're right, that's exactly what it means. And you are also right that this particular sentence is not exactly scintillating. But you've now read your first authentic Old English sentence, so it's a start.

In the course we will spend a couple of weeks with guided review of what you already know about English, so that you can apply that knowledge to thousand-year-old texts. You know, for instance, that we add -s to nouns to make them plural (girl/girls), but you also know that there are some exceptions to that rule (deer/deer, child/children). All three of those patterns are also present in Old English, and recognizing them as patterns in modern English alerts you to make use of that knowledge in reading Old English. You also know that if you dance and drink too much tonight, by tomorrow you have to say that you danced and drank (not drank) too much. Both of those familiar patterns of past tense verb formation are also present in Old English. Once we have refreshed our memories about things like this that we already know, we'll be ready for reading Old English texts: about daily life, magic, religious practices, gender roles, burial customs, tenth-century women's fashions, shipwrecks, royal romance, riddles, polar exploration, marauding dragons over northern England, Viking marauders in southern England, heroes and heroines, saints and sinners, lovers and enemies. It's all there, and it's all available within a semester. Who knows, maybe by the end, some might even want to have another go at a few passages in *Beowulf*.
Thaet waes god cyning!

Textbooks:

Bruce Mitchell, *An Invitation to Old English and Anglo-Saxon England*. Wiley-Blackwell. 978-0631174363

Constance Hieatt, *Beowulf and Other Old English Poems*. Bantam. 978-0553213478

ENG 517 – ELIZABETHAN/JACOBAN DRAMA

PROF. BARBARA BONO

Wednesday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 23713 (B) 23714

Shakespeare's plays were written in an age of theater that also produced a host of other major playwrights—Marlowe, Dekker, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, etc.—and literally dozens of masterful plays. Theater under Elizabeth I and James I was both elite and popular. It was orthodox, confirming religious and political pieties, exorcising social discontent, and it was subversive, threatening traditional boundaries and articulating hitherto unspoken fears. It was performed in the centers of power—the courts, great houses, and banqueting halls of the mighty—and it was marginalized, censored, played out in the suburbs, amid the stews and the bear-baiting. In 1642 the public theater was suppressed, but in 1649 it arguably performed its "last act" in a process Franco Moretti has famously described as the "deconsecration of sovereignty," the literal execution of the King: "That thence the royal actor borne,/ The tragic scaffold might adorn;/ While round the armed bands/ Did clap their bloody hands" (Andrew Marvell, "An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland").

In this course we will study these distinctions among and contradictions within Elizabethan and Jacobean drama through an historical survey reaching back to the native origins of English drama and looking ahead to Charles's deposition. We will use paperback editions of Andrew Gurr's *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642* and *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John Cox and David Scott Kastan as background resources; to them we will add a paperback edition of critical essays, *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass. I will also make available additional critical work on the drama of this period—coordinated with our weekly readings—by new historicist, sex and gender system,

and cultural materialist critics such as Catherine Belsey, Michael Bristol, Karen Coddin, Walter Cohen, Frances Dolan, Jonathan Dollimore, Margaret W. Ferguson, Susan Frye, Marjorie Garber, Jonathan Goldberg, Stephen Greenblatt, Richard Helgerson, Jean Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, Louis Adrian Montrose, Stephen Mullaney, Gail Kern Paster, Phyllis Rackin, Valerie Traub, Frank Whigham, and others. Our primary texts will be the works of Shakespeare and *The Norton Anthology of English Renaissance Drama* (2002).

Our focus will be on certain specific historical and symbolic moments in the history of the early modern English theater as a way of establishing the central cultural importance of the drama, frequently with an implied or explicit Shakespearean comparison. Thus we will begin by discussing the "place" of the early modern English drama through studying how it negotiates its limits, "beating the bounds" of the regional city or town in the medieval cycle plays, renegotiating those limits in royal entry pageantry and a play such as Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604), written shortly after James's entry into London as King. We will read John Lyly's court-centered *Endymion* (1588) as a heightened dramatic example of the "cult" of Elizabeth, erected against a background of royal pageantry, fetishizing her virginity against the Spanish threat, and compare Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a self-conscious remembering and displacement of that fantasy. We will study those early blockbusters of the purpose-built public theater, Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (c. 1586) and Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (c. 1592), as examples of the frustrate rising social energy of those two doomed roommates, and analogize them to the early success of Shakespeare's outrageous *Titus Andronicus* and charmingly evil and monstrous Machiavel in *Richard III* (c. 1592-93), and the combined threat posed by the sexualized woman and the envious subaltern in the anonymous *Arden of Feversham* (1592). We will review the good Machiavellianism, the positive historiography, of Shakespeare's second tetralogy of history plays (*Richard II* [1595], *1 Henry IV* [1597], *2 Henry IV* [1597-98], *Henry V* [1599]) as a prelude to discussing ways in which it is complemented and supplemented by a city-based model of production and reproduction in Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemakers' Holiday* (1599) and presages turn-of-the century anxiety culminating in plays such as *Julius Caesar* (1599) and *Hamlet* (1600-1602), and in the Essex rebellion (1601) and the death of the old Queen (1603).

James's tragicomic accession at the end of 1603 (that "Wonderfull Yeare," as Dekker suggestively titles it in his pamphlet) will form the occasion for us to read Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610) as a self-conscious look backward at the dominating passions of the Elizabethan age, their dramatic expression, and their commercial renegotiation in the seven years "sin' the king came in" (1.2.165). It will also be the occasion for us to return strongly to the issues of gender and sexual politics in transvestite comedies such as Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1599) and Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* (1610) and domestic tragedies such as Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603-1604), John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (c. 1613), and the first female-authored play in English, Lady Elizabeth Cary's closet drama, *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1613). Finally, it will provide us with the occasion to speculate on the increasing difficulty of government and surveillance (John Marston's *The Malcontent* [1604] and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* [1604]), of holding together a kingdom "unified" from two formerly independent states and committed to a policy of irenic marital diplomacy abroad (Shakespeare Scottish play, *Macbeth* [1605-1606] read against Ben Jonson's *Masque of Queens*

[1609], or tragicomedies by Beaumont and Fletcher such as *Philaster* [1608-1610]), and of unifying an audience sensibility riven by distinctions of belief systems and class (Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* [1607-1610]).

Pace and format will be contractually determined between the instructor and the individual student, depending upon the student's background for the work, graduate program, and section choice (A or B). One likely "A" format is brief bi-weekly response papers, a critical review, and either an extended seminar paper or a briefer mock-conference presentation. If you have questions, contact me (bbono@buffalo.edu) and we'll talk about how this course fits into your plans.

ENG 539 – 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE: GROTESQUE MODERNISMS

PROF. WILLIAM SOLOMON

Tuesday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 23715 (B) 23716

This seminar will examine the pivotal role played in (“high” and “late”) modernist writing by grotesque aesthetic strategies. A range of critical or theoretical perspectives are currently available in regard to images of corporeal mutilation and somatic pain, and we will seek to apply several of these to literary artifacts produced in the U.S. in the period extending from the 1910s to the 1950s. A crucial dimension of our inquiry will be the debt such affectively-charged rhetorical undertakings owed to popular forms of American entertainment such as blackface minstrelsy, burlesque, vaudeville, the “freak” show, the circus, as well as slapstick film. We will also analyze the penchant of assorted modernist writers for grotesque figurations as a manifestation of changing attitudes toward the organic body’s relation to machine technology, as well as a symptom of increasing preoccupations with the complexity of racial and sexual identities. Additional topics will include the politics of the spectacle, the promise of a comic modernism and correlative exploration of the subversive potential of laughter, the interplay between the gigantic and the miniature, the impact of urbanization and industrialization on everyday life, as well as the relays between abjection and amusement, horror and humor in twentieth-century cultural practice.

Authors will include the following: Stephen Crane, Eudora Welty, Nathanael West, William Faulkner, Jean Toomer, Henry Miller, Djuna Barnes, Flannery O’Connor, Mina Loy, Thomas Wolfe, Katherine Anne Porter, Carson McCullers, George Schuyler, Sherwood Anderson, and James Agee.

Critical theorists will include among others the following: Viktor Shklovsky, Mikhail Bakhtin, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, Julia Kristeva, Georges Bataille, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Susan Stewart, Bill Brown, Eric Lott, and Rachel Adams.

ENG 547 – CREATIVE WRITING FICTION WORKSHOP & COLLOQUIUM**PROF. DIMITRI ANASTASOPOULOS**

Thursday 7:00-9:40 p.m., Clemens 1032

Registration Number: 21885

ENG 549 – CREATIVE WRITING POETRY WORKSHOP & COLLOQUIUM**PROF. MYUNG MI KIM**

Thursday 7:00-9:40 p.m., Clemens 538

Registration Number: 21886

In this unique Colloquium course, we will examine a broad array of aesthetic techniques deployed in poetry and fiction in order to explore and reassess questions of genre to which we've become anaesthetized. Specifically, we will think through what function the concept of genre performs, what kinds of writing activity genre allows us to pursue, and how mobilizing the question of genre itself may help writers foster innovative sites of practice.

Predominantly exploratory in nature, the Fall Writing Colloquium is designed to investigate the limits and boundaries of poetry and fiction by negotiating three interrelated spheres of activity:

- 1) sharing student projects in writing
- 2) reading a wide range of texts in order to become familiar not only with contemporary writing, but also critical and theoretical concepts that will augment writing practice
- 3) participating in several Colloquia sessions during which the two sections of the class will meet to prepare for and discuss visits by an exceptional roster of writers: poets, novelists, short story writers, and writers of cross-genre and inter-genre forms.

ENG 547: Fiction Writing Colloquium

Students who are currently working on projects in fiction are invited to register for ENG 547 with Prof. Dimitri Anastasopoulos.

ENG 549: Poetry Writing Colloquium

Students who are currently working on projects in poetry are invited to register for ENG 549 with Prof. Myung Mi Kim.

ENG 563 – AUTISTRY**PROF. JOSEPH VALENTE**

Thursday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 23717 (B) 23719

Because story telling represents one of the most profoundly social practices in which human beings of all cultural backgrounds participate, the recent explosion in autobiographies, memoirs and self-profiles composed by subjects on the autistic spectrum casts, or should cast, significant doubt upon the widespread popular and scientific assumption that the essence of ASD (autistic spectrum disorder) resides in a hardwired hence incurable social incapacity or disconnection. Beginning with a critique of the cognitive, neurological and genetic evolutionist construction of autism that promote the social dysfunction thesis (theory of mind, Kohler's phenomena, weak central coherence etc.), my course,

“Autistry,” will examine the formal, thematic and stylistic features of recent, quasi-canonical autistic life-writing, with an eye to determining

- a) how social differences, rather than social deficits, may be understood to define the autistic condition
- b) what the sources—sensory, cognitive, hermeneutical—of those social differences might be
- c) how biopolitical norms act to transform those differences into real social disabilities, while simultaneously underwriting the theories of autism that define it as innate, inherited and irremediable
- d) what often stymied creative potential those social differences comprise

Taken in aggregate, the personal and developmental narratives to be studied indicate that autism manifests not in socio-symbolic default but in alternative modes of semiotic production and reception, an expressive/interpretive divergence from neurotypical norms not unrelated to the difficult verbal and visual experimentation regularly prized in the aesthetic documents and artifacts of the last century. Hence the titular pun on “artistry”.

In anticipation of the Psychoanalysis and Cognitive Disability Conference, to be organized by Professor Dean and myself here at UB, we will also be looking at some recent psychoanalytic interventions in the recent debates over the heterogeneous etiologies and potentials of autism.

**ENG 583 – STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY AND POETICS:
The Philosophy and Poetics of “Poetry”**

PROF. STEPHEN McCAFFERY

Wednesday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 438

Registration Numbers: (A) 23723 (B) 23724

This course examines the 20th century interrelation of a western philosophic tradition with that of a parallel tradition in poetics, traditions that focus upon the mutating function and construction of “poetry” as a key concept, metaphor, and mythologeme in both discourses. How does Heidegger’s notion of “poetry” differ from Charles Bernstein’s? Why is “poetry” variously considered the supreme communicating vessel and a sovereign non-communication? What links both philosophic and poetic desire to the notion of the sacrificial? These and related questions are examined in a range of philosophic readings including Heidegger, Kristeva, Levinas, Bataille and Baudrillard. Such philosophic positions are analyzed and read against a parallel series of poetic theories that similarly invest the notion of “poetry” in a variety of destinies and purposes. Included, among others, are Robert Duncan, Charles Olson’s radical fusion of the body and language, Paul Celan and the fate of poetry after Auschwitz, Denise Levertov on organic form and theories by two contemporary poets: Lyn Hejinian and Charles Bernstein.

ENG 586 – CULTURAL STUDIES: The British Tradition**PROF. DAVID SCHMID**

Friday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 20987 (B) 20988

In an essay entitled, “Always Already Cultural Studies: Academic Conferences and a Manifesto,” Cary Nelson argues presciently that “of all the intellectual movements that have swept the humanities in America since the seventies, none will be taken up so shallowly, so opportunistically, so unreflectively, and so ahistorically as cultural studies.” Nelson goes on to describe the “casual dismissal” of the history of cultural studies as “an interested effort to depoliticize a concept whose whole prior history has been preeminently political and oppositional.” As an antidote to the ignorance and opportunism that has characterized too many appropriations of cultural studies in the U.S., Nelson recommends that “people who comment on or claim to be ‘doing’ cultural studies ought at least to familiarize themselves with the British cultural studies tradition.” That is the purpose of this class. We will begin with the work of Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, and then continue with the multifaceted and seminal contributions of the ‘Birmingham school,’ paying due attention to some of the writers whose work has been especially influential on the British tradition of cultural studies, namely, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, and Roland Barthes. We will close out the seminar by discussing how to apply these materials to an analysis of the 1984-85 Miners’ Strike through a reading of David Peace’s novel *GB84* (2004) and Matthew Warchus’ film *Pride* (2014).

Reading:

Althusser, Louis. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation).” *Essays on Ideology*. London: Verso, 1984. 1-60.

“Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937).” *An Anthology of Western Marxism: From Lukács and Gramsci to Socialist-Feminism*. NY & Oxford: OUP, 1989.

Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*. London: Hutchinson, 1980. (selections)

Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and racism in 70s Britain*. London: Hutchinson, 1982. (selections)

Franklin, Sarah, Celia Lury, and Jackie Stacey (eds). *Off-Centre: Feminism and Cultural Studies*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991. (selections)

Gilroy, Paul. *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms." *Culture, Ideology and Social Process*. Tony Bennett et al. (eds). London: Batsford, 1981. 19-39.

- Hall, Stuart, and Tony Jefferson (eds). *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in post-war Britain*. London: Hutchinson, 1976. (selections)
- Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London: Routledge, 1979.
- Hoggart, Richard. *The Uses of Literacy*. Boston: Beacon, 1957. (selections)
- The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. NY: Norton, 1972. (selections)
- McRobbie, Angela. *Feminism and Youth Culture: From 'Jackie' to 'Just Seventeen.'* Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1991. (selections)
- Peace, David. *GB84*. London: Faber & Faber, 2004.
- Pride*, dir. Matthew Warchus (2014).
- Williams, Raymond. *Culture And Society: Coleridge to Orwell*. London: The Hogarth Press (1958), 1987. (selections)
- Williams, Raymond. "Culture is Ordinary." *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader*. Ed. Ann Gray & Jim McGuigan. London: Edward Arnold, 1993: 5-14.
- Williams, Raymond. *The Long Revolution*. London: Penguin Books, 1961. (selections)
- Women's Studies Group. *Women Take Issue: Aspects of Women's Subordination*. London: Hutchinson, 1978. (selections)

Requirements:

Students taking the class extensively are required to write a series of short (2-3 page) reading responses and a 5-7 page mid-term paper. Students taking the class intensively are also required to write a 20-25 page research paper.

ENG 599 – PRACTICUM IN TEACHING

PROF. ALEX REID

Monday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 538

Registration Number: 17571

This course is designed to support and develop TA pedagogy in the composition program at UB. The course will examine foundational and contemporary scholarship and research in rhetoric and composition that addresses first-year composition pedagogy. The course will serve as a forum for the discussion of classroom practices and issues as they arise during the semester and situate those discussions within the context of composition theory. We will investigate the historical development of first-year composition, the current debates regarding such courses, and the potential futures of writing instruction.

Extensive students will be required to write reading responses (including the review of a textbook or scholarly article), a teaching statement (useful as you build an application dossier), and a syllabus. Students taking the intensive version will also write a research paper.

**ENG 609 – DEMOCRATIC POETICS
(STUDIES IN 19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE)**

PROF. KENNETH DAUBER

Monday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 436

Registration Numbers: (A) 21868 (B) 21869

"In all the world, who reads an American book?" So asked British wit, Sydney Smith, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. "Who," indeed? For as Smith seems to intuit, even as he evades any real recognition of that intuition, it is in response to a polis constituted on new grounds that American literature takes shape. To put it in brief, in answer to Smith's question lies the tale of the very foundation of an American ethics, politics, and aesthetics from its early years to at least the Civil War. What authority did American writers claim for their writing? What was their sense of their audience and its powers? By what criteria of understanding did they measure their achievements and failures? Who speaks for whom, who as an exemplum and who as a representative and who, even, in the loneliness of the expectation of no response at all? In major works of the century, we will examine the peculiar discourse of American writing, its odd call, to "Call me Ishmael," for example, or its peculiar injunction for readers "to assume what I assume," and the implications of such peculiar calling for the idea of American literature.

ENG 613 – THE PUBLIQUE - 18TH CENTURY

PROF. DAVID ALFF

Friday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 22426 (B) 22427

What made something "public" -- open to view, in print, or about everyone -- during the eighteenth century? This is the central question of our seminar's investigation of British society between the restoration of Charles II and the American Revolution. Together we will explore different ideas of publicity in the context of period writings and performances by Behn, Astell, Locke, Defoe, Addison, Pope, Montagu, Swift, Savage, and Hume. Alongside this primary literature we will read works of modern social theory that elaborate and revise the public concept, including classic studies by Jürgen Habermas, Hannah Arendt, Nancy Fraser, Michael Warner, and two critical anthologies produced by McGill University's "Making Publics" digital humanities project. These pairings should spark many questions for seminar discussion: what is the relation between eighteenth-century usages of the words "public/publique/publick" and the bourgeois public sphere that Habermas attributed to that period? To what extent did authors of the 1700s understand themselves to be participating in public discourse? Who do eighteenth-century publics enfranchise and exclude, and upon what criteria? Methodologically, how do the keywords of cultural criticism facilitate and impede our access to history?

Writing assignments will stress close engagement with course texts and fluency in genres of the academic profession. All participants will deliver a 15-minute presentation and submit four 2-page responses. Intensively-registered seminar members will write an article-length research paper. Prior exposure to eighteenth-century literature is neither required nor expected.

ENG 625 – NINETEENTH-CENTURY AFRICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE

PROF. JIM HOLSTUN

Tuesday 12:30-3:10, Clemens 538

Registration Numbers: (A) 23725 (B) 23727

We'll survey African-American culture from 1773 to 1901, taking up a variety of genres: slave narratives, novels, poetry, oratory, and two collective projects (the slave rebellion, the "colored convention") considered as social and symbolic actions. We'll talk about

- African-Americans' reflections on slavery, abolition, Reconstruction, sex and gender, and capitalism,
- the role of publishing in abolitionist culture, and of white "gatekeepers" like Stowe and Child,
- white paternalism, black masculinity, and black female domesticity in the abolitionist slave narrative and novel,
- the invention of whiteness and white fear, the construction and reconstruction of white supremacy,
- Marx on the Civil War and marxist "history from below" (Du Bois, Genovese, Allen) on nineteenth-century African-American literature,
- Black American marronage, the black nationalist and emigrationist debates (Delany, Douglass, Whitfield),
- the miscegenation of novel and slave narrative, and
- the continuing importance of radical black Christianity as a liberation theology and theory of history.

We'll begin at the end, with Charles Chesnut's *The Marrow of Tradition*, his 1901 novel about an 1898 white riot in North Carolina. Then we'll head back to Phyllis Wheatley's *Poems* (1773) and Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, his black Atlantic classic of 1789. We'll read David Walker's sensational and apocalyptic *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (1829).

We'll read slave narratives, including Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life* (1845) and excerpts from his later autobiographies; and Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861); Sojourner Truth's strange account of New York slavery, evangelism, and public self-fashioning in *Narrative* (1850), her published scrapbook, *The Book of Life* (1884), and some recorded speeches; and the *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (1849-50). We'll also read from

some of the many shorter, lesser known ex-slave reflections on slavery and Reconstruction collected in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

We'll do a unit on slave revolts, as narrated in fictional and non-fictional genres. We'll read Thomas Gray's *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1831) and some related documents;

Martin Delany's *Blake* (1862), his novel about a hemispheric slave revolt, along with some of his political writings; and fictional accounts of shipboard revolt by Frederick Douglass (*The Heroic Slave*, 1852) and by token white Herman Melville (*Benito Cereno*, 1855, with excerpts from Greg Grandin's recent history of Melville's slave rebel prototypes). Two more novels: William Wells Brown on Jefferson's mulatto daughters in *Clotel* (1853); Harriet E. Wilson on free blacks amid Northern capitalism in *Our Nig: Sketches from the Life of a Free Black* (1859). Also Frances Harper's *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects* (1854) and *Sketches of Southern Life* (1872).

In another unit, we'll take up antebellum Buffalo, including records of local African Americans resisting the Fugitive Slave Law (spawned by our own Millard Fillmore), Henry Highland Garnet's incendiary *Address to the Slaves of the United States of America, Buffalo, N.Y., 1843*, and the poetry of James Monroe Whitfield, Buffalo barber and radical abolitionist, particularly *America and Other Poems* (1853). In a collective project on a collective project, we'll edit together a webpage on Buffalo's 1843 *National Convention of Colored Citizens* as part of the *Colored Conventions* project at the University of Delaware. We'll talk about work in primary sources, including local records and African-American newspapers, and everyone will do a small research project (transcription and annotation, biographical, etc).

Focus on primary texts, with supplementary criticism, theory, and historical contexts, which will themselves frequently wiggle into primary texts. Books at the University Bookstore; reader at Queen City Imaging. You'll need to have particular editions so we'll all be on the page for discussion. We'll start with *The Marrow of Tradition* (Norton Critical Edition), then move back to Wheatley and Equiano (Penguin editions for each). Contact me in August for a listing of all specific editions and links to inexpensive used copies: jamesholstun@hotmail.com.

All students will write weekly response essays (an hour's work or so). Students taking the class extensively will also write a 600-word research essay. Professor Robert Levine of the University of Maryland (notable writer on Douglass, Delany, Whitfield, and others) will be speaking on campus in the fall, and perhaps also in our seminar, and I hope you'll participate in his visit. I'm happy to talk with you further about the course

ENG 645 – POSTMODERN FICTION AND INFORMATION CULTURE**PROF. JOSEPH CONTE**

Wednesday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 436

Registration Numbers; (A) 21871 (B) 21872

The paradigm shift from analogue to digital culture should be acknowledged as a defining aspect of postmodernism. A complex dynamics of incommensurability arises in periods of technological overlap. In the Kuhnian model the new paradigm supplants the practices and forms of the old and renders them obsolete. But a model of remediation suggests that all new media refashion and sublimate old media. The incommensurability of print and digital media incites creativity in—and thus disturbs, but does not eradicate—the older, established forms of literature. Modulations in the form of the novel—the concept of what a “novel” might consist of, how its structure as a bound codex might be manipulated—are provoked by the introduction of digital media. While photography did not supplant painting in the nineteenth century, its capacity for documentary detail compelled the artist to reexamine the conventions of mimesis, challenge the genteel rules of subject matter and foreground the painterly medium of color and light. In the twentieth century broadcast television arises as literary fiction’s dominant technological other. And yet TV’s one-to-many delivery of infotainment to a passive audience instigated an interactive, plural and multimodal print fiction. The disturbing presence of broadcast and digital media has not made the novel disappear; rather, new media has made the most compelling fictions those that generate associative logic instead of the causal sequence of plot, parallel processing instead of serial in discourse, and multimodal design instead of the block print page. The reader’s apprehension of the textual condition displaces the conduit metaphor of communication; reflexivity in the narrative dispels absorption in the text-world.

During the seminar, we’ll alternate between readings of postmodern novelists who provocatively engage with the terms and conditions of information culture and theorists who invoke the surfeit of information and the hyperconnectivity that characterizes broadcast and digital media. We’ll begin with writers who question the antagonistic relationship between literary fiction and television as the dominant mass media in the postwar period, including David Foster Wallace’s “E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction” (1993) and “My Appearance” (1989); and Curtis White’s *Memories of My Father Watching TV* (1998). Next we’ll survey the advent of virtual reality (VR) in a selection of cyberpunk fiction including: Neal Stephenson’s *Snow Crash*, which features a Hiro Protagonist whose digital avatar pursues a virus capable of infecting the cerebral cortex; Pat Cadigan’s *Synners* (1991), in which the map of the mind becomes the territory of real space; and William Gibson’s *Pattern Recognition* (2003), which delves into the post-Cold War world of multinational corporate communications. Richard Powers’s *Plowing the Dark* (2000) switches between narratives that correlate the sensory deprivation of a hostage in an empty room in Beirut and the efforts of a Seattle-based group to project a virtual reality on the blank walls of “the Cavern.” We’ll finish with the Avant-Pop movement that splices the coruscations and convergences of the avant-garde and popular media culture in work by Larry McCaffery, Mark Leyner, Kathy Acker and Samuel R. Delany.

Our fiction readings will be informed by excerpts from a variety of critical and theoretical texts on information culture, virtual reality and digital media, including: Espen Aarseth, *Cybertext: Perspective on Ergodic Literature*; Sven Birkerts, *The Gutenberg Elegies*; Jay Bolter and

Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*; David Ciccoricco, *Reading Network Fiction*; Joseph Conte, *Design & Debris: A Chaotics of Postmodern American Fiction*; Jane Yellowlees Douglas, *The End of Books*; Peter Freese and Charles B. Harris, ed. *The Holodeck in the Garden: Science and Technology in Contemporary American Fiction*; Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century”; N. Katherine Hayles, *My Mother was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts*; Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*; Michael Joyce, *Of Two Minds: Hypertext Pedagogy and Poetics*; George Landow, *Hypertext 2.0: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology*; Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*; William Paulson, *The Noise of Culture: Literary Texts in a World of Information*; Mark Poster, *What’s the Matter with the Internet?*; Joseph Tabbi, *Cognitive Fictions*; and Paul Virilio, *The Information Bomb*.

Seminar participants who are registered intensively will be required to make a twenty-minute oral presentation and produce a twenty-page research paper.

ENG 653 – POLITICAL ETHICS

PROF. CHAD LAVIN

Monday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 1032

Registration Numbers: (A) 24395 (B) 24396

This seminar will explore the interface of two distinct modes of reasoning – ethics and politics – in order to see how different terms for imagining and prescribing agency contribute to different ways of theorizing both problems and solutions. The first half of the seminar will look at canonical approaches to the relationship of ethics and politics, taking cues from abolitionist literature and the feminist mantra “the personal is political.” The second half of the seminar will focus on sympathetic and critical approaches to what scholars have recently termed “the ethical turn” in political thought, in which in which complicated political issues surrounding climate change and economic inequality are addressed not by theorizing power or organization, but rather by rehabilitating a generosity that is presumed to precede a democratic agenda. Through this attention, the class will also attend to host of attendant distinctions between private and public, individual and collective, ideal and material, all toward the aim of examining the meaning and possibility of a truly political ethics.

Authors studied will include Thoreau, Emerson, Nietzsche, Foucault, Connolly, Singer, Butler, Rancière, and Critchley. Assignments will include class facilitation, a midterm paper, and a final seminar paper.

**ENG 679 – GENDER, NARRATIVE, EXPERIMENTATION:
Punk, Pirate & Guerilla Girl Fictions**

PROF. CHRISTINA MILLETTI

Wednesday 7:00-9:40 p.m., Clemens 436

Registration Numbers: (A) 23744 (b) 23745

In Kathy Acker's novels, feminine characters range from high school students to cyborgs, from terrorists to pirates. The trajectory is significant: her protagonists resist political structures, literary conventions, as much as economic systems—what she calls apparatuses of “control.” As she argues, realist narratives, in particular, are embedded with a normative order that manipulates readers' perceptions. It might be said that, for Acker, all narrative is political, inflected by questions of power.

Acker's writing attempts to interrupt conventions, invites readers to consider how their perceptions have been formed.

Our seminar will explore a range of narrative experiments and representational poses of the feminine as they appear in contemporary novels. In particular, we will consider in what ways fictional language can present opportunities to critically examine the work of power in language. We will think through how altered narrative forms can present the means for challenging political forces, both subtle and overt, with respect to questions of the feminine. And we will sift through the literary mechanisms writers have used to resist, shed light on, and challenge representations of the feminine. Embedded in this investigation are questions about the nature of representation itself: who is being represented, to whom, for what ends, and what the impact of that figuration is on readers.

If, as Clarice Lispector's narrator asserts in *Hour of the Star*—“everything begins with a yes”—then this seminar will consider what kind of action is possible through language, how writers “take action” through strategic linguistic mechanisms or figural representations, and what their various techniques accomplish (or fail to accomplish). Are there new points of insertion into the old problem of gender and genre?

The most significant portion of our course will examine contemporary narratives, though we will contextualize them with selected novels that are identifiable antecedents. Among the writers we will consider: Shelley Jackson—who will be a guest visitor to the seminar—Kathy Acker, kari edwards, Claire Messud, AM Homes, Rachel Hunter, Carole Maso, Lydia Davis, Claudia Rankine, Nell Zink, Lidia Yuknavitch, Alissa Nutting, Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, Djuna Barnes, Angela Carter, and Clarice Lispector. Critical texts by: Maurice Blanchot, Luce Irigaray, Susan Suleiman, Helene Cixous, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, J.L. Austin (among others).

Students will be encouraged to write creative, as well as critical, responses to assigned texts.

ENG 680 – MYTHOLOGY: THE STRUCTURE OF RELIGIOUS NARRATIVE**PROF. DIANE CHRISTIAN**

Wednesday 3:30-6:10, Clemens 610

Registration Numbers: (A) 23944 (B) 23945

“I have always preferred mythology to history. History is composed of truths which become lies, mythology of lies which become truths.”

Jean Cocteau

“Mythology is somebody else’s religion,” Robert Graves wrote when organizing *The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* in the 1950s. The Editors then refused to allow graves to include biblical material as mythological. They regarded biblical stories as religious history, not myth, thereby drawing Graves’ pointed comment. What governed was belief in truth, distinguished from fiction. Appositely, the classic definition of myth is sacred narrative believed as true. Myth doubles as truth and lies, and Cocteau catches a complex evolutionary quality. Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* and *The Descent of Man* are scientific sacred narratives, believed as true, just as *Genesis* is a religious sacred narrative believed as true. The problem is truth, unless one embraces Blake’s proverb that “Everything possible to be believed is an image of truth.”

This course will consider myths of origins and sexual organization from all over the world, sacred narratives from ancient and modern times. From the ancient world we’ll look at Sumerian, Egyptian, Hebrew, and Greek myths particularly, and from the modern Dogon, Darwinian, Hopi, and Inuit. We’ll use Barbara Sproul’s *Primal Myths* which is organized according to geography, and a *Mythology* course book.

Methodologically we’ll use Plato, Barthes’ *Mythologies*, Bruce Lincoln’s *Theorizing Myth*, and Walter Burkert’s *The Origins of the Sacred*. We’ll give some attention to the 2500-year-old debate about fiction and falsehood and the continuing issue of sacrifice. The central questions are where does the world come from, where are humans in it, and how do sex and violence figure in our story? We’ll conclude with a ‘new’ animist myth from the circumpolar peoples—Jean Marlarie’s *L’Alée des Baleines [The Whale Passageway]*. Malaurie, a famed geomorphologist of rock and ethnographer of the Inuit, advances through living myth a scientific and animist theory of origin and human position.

**SPRING 2016
ANTICIPATED SEMINARS**

ENG 524 – 18TH CENTURY LITERATURE
PROF. RUTH MACK

ENG 528 – THE SOCIAL LIFE OF VICTORIAN PAIN
PROF. RACHEL ABLOW

ENG 541 – 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN NOVEL
PROF. DIMITRI ANASTASOPOULOS

ENG 545 – SAMUEL BECKETT
PROF. DAMIEN KEANE

ENG 548 – CREATIVE WRITING FICTION
PROF. NNEDI OKORAFOR

ENG 550 – CREATIVE WRITING POETRY
PROF. MYUNG MI KIM

ENG 553 – EPIC
PROF. JEROLD FRAKES

ENG 581 – AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE
PROF. JANG WOOK HUH

ENG 584 – POETICS
PROF. JUDITH GOLDMAN

ENG 585 – DIGITAL MEDIA & PEDAGOGY
PROF. ALEX REID

ENG 587 – EMILY DICKINSON
PROF. CRISTANNE MILLER

ENG 606 – STUDIES IN MIDDLE AGES
PROF. RANDY SCHIFF

ENG 610 – STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE
PROF. CARLA MAZZIO

ENG 648 – PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM
PROF. TIM DEAN

ENG 651 – LITERARY THEORY I
PROF. HERSHINI YOUNG

ENG 653 – CRITICAL THEORY
PROF. STEVEN MILLER

ENG 653 – FEMINISM, VIOLENCE, AND LITERATURE
PROF. CARINE MARDOROSSIAN

ENG 689 – POETICS OF TEXTUAL PHYSIOGNOMY
PROF. MING QIAN MA

ATTICA
PROF. BRUCE JACKSON
