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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
SPRING 2017

For more information about the Department of English
visit our Website at
<http://english.buffalo.edu>

ENG 509 – MEDIEVAL LITERATURE – CHAUCER

PROF. RANDY SCHIFF

Tuesday 12:30-3:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 23144 (B) 23145

ENG 541 – 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN NOVEL

PROF. ROBERT DALY

Wednesday 3:30-6:10

Person Numbers: (A) 19892 (B) 19893

ENG 548 – CREATIVE WRITING FICTION

PROF. DIMITRI ANASTASOPOULOS

Wednesday 12:30-3:10

Registration Number: 20773

ENG 550 – CREATIVE WRITING POETRY

PROF. STEPHEN McCAFFERY

Wednesday 12:30-3:10

Registration Number: 20774

ENG 584 – POETICS SEMINAR: ECOPOETICS AND BIOPOLITICS

PROF. JUDITH GOLDMAN

Wednesday 3:30-6:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 20775 (B) 20776

ENG 585 – READINGS IN AMERICAN CULTURAL STUDIES

PROF. DAVID SCHMID

Friday 3:30-6:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 21803 (B) 21804

ENG 586 – THEORIES OF MONTAGE AND REPRESENTATION

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PROF. TANYA SHILINA-CONTE
Thursday 4:00-6:40
Registration Number: 23526

ENG 609 – STUDIES IN 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE
PROF. KENNETH DAUBER
Monday 12:30-3:10
Registration Numbers: (A) 24490 (B) 24491

ENG 627 – MODERNISM, PSYCHOANALYSIS, COMEDY
PROF. WILLIAM SOLOMON
Tuesday 3:30-6:10
Registration Numbers: (A) 23148 (B) 23150

ENG 628 – MISREADINGS: THE FICTION WRITER AS CRITIC,
THE CRITIC AS FICTION WRITER
PROF. DIMITRI ANASTASOPOULOS
Monday 3:30-6:10
Registration Numbers: (A) 23151 (B) 23152

ENG 686 – FIELD GENRE: SCIENCE FICTION
PROF. NNEDI OKORAFOR
Friday 3:30-6:10
Registration Numbers: (A) 23153 (B) 23154

ENG 698 – POETIC OF THE INVISIBLE
PROF. MING QIAN MA
Monday 12:30-3:10
Registration Numbers: (A) 23155 (B) 23156

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ENG 509 – MEDIEVAL LITERATURE – CHAUCER

PROF. RANDY SCHIFF

Tuesday 12:30-3:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 23144 (B) 23145

It is not without reason that Geoffrey Chaucer is sometimes called the Father of English Poetry. Our course will focus on the two works that are most responsible for Chaucer's preeminent position within Middle English literature—*The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. In exploring most of the *Canterbury Tales*, our seminar will not only engage with a literary masterpiece, but also survey the significant range of genres, meters, and traditions in this heterogeneous collection of stories drawn from various socio-economic, regional, and gender positions. Our course will also engage deeply with the discourse of courtly love by reading Chaucer's neo-Trojan romance, *Troilus and Criseyde*. Our course will also feature essays by cutting-edge theorists who have been drawn to Chaucer as the central figure of Middle English literary studies. Students in the seminar will be introduced to the work of many leading critics, including key feminists (Dinshaw, Evans), psychoanalysts (Fradenburg, Miller, Scala), cultural theorists (Cohen, Ingham, Lavezzo, Wallace), and historicists (Patterson, Simpson, Butterfield). All seminar participants will be required to provide one oral presentation and to produce a 250-500 word abstract of a literary critical argument that engages with Chaucer; students taking the course intensively will be required to write a seminar paper of 17-25 pages.

ENG 541 – THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN NOVEL

PROF. ROBERT DALY

Wednesday 3:30-6:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 19892 (B) 19893

We shall read 20th- and 21st-century American novels in the contexts of both their times and ours. This seminar will be open to any and all approaches and theories. In 2016 Cynthia Ozick warned against “the dying of the imagination through the invisibility of the past” (*Critics, Monsters, Fanatics, & Other Literary Essays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016)). In the autumn 2013 issue of *New Literary History*, Nancy Easterlin argued for adaptationist literary theory: “Everyday living is an interpretive process,” not just “textual,” but “a fundamental life process” that we “make special or elaborate in literary texts” and that “literary studies . . . increase the efficacy of meaning-making processes and the conscious awareness of humans” by “engaging in communal interpretation.”

In 2013 Alan H. Goldman linked reading novels with preparing for life outside them: “Novels . . . challenge us to continuously interpret as we read,” thereby “broadening our

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repertoire of responses to situations that might arise” in our lives (Philosophy and the Novel. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013). In the winter 2012 issue of New Literary History, Charles Altieri suggested that “seeing-in” to literature “affords the possibility of making more supple, more intricate, and more intense our repertoires for engaging, understanding, and shaping experience in the world beyond the text.” These notions are all handy for the toolkit, and I see no need to throw out all the others to make use of just one.

With these priorities of our own time in mind, we shall read, within their reciprocal cultural contexts, several novels that help to define, create, or revise our communal cultures, both the discourse of nationalism and what Julia Kristeva called the discourses of “nations without nationalism.” We shall attend to their interactions with other cultures, with conversations among them, and with the ways in which they are both representative (participating in the cultural conversations of their times and ours) and hermeneutic (affording us practice and instruction in the arts of interpretation).

Though its primary focus will be on the novels themselves and the connections among them, this seminar will be informed by recent developments in our understanding of mirror neurons and cognitive theory but will not be dominated by them. Theories give us models for doing criticism, so it’s best to have several. For that reason, ecocriticism, feminism, trauma theory, post-analytic philosophy, virtue ethics, aesthetics, cultural theory, and any other theories we find useful will be welcome in our discussions of these texts but will not replace them.

We shall also focus on agency and action, on what difference these thoughts make in our lives. As Hawthorne suggested long ago, “Thought has always its efficacy,” and as Amanda Anderson argued more recently (The Way We Argue Now. Princeton, Princeton UP, 2006), “We must keep in mind that the question, How should I live? is the most basic one; the response, As a knower, is simply one modification thereof.” We “must acknowledge the priority of normative questions and the fundamentally practical structure of human action and understanding.”

We shall not necessarily agree or disagree with all or any of these writers. We shall begin with the current understandings of the primary texts and see what we can do to both learn and advance them.

Each student is expected to participate in seminar discussion and do one seminar report (15-20 minutes); each student taking the seminar intensively (for full credit) will also do one research essay on a topic of his or her own choosing.

Texts:

Wharton, Edith. Summer. Harper Collins, or Signet.
Cather, Willa. My Antonía. Houghton Mifflin.
Anderson, Sherwood. Winesburg, Ohio. Norton Critical Edition.
Fitzgerald, F. Scott. The Great Gatsby. Scribner’s.
Pynchon, Thomas. The Crying of Lot 49: A Novel. Harper Collins.
Gardner, John. Grendel. Vintage.

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Morrison, Toni. Song of Solomon. New American Library.
Tan, Amy. The Joy Luck Club. Ivy Books, Ballantine.
Momaday, N. Scott. The Ancient Child: A Novel. Harper Collins
Power, Susan. The Grass Dancer. Berkley Books
Dillard, Annie. The Maytrees: A Novel. Harper Perennial

These texts, all paperbacks, will be available at the University bookstore.

ENG 548 – CREATIVE WRITING FICTION

PROF. DIMITRI ANASTASOPOULOS
Wednesday 12:30-3:10
Registration Number: 20773

This course interweaves the practice of crafting fictional language with the study of contemporary novels, short stories and theories of fiction. As an integral part of this inquiry, students will be engaged in the English Department's writing communities, with a particular focus on a series of events (Exhibit X and Poetics Plus, mainly) at which students will have the opportunity to meet and engage practicing writers from outside our university.

A workshop is made of a community of writers willing to take time and care with each other's work-in-progress. This seems basic enough but it signals a level of commitment outside one's writing and into multiple and challenging conceptions of writing offered by others. Our goal therefore is to offer acute, critical insights about the manuscripts we examine—their structure, plot (if they have plots), conceptual conceits, language, voice, character development and so on—keeping in mind the evolution of individual techne.

ENG 550 – CREATIVE WRITING POETRY

PROF. STEPHEN McCAFFERY
Wednesday 12:30-3:10
Registration Number: 20774

This workshop-seminar will engage students in the discussion and creation of innovative texts and poem-objects.

We will engage various contemporary thematics including the problematization of representation, defamiliarization, collage, disjunctive strategy, conceptual writing, systematic-chance composition, the materialization of texts and the socialization of

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readership. These will be substantiated by exploring works by Gertrude Stein, Susan Howe, Heimrad Bäcker, Edmund Jabes, Charles Bernstein, Joan Retallack, Geraldine Monk, Karen Mac Cormack, Jackson Mac Low among others. Students are required to attend the events and readings itemized on the Poetics Plus Calendar and it is hoped too that some sessions will be enhanced by in-class visits by poets.

A large amount of time will be devoted to sharing ongoing creative projects with other students and discussion of such **matters as revision, format**, accretion, and collaboration. All of this effort will hopefully result in a substantial body of finished work by the end of term.

Students will also explore the rich holdings in contemporary Anglophone poetry in the Poetry Collection and will be asked to formulate an archival project chosen from the archives of either Sylvia Beach, Robert Duncan, **Helen Adams, Jonathan Williams**, Clark Coolidge or an approved topic of their own choosing.

ENG 584 – POETICS SEMINAR: ECOPOETICS AND BIOPOLITICS

PROF. JUDITH GOLDMAN

Wednesday 3:30-6:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 20775 (B) 20776

This exploratory seminar will take up ecopoetics and biopolitical poetics within a broad, interdisciplinary framework, on grounds that ecological concerns overlap considerably with biopolitical ones and that poetry endures as a set of practices for thinking through, representing, and consciously acting within and upon these concerns understood as constitutive, limiting, and enabling. Many of the works we will examine couple a decentering of language with a decentering of the human, enacting posthuman aesthetics and ethics as critique of regimes of environmental degradation and dehumanization and/or as a means of encountering at various scales a world (humans included) otherwise reduced to an instrumentalizable alterity. All of these works, of course, are proposed and composed in relation to phenomena and events, and within layered cultural contexts; our study of poetry and other art will be framed by exempla of the primary and critical discourses with which they are in or can be put in productive conversation.

Topics for exploration may include: 18th- and 19th- century constructions of earth as “system,” geological time, and evolution; Western and non-Western cartographic technologies; early modern British pastoral and anti-pastoral poetry; the classification of species; commons and enclosure (e.g. contemporary biopiracy); the production of urban space; industrial and postindustrial landscapes; Bataille’s unconditional heliocentric economy v. ecological debt (capitalism as a system of unpaid costs); gardens; parks and wilderness areas; ruins and ruination; junk space; “planet of slums” and the shantytown as zone of creation; earth works and land art; environmental sound and soundworks; green design; waste and “garbology” (e.g. the

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Pacific Trash Vortex); ecological degradation and catastrophe (e.g. mining, petroleum industry, agribusiness, war, “natural” disaster); ethnopoetics as ethnoecology; GMOs and heirloom cultivars; the Olympics; the plastics industry; animal studies; object-oriented ontology; theory of biopolitics (Foucault’s biopolitical governmentality and Agamben’s “bare life”); the Human Genome Project; eugenics; organ donation/sales and prosthetics; artificially extended life; refugee and INS camps; national border phenomena; thanato- or necropolitics.

Course Requirements

--Each student will give a focused, carefully prepared and timed 15min. critical presentation on one of the assigned materials for the week. Students are expected to meet with me in office hours or by telephone to discuss the presentation in advance; please have a concrete sense of the focus/aim of your presentation before we meet.

--Students will post a 1-2 pp. response every other week on one of the remaining assigned texts.

--Students will write a 10-12pp. final paper due the week following class. The paper will be planned and written in several steps in a process beginning about a month before the end of class.

Course materials

Course texts may include: 20-21C critical theory and philosophy such as Bataille, Agamben, Lefebvre, Haraway, Serres, Butler, etc.; 20-21C poets such as Vicuña, Ponge, Durand, Berssenbrugge, Bök, Niedecker, Roberson, Scalapino, Reilly, etc.; artists and composers such as Smithson, Goldsworthy, Burtynsky, Oliveros, etc.; 16-19C Brit. and Amer. thinkers and creative writers such as Barbauld, Marvell, Darwin, Shelley, C. Smith, Thoreau, etc.; and ancients such as Aristotle, Virgil, and Lucretius.

ENG 585 – READINGS IN AMERICAN CULTURAL STUDIES

PROF. DAVID SCHMID

Friday 3:30-6:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 21803 (B) 21804

Exactly what happened to the discipline of cultural studies when it was ‘exported’ from its original home in Britain to the American academy, along with the reasons for what happened, have been the source of much controversy. The conventional way of telling the story of this move has emphasized its post-lapsarian dimensions, with Birmingham’s Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies playing the role of Eden, and the United States being typecast, once again, as a cultural and political wasteland. Although this version may not be entirely inaccurate, it is neither helpful nor nuanced, and this seminar will be dedicated to building a more detailed and constructive sense of what exactly we mean by American Cultural Studies. We will begin by reviewing some of the most direct overlaps between the British and American

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versions of cultural studies, in the form of international conferences. We will then discuss some of the 'classic' texts of American cultural studies (although we will also be calling into question the very notion of 'classic,' that is, canonical cultural studies texts), followed by some of the most exciting work currently being done in the field. Throughout the seminar, we will put pressure on both the utility and practicality of the idea that cultural studies can or should be thought of primarily in terms of national traditions. We will therefore conclude the seminar by focusing on the emergence of transnational cultural studies, a field that we will study in much greater detail at a later date.

Course Texts

Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds). *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (selections):

- Cornel West, "Marxist Theory and the Specificity of Afro-American Oppression."
- Stuart Hall, "The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism Among the Theorists."
- Chantal Mouffe, "Hegemony and New Political Subjects: Toward a New Concept of Democracy."
- Perry Anderson, "Modernity and Revolution."
- Fredric Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping."
- Michèle Mattelart, "Can Industrial Culture be a Culture of Difference?"
- Simon Frith, "Art Ideology and Pop Practice."
- Terry Eagleton, "The Critic as Clown."
- Michèle Barrett, "The Place of Aesthetics in Marxist Criticism."

Lawrence Grossberg et al (eds). *Cultural Studies* (selections):

- Cary Nelson, Paula A. Treichler, and Lawrence Grossberg, "Cultural Studies: An Introduction."
- Tony Bennett, "Putting Policy Into Cultural Studies."
- Homi K. Bhabha, "Postcolonial Authority and Postmodern Guilt."
- James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures."
- John Fiske, "Cultural Studies and the Culture of Everyday Life."
- Simon Frith, "The Cultural Study of Popular Music."
- Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies."
- Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others."
- Meaghan Morris. "On the Beach."
- Carolyn Steedman. "Culture, Cultural Studies, and the Historians."
- Angela McRobbie, "Post-Marxism and Cultural Studies: A Post-script."
- Michael Denning. *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*.
- Janice Radway. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*.
- Andrew Ross. *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (selections):
 - "No Respect: An Introduction."
 - Chapter 1. "Reading the Rosenberg Letters."

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Chapter 2. “Containing Culture in the Cold War.”

Chapter 3. “Hip and the Long Front of Color.”

Chapter 7. “Defenders of the Faith and the New Class.”

Tania Modleski, *The Women Who Knew Too Much*.

Henry Giroux. *Impure Acts: The Practical Politics of Cultural Studies*.

Henry Jenkins. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*.

Gina Dent (ed). *Black Popular Culture*.

Josh Kun. *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America*.

Chad Lavin, *Eating Anxiety: The Perils of Food Politics*.

Mary Celeste Kearney. *Girls Make Media*.

José David Saldívar. *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*.

Requirements

Students taking the class extensively are required to write short (2-3 page) response papers for each of our meetings, 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 586 – THEORIES OF MONTAGE AND REPRESENTATION

PROF. TANYA SHILINA-CONTE

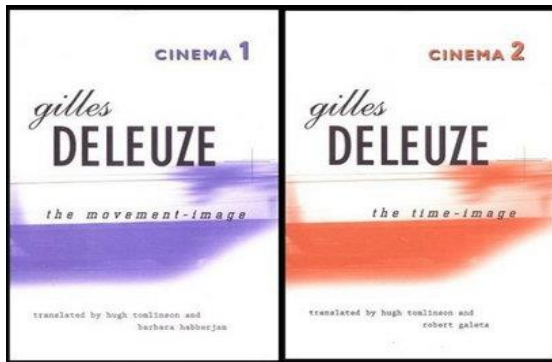
Thursday 4:00-6:40

Registration Number: 23526

This class will be structured as a comprehensive overview of the theory and practice of montage and representation in global film and media. Topics for discussion will include the Soviet montage school (Eisenstein, Kuleshov, Pudovkin, Vertov), American continuity style, rational and irrational / serial montage (Deleuze), spatiotemporal montage and montage-within-the-shot (Manovich), analogue and digital montage. We will trace the technological developments in film and digital media that permitted a shift from single frame shots (sequence) to multiple frames, windows and screens (multiplicity). We will also discuss the contemporary remix era, the emerging genre of the cinematic remix and the notions of copyright and fair use. For our purposes we will rely on excerpts from Gilles Deleuze’s diptych on cinema, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, as well as engage with key theoretical writings on post-Deleuzian thought in the digital age (so-called “Third Image” approaches).

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Many films discussed in this class will explore alternative modes of representation such as fragmentation, coding, silence and absence, both as a means of experimentation with the cinematic language and as a tool of political protest and resistance. From these reservoirs of invisible evidence in cinema emerge a host of critical issues such as ethnicity, race, sexuality, gender, ethics, trauma and censorship. The topics covered in this class will help us to understand the connection between cinematic form and content and place mediated representations into social, cultural and historical contexts. We will also focus on the recent turn to non-representation and the reframing of regimes of visibility in film-philosophy and media studies, especially in the context of affect theory. Films and excerpts by Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais, Chris Marker, Derek Jarman, Abbas Kiarostami, Elia Suleiman, Su Friedrich, Marlon Riggs, Isaak



Julien, Thom Andersen and others will be considered. This class would be indispensable for students interested in learning how to interpret film and media critically as well as for students who wish to become better editors/makers of their own media.

ENG 609 – STUDIES IN 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE

PROF. KENNETH DAUBER

Monday 12:30-3:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 24490 (B) 24491

Theory of American Literature. This course is designed to give you a roadmap of the variety of ways of talking about classic American literature as they have been laid out since the field came into existence as a field and through to the current moment, through readings in the literature of the period and, especially, through a variety of secondary books by influential critics. The idea is to take a secondary text that constructs its canon and a primary text central to that construction and read them for attunements and gaps, for what gets established and disestablished, what gets opened up and what closed off.

We will read works of cultural criticism, ordinary language criticism, deconstruction, feminism, historicism—some oldies (like D.H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* or Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel*), some relative newies (Donald Pease on cultural critique), some in between (Russ Castronovo reading against the liberal American subject, Stanley Cavell reading Thoreau and Emerson, Jane Tompkins reading sentimental literature, Skip Gates on African-American Literature), some as yet to be determined. The list will be chosen on the basis of what seems current, what seems enduring, and what I haven't read yet but meant to because it seems promising.

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Primary texts will include Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (you will be surprised), *Uncle Tom's Cabin* along with some slave narratives (Douglass and Jacobs), some Hawthorne (*The House of the Seven Gables*, because nobody really likes it, and why nobody does is especially revealing), Melville (especially *Pierre*, which people generally like for the wrong reasons), a few of Emerson's best, and a couple of earlier American novels (like Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland* and Cooper's *The Prairie*).

By the end of the course, if you are faithful, you will have an extraordinary sense of how the founding period in American literature lays itself out, what the debates about it are, what works and what doesn't and to what extent. I tend to have opinions about such matters. The course is designed to enable you to form your own (hopefully different) opinions, as well, which you will be able to try out in presentations and class discussion.

ENG 627 – MODERNISM, PSYCHOANALYSIS, COMEDY

PROF. WILLIAM SOLOMON

Tuesday 3:30-6:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 23148 (B) 23150

This course will introduce students to the shared set of problems structuring literary modernism (in the US), psychoanalysis, and twentieth-century modes of comic performance. Some of the thinkers and writers and filmmakers we will engage in our effort to conceptualize together these three distinctive yet overlapping regions of cultural practice include T.S. Eliot, Sherwood Anderson, Ring Lardner, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, E. E. Cummings, Marianne Moore, Mina Loy, S. J. Perelman, Nathanael West, Flannery O'Connor, Charles Baudelaire, Jean Genet, Georges Bataille, Jacques Lacan, Paul de Man, Alenka Zupancic, Antonin Artaud, Viktor Shklovsky, Michael Riffaterre, Andre Breton (on "black humor"), Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, W. C. Fields and the Marx Brothers. On one level, the issues we will interrogate will focus on affectively-charged images of the body and the ways in which these mediate a sense of self and this self's often violent or aggressive relation to others. On another level, we will be preoccupied with the determining role of language in social relations between speaking subjects, and the disruptive force of jokes (or wit and nonsense) on everyday discourse. On still another level, we will attend to the materiality of writing as well as modes of enjoyment the play of the signifier supplies.

In the process of pursuing our inquiry, we will seek to deal with as many of the figures mentioned above as is feasible. However, our primary point of entry to the topic will be Lacan's work in the 1950s where Hegel's master-slave dialectic, speech-act theory, and rhetorically oriented modes of investigation combined to form what Lacan characterized at the time as a conjectural (as opposed to a human) science. One of our key touchstones will be the first eight sessions of Lacan's fifth seminar, "Formations of the Unconscious." It is here that he begins to construct his graph of desire and to speculate on the degree to which unconscious processes can be mapped in accordance with linguistic tropes such as metonymy and metaphor. Another crucial point of reference will be O'Connor's exactly contemporaneous narrative fictions. This is not to say however that our goal will simply be to utilize psychoanalytic formulations to comprehend comic strains of modernism. Rather, my premise is that literary (and cinematic) practice on the

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one hand and psychoanalytic theory on the other may prove mutually illuminating. I hope we will be able to integrate aspects of historical materialism into our discussions, thus exploring the possibility that comedy may function as a means of resisting the spell of the commodity.

No previous exposure to any of the critical methods alluded to above is required. On the contrary, this course is designed as a starting point for those interested in grappling with some of the more formidable aspects of our disciplinary past (reader-response theory, Russian Formalism, American deconstruction, etc.) I would however recommend that students try to familiarize themselves with Henry Bergson's *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* and Freud's *Jokes and Their Relationship to the Unconscious* before the seminar commences.

ENG 628 – MISREADINGS: THE FICTION WRITER AS CRITIC,
THE CRITIC AS FICTION WRITER

PROF. DIMITRI ANASTASOPOULOS

Monday 3:30-6:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 23151 (B) 23152

We'll read the novels and critical essays of selected fiction writers in order to investigate the terms by which they elaborate, critique, and/or misread (as the case may be) the writing of other novelists. Taking Maurice Blanchot's fictions as well his theories of fiction and fictional language as the lynchpin of the seminar, the class will begin by reading the first volume of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time (Swann's Way)*, then turn to Beckett's critical book on Proust as well as Beckett's novel *Watt*. From there, we'll read a couple of Nikolai Gogol's short stories (ex. "The Nose" and "The Overcoat"), before turning to Nabokov's critical work on Gogol as well as Nabokov's novel *Lolita*. From Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, we will turn to Blanchot's several essays on Kafka, then to Blanchot's fiction *Madness of the Day*. We will continue on to Helene Cixous' comparative essay of Blanchot's fiction and the novels of Clarice Lispector, then to a reading of Lispector's novel *The Hour of the Star*, followed by a reading of Cixous' fiction. Finally, we'll end with Nathaniel Mackey's essays from his critical study, *Discrepant Engagement*, before reading the third installment of his tetraology, *Atet AD*. The structure of this course, in other words, will take on a "chain-link" approach that connects writers to writers, fictions to essays and vice versa, as well as theories on writing in order to investigate their aesthetics as they describe them in their own terms. We will ask questions such as: why does Nabokov deem Gogol a "ventriloquist" (with regard to the question of realism), and why does he designate them Gogol's fictions as "four-dimensional?" What do these terms reveal about Nabokov's own *techne*, and the problems of narration he undertakes to resolve in his own work? By investigating the roles of both writer and critic with which writers have alternately played during their careers, this course will explore not just how writers think about fiction when they write, but to also identify the problems with which they struggle—how they choose to elaborate the questions they have asked themselves about fiction in critical forms.

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ENG 686 – FIELD GENRE: SCIENCE FICTION

PROF. NNEDI OKORAFOR

Friday 3:30-610

Registration Numbers: (A) 23153 (B) 23154

Do you think the tradition of science fiction challenges our basic assumptions of identity, or does it ultimately work to normalize them? This course will highlight how and question whether the work of science fiction writers de-familiarizes our assumptions about “familiar” social issues. We will examine a sampling of today’s most cutting-edge science fiction novels and short stories in order to gain an appreciation and understanding of science fiction literature.

ENG 698 – POETICS OF THE INVISIBLE

PROF. MING QIAN MA

Monday 12:30-3:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 23155 (B) 23156

Continuing the postmodern critique of the “vision-generated, vision-centered language” (Levin), this seminar will explore and speculate on some concomitant corollaries, both theoretical and pedagogical, as embedded in the textual practices of contemporary innovative poetry. If, as Charles Bernstein has already forcefully argued, “Language is the lens of sight,” which “logico-mathematically” correlates “sight” with “insight,” and which leads thusly to what Levin calls an “ocular-centric paradigm” undergirding, since antiquity, a “vision-generated, vision-centered interpretation of knowledge,” what would innovative poetry that breaks the limits of language as the limits of one’s world (Wittgenstein) necessarily entail, theoretically? If such poetry text gestures, by its very praxis of disrupting the informing perceptions of language, toward a phenomenology of the invisible, what would that invisible be, and how should such phenomena of invisibility be approached, pedagogically? Other related issues of inquiry will include the nature and the function of the text, the nature and the function of reading, the status of the reading subject, among others. Situating itself in the larger context of the current scholarship on the “post-human” or the “non-human” poetics, this seminar will look into the implications as well as the ramifications of a poetics that engages the invisible, exploring ways of encountering the invisible on its own terms. Seminar readings include, but not limited to, selected essays or sections from the following:

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Theories and philosophy:

Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay, ed. *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight*

Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish*

David Michael Levin. *The Philosopher's Gaze: Modernity in the Shadow of Enlightenment*

Davis Michael Levin, ed. *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*

----- *Sites of Vision: The Discursive Construction of Sight in the History of Philosophy*

Jean-Luc Marion. *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger, and Phenomenology*

----- *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*

----- *In Excess: Studies of saturated Phenomena*

Poetics, Poetry, Arts:

Bruce Andrews. *Paradise and Method* and selected poems

Charles Bernstein. *Content's Dream* and selected poems

Amy Catanzano. *Multiversal* and other poems

Andrew Joron. *Invisible Machines* and other poems

Robert Smithson. "Mirror Displacements" and other earth art works

And others.
