

Graduate Course Descriptions



Spring 2026

Department of English

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Graduate Course Descriptions

ENG 576 Literature & Society THE YESTERNOW OF MODERNISM

Wednesday 3:30-6:10pm

Instructor: Damien Keane

Clemens Room #1032

(A) Section 23805

(B) Section 23806

ENG 599 SEM Introduction to Writing and Rhetoric

Wednesday 12:30-3:10pm

Instructor: Paul Feigenbaum

Clemens Room #1032

Class Number 18598

SPA 628 SEM 20th Century Poetry Global Poetics and Ontology

Thursday 9:30am-12:10pm

Instructor: Carlos Amador

Baldy Hall Room #114

AMAE Section Class Number 32618

AMAI Section Class Number 23619

ENG 649 Studies in African American Literature

Monday 12:30-3:10pm

Instructor: Miriam Thaggert

Clemens Room #1032

(A) Section 22934

(B) Section 22935

ENG 653 Critical Theory The Return to Freudo-Marxism

Monday 3:30-6:10pm

Instructor: Steven Miller

Clemens Room #1032

(A) Section 20165

(B) Section 20166



ENG 576 Literature & Society Wednesday 3:30-6:10pm

ENGLISH 576: THE YESTERNOW OF MODERNISM

The title of this seminar takes its bearings from two sources: Miles Davis's "Yesternow" (1970) and Marshall McLuhan's "The Yestermorrow of the Book" (1972). The former occupies the entire second side of Jack Johnson, but is an amalgam or composite of at least four distinct recordings made at different times. The latter is a short piece that appeared in an issue of the UNESCO Courier celebrating the "year of the book," but draws on fifteen years of his thinking about orality, print, and electronic media. Working at once through a legacy and an aftermath, each recognizes history as a communication problem and aims to assess, both critically and practically, the stakes of this condition. What might their example suggest about coming to modernism now?

To address that question, the seminar will focus on works made between the mid-1930s and the mid-1970s, or from the end of the traditionally construed period of modernism into the forty years seemingly after or even beyond modernism, when political crisis and ideological retrenchment strained, but in no way finished, its project of perceptual experiment and social documentation. As a means of understanding this aesthetic domain, we will pay attention to modernist networks and the modernist "archive," particularly for their impact in the era of decolonization; and, in doing so, will attempt to establish a critical and concrete methodology for engaging with twentieth-century artifacts. To that end, we will spend as much time as is feasible working with materials in the Poetry Collection.

Primary works may come from those of, among others: Samuel Beckett, Elizabeth Bowen, Kamau Braithwaite, Graham Greene, Christopher Isherwood, James Joyce, George Lamming, Primo Levi, Una Marson, Es'kia Mphahlele, Flann O'Brien, Gabriel Okara, Jean Rhys, Andrew Salkey, Muriel Spark, Amos Tutuola, Virginia Woolf, and W.B. Yeats.

Critical readings will draw on works by Theodor Adorno, Pierre Bourdieu, and Raymond Williams, as well as more recent work on modernism, media, archival theory, and the sociology of culture.

Course requirements for all registered students will include active participation in seminar discussion and periodic written responses; 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; as such, there will be no incompletes granted for the seminar.

ENG 599 SEM Introduction to Writing and Rhetoric

Wednesday 12:30-3:10pm

Designed to support and develop your pedagogy as a new or returning teacher, English 599 will serve as a forum for discussing classroom practices and issues, as well as for engaging core concepts that shape the teaching of writing. This course understands teaching as intellectual work that is best supported through communities of practice. We will spend considerable time examining teaching through both conceptual and applied lenses, especially in relation to ENG 105, but we will also consider your longer-term teaching goals and the role of teaching in your career trajectory. The whole course—readings, activities, and both informal and formal assignments—seeks to support your development as thoughtful, engaged, and reflective professional educators.

Please note that unlike other courses in our graduate curriculum, ENG 599 is neither taken extensively or intensively. As such, though it does not count as one of the required “intensive” seminars in English, this does not mean that the course only has an “extensive” workload either—you must keep up with the reading and writing to pass the class. Because the course is primarily intended to prepare and certify graduate students as independent instructors in the writing program, all students are required to do the same amount of work. TAs must pass the course to remain in good standing as instructors.

Passing the course means completing all the assigned work, participating in class discussions, and helping the class be a community of mutually supportive teachers of composition.



SPA 628 SEM 20th Century Poetry
Global Poetics and Ontology
Thursday 9:30am-12:10pm



The course brings together contemporary poetry, plastic arts, film/video art with contemporary research on ontology in order to interrogate what literary and cultural products are as real objects. Students will read canonical philosophical accounts of ontology from Spinoza, Hegel, Lessing, and Marx to current works from Heidegger, Deleuze, Kristeva, Lacan, and M, Ferraris with the objective to develop an historical and actual account of ontology. The other side of the course is to develop an account of how poetics and poetic practice use questions of form, mood, and material practice to produce ontological statements about what is real and possible within art and art markets. We will look specifically at poets globally, with artists from The Philippines, S. Africa, Angola, Chile, Perú, Colombia, as well as contemporary Anglophone poetry and cultural production. Students will produce an annotated bibliography, conference style presentation, and short critical interventions for academic and popular outlets.

ENG 649 Studies in African American Literature Monday 12:30-3:10pm

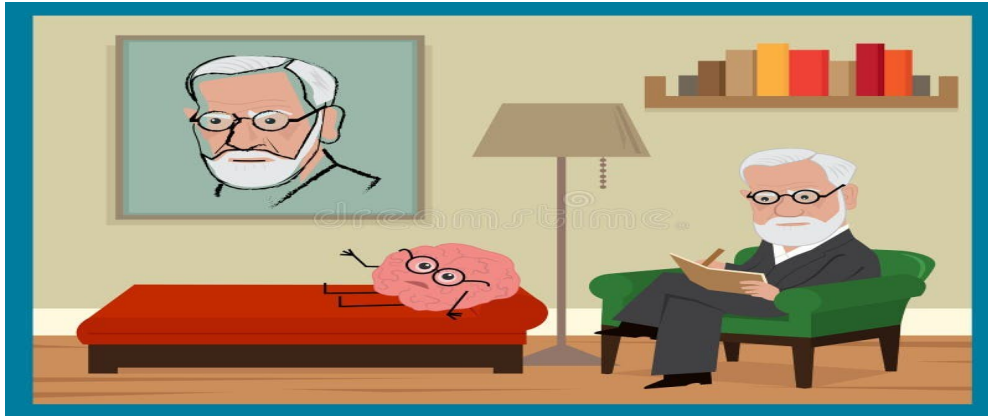
This graduate seminar studies recent African American literature and literary theory. Moving beyond the conventional discussion of resistance in Black literature, the course introduces students to a number of contemporary critical frameworks for analyzing Black life and culture such as Afro-pessimism, Black geographies, critical fabulation, Black ecologies, Black interiority, and the archive. Likely scholars to be studied include: Stephen Best, Saidiya Hartman, Habiba Ibrahim, Katherine McKittrick, Sonya Posmentier, Kevin Quashie, Hortense Spillers, Frank Wilderson, and Sylvia Winter. Likely fictional authors or poets to be studied include: Teju Cole, Percival Everett, Yaa Gyasi, Claudia Rankine, Evie Shockley, Jesmyn Ward and Colson Whitehead.



ENG 653 Critical Theory

The Return to Freudo-Marxism

Monday 3:30-6:10pm



The term “Freudo-Marxism” is a coinage that designates and delimits the works of various authors who, in response to the rise of fascism in Europe, sought to supplement Karl Marx’s analysis of the constitutive injustices of capitalism with a Freudian theory of the subject; and, in turn, to embed this theory of the subject within a Marxist philosophy of history and political transformation. This course offers students the opportunity to read (or reread) many of these works, from the earliest attempts at synthesis between the world wars—Wilhelm Reich, “Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis” and *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Georges Politzer, *Critique of the Foundations of Psychology*, and Otto Fenichel, “Psychoanalysis as the Nucleus of a Future Dialectical Materialist Psychology”—to the major works that seek to rethink the basis of human civilization in the aftermath of World War Two—Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History*, and Leon Rozitchner, *Freud and the Limits of Bourgeois Individualism*. And our reflection on this sequence wouldn’t be complete without discussion of Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*.

We will frame these philosophical projects with relevant selections from the works of Marx and Freud along with texts by Jacques Lacan, Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, and Michel Foucault that offer new approaches to their fundamental questions. Working through these works, however, will not simply be an exercise in intellectual history. Beyond clarifying and justifying the synthesis of Marx and Freud—why Marx “needs” a theory of the subject, why Freud “needs” a theory of class struggle—we will consider these authors as *readers* (or *passeurs*) of Freud and Marx both apart and together, who seek in each work singular insights that wouldn’t be legible without the other, and who consider this reading to be an essential weapon in the struggle against fascism in politics and everyday life. In other words, we will consider the dimensions of these texts that cannot simply be relegated to the past and remain urgent for psychoanalysis, philosophy, and politics today.

