Fall 2011 Course Descriptions

ENGL 667: Introduction to Graduate Studies
Edward Larkin
W 1:15 -2:25 p.m.
The goals of this colloquium are to (1) teach new graduate students to negotiate the modes of reading and modes of authority they will encounter in their academic work; (2) introduce them to the library and other resources for graduate study in English; and (3) help them acquire a better understanding of the genres of our profession—especially the academic article and monograph. The colloquium will exemplify the reading practices that are essential to scholarship in the discipline of English. The class will focus on a single text and move from a basic reading to a close reading, turning finally to a critical reading that prepares them for producing scholarship on the text.

ENGL 688: Teaching Composition
Stephanie Kerschbaum
T/R 3:30 -4:45 p.m.
To provide students a range of pedagogical approaches to the teaching of writing, this course will examine why we teach writing as well as a variety of theoretical approaches to writing instruction. Through reading, writing and discussion, students will connect these theoretical constructions to their classroom enactment. Course texts include Victor Villanueva's Cross-Talk in Composition Theory and Joseph Harris’ ReWriting: How to Do Things With Texts. Assignments include biweekly position papers, a series of reflective responses, a teaching philosophy and a teaching portfolio.

ENGL 684: Introduction to Literary Theory
Julian Yates
F 9:00 a.m. -12:05 p.m.
This course will serve as an introduction to the on-going conversations about form, history, rhetoric, and matter that are corralled under the name “Theory.” It aims to build a sense of the “story so far” as well as to keep the focus on learning how to read these sometimes esoteric and challenging texts. We will begin by telling the story of the origins of English Studies in the UK and the US, trace the formation of New Criticism and cultural studies, and then reckon with the translation exercise, import / export business, that was the arrival of French and German philosophy in English Departments in the mid 1970s and 1980s: Structuralism, Post-Structuralism. We will reckon with the rise of New / neo-historicism (1990s), the so-called turn to empiricism in our present, and the advent of science studies / eco-criticism / animal studies / the “post-human.” Requirements will likely include: turns at discussion leading / presentations, weekly short writing exercises / blogs, and 15–20 pages of formal writing.

Useful summer reading / preparation would include: Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction (Minnesota), Vincent Descombes, Contemporary French Philosophy (Cambridge). You might also do an MLA bibliography search on a literary text on which you have already written in another course and sample the kinds of readings on offer by critics with different methodological interests. Rewind the clock from the present to say the mid-1980s or 1990s and see what’s changed. You might also turn anthropologist and surf through the current issue of PMLA or Critical Inquiry via the library databases with an eye to the kinds of essays it includes and the rituals they perform; what and who they cite; what magico-religious terms they deploy; what they take pains to gloss and explain, and what they assume to be a lingua franca. Then do it again but for some time in the 1980s. Both of these exercises will enable you to build your literacy and get a sense of how historically defined fields absorb / resist different kinds of questions / reading practices.
ENGL 641: Nation and Empire in the Early United States
Edward Larkin
T 9:30 a.m. -12:15 p.m.
Most historical and literary scholarship of the American Revolution has treated the event and the culture that emerged in its aftermath as a narrative of national awakening. More recently scholars have begun to explore how ideas of empire shaped the US from its inception. This course will pursue the thesis that both national and imperial elements shaped the politics and culture of the period. We will read political documents, novels, and plays to trace the way empire and nation worked together to shape the early US. We will also be reading a series of foundational critical and theoretical explorations of nation and empire alongside our primary texts. Primarily conceived as a reading seminar the major assignment for the term will be a 10-page conference paper which you will be revised and rewritten. Each student will also be expected to give several short presentations to direct the class conversation.

ENGL 641: The New Negro Movement and its Discontents
Timothy Spaulding
TH 9:30 a.m. -12:15 p.m.
In this seminar we will focus on the cultural production of African Americans during the period of time alternately referred to as the Harlem Renaissance, the New Negro Movement, the Jazz Age and the Prohibition Era. Although our primary concern will be with the literary works of the period (poetry, essays, novels), we will examine these texts within the contexts of other expressive forms (music, visual arts, theater) in an attempt to re-conceptualize the links that critics have made between these diverse texts. To what extent do these texts operate within the broader space of American modernism? On what basis do we see these texts as part of a coherent cultural movement? Some of the key texts we will examine include: Jean Toomer’s Cane, Nella Larsen’s Passing, Langston Hughes’s The Weary Blues, Duke Ellington’s “Black and Tan Fantasy,” Countee Cullen’s Color, Claude McKay’s Home to Harlem, Bessie Smith’s blues, Rudolph Fisher’s The Walls of Jericho, Jessie Fauset’s Plum Bun, and Archibald Motley’s portraits of the era. We will also look at contemporary re-imaginings of the era such as Toni Morrison’s Jazz, August Wilson’s Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, and Houston Baker’s Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance. Writing requirements will include weekly response papers, three interpretive essays (5–7 pages) and a final conference length paper (8–10 pages).

ENGL 820: The 18th-Century Theatre World
Matthew Kinservik
M 9:05 a.m. -12:05 p.m.
This course will focus on the drama of the long 18th century (1660-1800). This was an era of change and experimentation on the London stage and those changes include literary concerns (genre, approach to character) and theatre history concerns (women performers, innovations in staging, and government regulation). This seminar will have a twin focus on genre and theatre history methodology and so it is meant to be helpful to students of the long 18th century and to others interested in Early Modern literary studies and theatre historiography. Students will be responsible for two seminar presentations (one on genre, one on theatrical history), an annotated bibliography of a term paper and two complete drafts of a term paper.

ENGL 806: Queenship and the English Renaissance
Miranda Wilson
T/R 12:30 -1:45 p.m.
This course explores the complex and often contradictory views of queenship during the sixteenth and seventeenth century – a conflict encapsulated by the early modern pun on queen (monarch)/quean (prostitute). Early modern struggles to define and limit relationships between gender and power make for an extremely nuanced and
interesting series of debates on not only gender, but political authority, the limits of the State, the ethics of performativity, and the representational power of suffering. This course will include literary and political works from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, as well as scholarly approaches to these texts. We will read a number of texts pertaining to Elizabeth’s different positions as queen, including works by John Knox and John Aylmer, letters generated in Elizabeth’s court, and texts by Elizabeth herself. We will also consider queenship on the popular stage (as in Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Bonduca*), in closet drama (as in Elizabeth Cary’s *Tragedy of Mariam*), in court masques (such as those connected to Anne of Denmark and Henrietta Maria), as well as queenship in poetic and prose pieces from authors such as Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Mary Wroth and Margaret Cavendish. Along the way, we will consider the role of women as patrons, as well as producers and consumers, of art. This discussion-based class will require weekly readings in primary and secondary sources, several response papers and oral presentations, and a conference-length research paper (around 20 pages).

**ENGL 844: The Detective Story**

**Tom Leitch**

**W 9:05 a.m. -12:05 p.m.**

Everyone reads detective stories, but apart from voting thumbs-up or thumbs-down, few readers think very hard about them. This course aims to establish a climate conducive to critical thinking about the genre that can push beyond its theorizing in structuralist terms a generation ago. We’ll begin with the tales that created protocols for the historically dominant schools of detective fiction—A.C. Doyle’s *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, Agatha Christie’s *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, Raymond Chandler’s *The Big Sleep*, and Hillary Waugh’s *Last Seen Wearing*—and foundational enunciations of those rules by Chandler, G.K. Chesterton, S.S. Van Dine, and W.H. Auden. After reviewing this structuralist basis for analysis, we’ll test it by examining detectives in cinema, detectives for young readers, and detectives in contemporary bestsellers. We’ll consider the relation between detectives and identity politics in Sara Paretsky’s *Burn Marks* and Walter Mosley’s *Devil in a Blue Dress*, the careers of detectives in Africa and Scandinavia, and the special challenges and opportunities offered by writing about detectives who are themselves criminals. Our goal will be to identify as precisely as possible the cultural work the genre in its different forms has done for readers and the ways in which its conventions do and don’t enter into a broader culture. En route to writing a research paper of 15 pages, students will be asked to draft rules for emerging schools of detective fiction, write parodies or pastiches of specific authors, submit annotated bibliographies, and take turns leading classroom discussion. Unlike a proper detective story, the course guarantees more questions than answers.

**Spring 2012 Course Descriptions**

**ENGL 621: Manuscript and Book Cultures**

**J.M. Dean**

**T/R 9:30 –10:45 a.m.**

In this course we will explore how oral literature became written literature due to the importance of interpreting scripture. Manuscript culture was fostered in the monasteries and then later on in universities dedicated to scriptural exegesis. We will read some Old English poetry in translation, and a few in the Old English language. Students will explore the materiality of medieval “books” and will learn how each manuscript was and is unique. There will be some attention to deciphering manuscript “hands” of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and students will learn how to create an edition. We will also study the publishing career of William Caxton, England’s first printer, who brought out versions of Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur*. Readings will include most of *The Canterbury Tales*; Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*; William Langland’s *Piers Plowman* (chiefly in the B-text); and much of Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur*. A key topic for this course will be the
English Graduate Course Schedules

history of the book (but also the history of the history of the book). Among our texts will be Joshua Calhoun’s recent PMLA article “The Word Made Flax: Cheap Bibles, Textual Corruption, and the Poetics of Paper” and Erick Kelemen’s Textual Editing and Criticism: An Introduction (on Reserve). Josh is a current graduate student in our department, and Erick is a fairly recent doctorate from our department. Our approach will be historical and cultural.

ENGL 634: African American Literary History, Criticism and Print Culture in the Nineteenth-Century
Gabrielle Foreman
T 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.
From short fiction in the earliest African American newspaper to the recently recovered serialized novels of Frances E.W. Harper and Pauline Hopkins, so much of early African American literary culture has been expressed in the Black periodical press. We will keep this in mind as we read essays, fiction and commentary that appeared in such papers as Freedom’s Journal, Frederick Douglass’s Paper, the Weekly Anglo-African, the Colored American and the Christian Recorder. As we make our way through the writings of and about Martin Delany, Sojourner Truth, William and Ellen Craft, Pauline Hopkins and Ida B. Wells, we will build on our familiarity with now canonical texts. Our discussions will be informed by our analysis of some of the most important studies to emerge in recent years including: Liberation Historiography: African American Writers and the Challenge of History 1794-1861, Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African-American Literary Societies, Unexpected Places: Relocating Nineteenth-Century African American Literature, and Doers of the Word: African-American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830-1880). We will also read excerpts and essays by scholars in cultural history and American studies. This class should provide a foundation for students who want to deepen their understanding of nineteenth-century U.S. literature, history and criticism.

ENGL 634: Beyond Orientalism: Re-reading the British Empire in an Era of Globalization
Siobhan Carroll
W 12:20 – 3:20 p.m.
In 1791, Erasmus Darwin warned of an imminent climate crisis. Arguing that one of the duties of imperialism was to safeguard the globe, Darwin urged European nations to abandon war and instead use imperial systems to combat climate change. This seminar uses Darwin’s argument as a starting point from which to examine the complicated legacies of the British Empire. We will read significant literary works from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries alongside recent scholarship on imperialism’s entanglement with globalization, environmentalism, and gender. Questions we will pose include: how did imperial narratives color Britons’ view of Nature and human beings’ impact on ecological systems? How did women and ethnic minorities engage with the opportunities and restrictions of an imperial social framework? How do the poems and novels we read represent literature’s participation in – or resistance to – empire? The aims of this course are twofold: to introduce graduate students to scholarship on imperialism, and to provide a survey of significant literary works from Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe and Darwin’s “The Botanic Garden” to M.W. Shelley’s The Last Man and H. R. Haggard’s She. Writing requirements will include two short response papers, two interpretive essays (5-7 pages) and a final conference length paper (8-10 pages).

ENGL641: American Literature and Environmental Humanities
McKay Jenkins
M 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.
This class will provide a broad introduction to the growing fields of environmental literature and the environmental humanities. We will take a close looks at traditional literary forms including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and theory, but will also spend considerable time discussing history, geography, ecology, and environmental justice and racism. Texts will include the canonical (H.D. Thoreau; Walt Whitman Aldo Leopold Rachel Carson; Edward Abbey); the
contemporary (Annie Dillard, John McPhee; Barry Lopez; Peter Matthiessen); and the very recent (Bill McKibben, Michael Pollan; Sandra Steingraber). In addition to our reading, the course will offer intensive writing instruction in a variety of forms; students will be asked to compose a couple of shorter pieces, including a review essay and a piece of personal writing; and a longer 15-page critical essay.

ENGL685: Reading the Globe: Postcolonial Studies, Globalization, and World Literature
Emily Davis
T/R 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.
From its inception, postcolonial studies have been characterized by an intense ethos of self-critique, and claims of its imminent demise go back nearly as far as the field itself. Such predictions have intensified in recent years with the (re)emergence of world literature and globalization as competing narratives about global cultural exchanges. This course is designed to provide an overview of some of the key texts and debates central to the development of the field of postcolonial studies. In our discussions, we will assess both the construction and the ongoing transformation of this dynamic (anti)field, including key issues such as language, the psychology of colonialism, nationalism, the subaltern, gender and sexuality, capitalism, diaspora, human rights, and biopolitics. Likely texts include Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*, Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Kunzru’s *Transmission*, Smith’s *White Teeth*, and Ania Loomba’s *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, as well as critical pieces by Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Stuart Hall, and others. Course work will include short writing assignments, two presentations, and a final project such as a conference abstract and 10-12 page paper or a course syllabus and accompanying explanatory paper.

ENGL 844: The Atlantic Monthly and Its Writers, 1857–1925
Susan Goodman
W 9:05 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.
The story of *The Atlantic Monthly* reflects the story of a nation and its aspirations. With roots firmly grounded in the antislavery movement, its founders made a pledge to the American people to work for the nation’s greater good, or what they endorsed as “the American idea,” which amounted to a national conscience. Their goal was great, but so were the people dedicated to its achievement. In bringing together the likes of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Atlantic* played its appointed role in Boston, its appointed city.

Founded in 1857, as the United States staggered toward civil war, *The Atlantic* served the cause of freedom through literature. Its readers and contributors saw it as the voice of the nation, and, through the years of war, the voice of the Union. Wielding influence far beyond its immediate readership, *The Atlantic Monthly* successfully cast itself as the conscience of the American public. Contributors spoke to the nation’s status, character, and warring ambitions. They agreed to disagree on a vast range of issues, from the complexities of economics and religion to the hazards of war and peace. In the 1880s, for example, *The Atlantic Monthly* ran pieces on America’s minorities, Western water rights, anti-Semitism, and the mill-girls of Lowell, Massachusetts. During World War I, it published reports from Belgium and the front. Along with essays for and against American intervention, it drew contributors from France, England, and the United States, including Woodrow Wilson, Maurice Barrès, John Dewey, and H. G. Wells. Wars, social reforms, artistic movements, and national politics mark the epic journey of the magazine.

I hope this course will give you a sense of the forces that contribute to development of a “national” literature, an understanding of individual authors and editors, and insight into the “business of letters.” Requirements include presentations, short papers, and a seminar-length essay.
ENGL 874: Mapping It—Narratives in Early America
Martin Brückner
M 12:20 –3:20 p.m.
This 800-level seminar explores the rise of "it-narratives" and the agency of "things" in American literature between 1700 and 1900. Following a broad introduction to the critical fields of material culture theory and literary methodology, seminar meetings will address the role of objects in the configuration of early American literary form, book history, and reception studies. For example, we will examine the relationship between elite consumer goods and popular print culture; gender and the consumer revolution; literacy and the issue of self-representation; race and the objectification of people; and strategies of accumulation, alienation, and fetishization. Readings include theoretical texts and primary sources covering different genres (biography, travel narratives, poetry, drama, novels, magazine stories, textbooks, news). Two short presentations/papers and one original research project recovering and discussing one "it-narrative" of choice.