

Fall 2018 English Department Graduate Courses

Summary:

ENGL600: Introduction to Graduate Studies in English (Carroll)
Wednesday, 10:10-11:00am

ENGL684: Introduction to Literary Theory (Wasserman)
Monday, 3:30-6:15pm

ENGL680: Writing for Publication (Yates)
Thursday 3:30-6:15pm

ENGL844: African American Literature, Historical Tourism and Public Memory (Ernest)
Tuesday 12:30-3:15pm

ENGL685: Composition and Disability Studies (Kerschbaum)
Monday, 12:20-3:20

ENGL870: Mapping Transatlantic Space and Time in the 18th Century Novel (Larkin)
Wednesday 12:20-3:20pm

ENGL875: Refiguring Human Rights (Davis)
Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30-10:45am

ENGL 600: Introduction to Graduate Studies in English
Siobhan Carroll
Wednesdays, 10:10-11:00am

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 to examine and discuss the reading and writing 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.

This 1-credit course is required of all first year students

ENGL684: Introduction to Literary Theory**Sarah Wasserman****Mondays, 3:30-6:15pm**

The goal of this course is to orient students toward the presuppositions and practices of contemporary (post-1960) literary theory and criticism. Rather than a "tool box" course that applies a theory-of-the-week to a given literary text, this course is designed to help students understand current theory and criticism in relation to the long history of literary criticism. Therefore, readings will draw on foundational works in philosophy, linguistics, and social theory (Hegel, Marx, Freud, Saussure, Levi-Strauss, Lacan, Althusser, et al.) as the basis for cultural theory in general (Kristeva, Foucault, Butler, Spivak, Baudrillard, Sedgwick, and the like) and literary theory in particular (such as Bakhtin, Barthes, Iser, Derrida, Fish, et al.).

Written work will consist of multiple short papers and exercises (3-5 pages) over the course of the semester, totaling approximately 20 pages.

This course is required of all first year students

ENGL 680: Writing for Publication**Julian Yates****Thursdays, 3:30-6:15pm**

In the "The Discourse on Language," his inaugural address to the Collège de France in 1970, Michel Foucault described truth as a space of discourse rather than as an ontologically stable thing or category. Publication, academic publication especially, regardless of the intrinsic value of the writing or its concept, is described as a process of accreditation or truth making. When we write, have ideas, posit readings, etc., and attempt to alienate that writing in the form of journal essay, book chapter, or book, our efforts will be judged to fall "within" of "without" the limits of the "true." Such is the process of entering into a discourse, of being judged a competent or incompetent user. And as Foucault was only too aware, such judgments have the power to bestow the social hieroglyphs of acceptance on certain users; to deprive others of access to the "truth"; and to accord others the ambiguous status of the outsider, the marginal, the idiotic, the *avant garde*.

The aim of this course, developed as a collaboration between graduate students and faculty back in 2013, is to aid you in negotiating the passage from writing essays for seminars to "writing for publication" both in the mechanical or rhetorical sense of what to do and when to do it, and also in the larger sense of how you hope to take up your relation to this mode or "order of discourse." Topics to be covered include: how to choose a journal appropriate to your essay; differences between a seminar paper and a journal essay; how to frame an essay for an audience; navigating readers' reports; the process of copy-editing and proofing a manuscript; book reviewing, and the genres of academic writing.

ENGL 844: African American Literature, Historical Tourism, and Public Memory**John Ernest****Tuesdays, 12:30-3:15pm**

On November 14, 1847, William Wells Brown delivered a lecture to the Female Anti-Slavery

Society of Salem, Massachusetts, and announced that his subject would be American slavery “as it is,” including “its influence on American character and morals.” Having said that, though, Brown quickly asserted that “Slavery has never been represented; Slavery never can be represented.” Any attempt to represent the system of slavery, Brown noted, could only fail; and if he were to try to represent it, he stated, he would need to whisper it to his audience, “one at a time.” Brown then goes on to represent slavery in a masterful performance that includes definitions of slavery, examples of its intimate violations, commentary on the white press and commercial interests involved in the maintenance of the national system of slavery, remarks on the legal system required by slavery, and observations on the extent to which slavery has corrupted white American character, including the political and religious ideals to which white Americans claimed devotion. It was a system, as Brown’s opening remarks indicated, at once so extensive and so intimate as to both resist and require representation—and the representation that could only fail would somehow need to be both general and individualized, both a grand dissertation and an intimate communication, whispered to individual ears but finding the one in the many, the many in the one, in its approach to the system that provided the underlying but unspeakable unity to a nation all but lost in its own mythology and degradation.

In this course we will read various attempts to represent the unrepresentable realities of U.S. history in American literature and culture. Our readings will extend from the nineteenth-century to the present, Henry Box Brown and Sojourner Truth to Toni Morrison, Ishmael Reed, and Colson Whitehead. We will consider plantations, heritage trails, and other sites of memory and historical tourism, and we will consider as well such significant historical/legendary narratives as the Underground Railroad (itself an organizing framework for historical tourism). Drawing from such studies, we will consider the ways in which African American writers work to respond to the kind of public memory memorialized in which sites. We will explore print culture broadly to consider the reception—and the attempts at appropriation and containment—of African American literature. To what extent are many readers prepared to read African American literature as historical tourists or cultural voyeurs, and to what extent can scholars hope to promote more just readings?

Expect a major essay, along with shorter writings on one or more sites of public memory or examples of historical tourism.

ENGL 685: Doing Composition and Rhetoric in the Presence of Disability
Stephanie Kerschbaum
Mondays 12:20-3:20

How and in what ways do the everyday practices of teaching and researching in composition and rhetoric shift when disability is centered? The title of this course is taken from a special issue of *Composition Forum* (Summer 2018) that I co-edited and which poses this same question. As Annika Konrad, Elisabeth Miller and I write in our editors’ introduction to that special issue,

To *do* disability . . . is to challenge deeply rooted traditions and commonplaces in our field. “Presence,” in turn, highlights that disability is already and always present in our classrooms, writing programs, research, and professional lives in embodied, theoretical, and methodological ways. With *presence*, we reject the common misconception that anyone can wait until disability announces itself to begin moving with disability (see Titchkosky). By critically and creatively engaging disability presence in its many manifestations, opportunities emerge for new pedagogies, programs, and practices that engage diverse forms of embodiment as sites of inquiry and innovation.

The final keyword in our title, “disability,” recognizes that disability is never “by itself” (Dolmage, *Disability*). All of the contributors to this special issue understand the critical and creative possibilities of disability as always in concert with other identities and experiences, following the work of leading Disability Studies scholars such as Therí Pickens, Sami Schalk, Nirmala Erevelles, Alison Kafer, Ellen Samuels, and Christopher Bell, who ask us always to notice race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic class in our assessments of who is represented and who is not in the populations, projects, communities, classrooms, and environments through which we move.

Taking this question, and the meditations on *doing*, *presence*, and *disability* that it offers, then, this seminar will serve as an introduction to disability studies (DS), taking as its focus the work emerging in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. We will read foundational work from early DS-RhetComp scholars all the way up to emerging and in-progress DS work. Major assignments will include a 7-10 page analysis of citational trails in emerging DS scholarship and a concluding seminar project. Smaller assignments and activities will include presenting and leading class discussion, writing an abstract of a scholarly essay, collaborative note-taking, and discussion board posts/forms of online engagement around course materials and discussion. We will have the chance to interact with and talk to DS-RhetComp scholars about their in-progress work. Texts will likely include Dolmage, *Academic Ableism*; Yergeau, *Authoring Autism*; Hamraie, *Building Access*; Kim, *Curative Violence*, Chen, *Animacies* as well as a packet of articles and book chapters).

ENGL 870: Mapping Transatlantic Space and Time in the Eighteenth-Century Novel

Edward Larkin

Wednesdays, 12:20-3:20pm

The rise of modern empires in the eighteenth century was accompanied by new understandings of space and time designed to complement and facilitate the needs of the new globalizing order. One of the key vehicles for thinking about the new spatial and temporal regimes of empire was the novel. This course will study, in part, to what extent the novel, as a form, owed its existence to the rise of modern empire. We will read both British and American novels and use digital humanities tools, particularly mapping techniques, to generate visualizations that track the movement of characters, plot elements, objects, etc. through space and time. What can these DH tools teach us about the relationship between the novel as a form, the rise of empire in the eighteenth century, and the understanding of space and time?

I am currently in the process of developing, with the assistance of a professional programmer, a digital tool to generate maps of novels. Part of the work of this course will include students working with that software, to the extent possible, to generate their own maps as part of your research project. Your research paper for the course should include some kind of digital map that plays a significant role in your analysis. Student essays need not focus on early American materials, but they must involve some kind of digital mapping.

ENGL 875: Refiguring Human Rights

Emily Davis

Tuesday and Thursdays, 9:30-10:45am

In this course we will explore the ways in which literary studies usefully challenges the limits of human rights discourse as it is currently understood in Western legal and activist circles. As prominent scholars of human rights have pointed out, there are a number of problems with current human rights discourse. One of the major limitations from a legal point of view is that it depends on the citizen as the model for who is guaranteed rights and on whose behalf interventions are carried out. However, many people are vulnerable to human rights abuses precisely because they are not citizens of the nation-state in which they live: they are immigrants, refugees, or exiles who lack the protections guaranteed to citizens by the state. If the category of the citizen is a problem for human rights discourse, the state is also a problem as the body responsible for enforcing human rights norms. What happens if the state itself is the perpetrator of human rights abuses, which has been the case with alarming frequency? Yet, since organizations like the International Criminal Court have a limited ability to force states to obey international human rights norms like those laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there has not been a viable alternative to the nation-state.

How can literary studies help with this situation? For one thing, literary representations of human rights have helped us imagine new forms of solidarity and shared humanity that take us beyond the mostly Western-centric ideas about the citizen and the state in human rights discourse. Writers working from a variety of locations around the globe have reflected on their connections across national borders, offering new models of what the "human" in human rights means. Texts like Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, for example, reimagine shared humanity based on the universal aspiration to physical and mental health and our shared vulnerability to disease, especially in an era of global contagion. If human rights discourse has often focused on political rights at the expense of cultural and economic rights, Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* demonstrates how taking into account the power of individual and community perceptions of who one is and what one stands for (a strength of literary studies) provides necessary correctives to purely political or economic approaches to intervention and aid.

We will read a variety of key texts in the interdisciplinary field of human rights, from the literary to the historical to the legal, as well as several novels. Assignments will include two presentations, an annotated bibliography of a key term from the field, and a final research paper of approximately 20 pages.