

A photograph of a street scene. The street is paved and has white dashed lines down the center. On the left side, there are several buildings, including one with a Starbucks sign. A dark SUV is parked on the left. On the right side, there are more buildings, including one with a red awning and a white fence. A silver car is parked on the right. In the background, there are utility poles with power lines and a church steeple. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

# Fall 2021

# Graduate Course Descriptions

**Department of English**

## Fall 2021 Graduate Course Schedule Department of English



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<p><b>ENGL867 Special Topic in Environmental Humanities</b> <i>Blue Humanities</i></p> <p>Lowell Duckert <b>9:05-12:05pm</b></p>	<p><b>ENGL876 Special Topic in Film &amp; Media</b> <i>Film &amp; Television Studies: Foundations, Methods, and Turning Points</i></p> <p>Peter Feng <b>9:30-12:15pm</b></p>	<p><b>ENGL874 Special Topic in Material Culture</b> <i>New Things: Bodies, Sexualities, Objects, Discourse</i></p> <p>Miranda Wilson <b>9:05-12:05pm</b></p>	<p><b>ENGL671 Studies in Fiction</b> <i>Speculative Fiction Thinks Race, Sexuality, and the Environment</i></p> <p>Siobhan Carroll <b>9:30-12:15pm</b></p>
<p><b>ENGL684 Literary Theory &amp; Criticism</b> <i>Introduction to Literary Theory</i></p> <p>Julian Yates <b>12:20pm-3:20pm</b></p>			<p><b>ENGL600 Introduction to Graduate Studies</b></p> <p>Sean Zdenek <b>2:00-3:15pm</b></p>

All Courses Require Department Approval to Enroll  
Please contact Jessica at [jventuri@udel.edu](mailto:jventuri@udel.edu)

# Introduction to Graduate Studies



## **ENGL600: Introduction to Graduate Studies**

Thursdays 2:00pm-3:15pm

Taught by the Director of Graduate Studies, this introductory seminar aims to familiarize students with some of the resources and faculty associated with our program. It also introduces and reviews important genres of academic writing, including the journal article and proposal. The colloquium will examine and discuss the reading and writing practices that are essential scholarship in the discipline of English.

*\*Required for all first-year English PhD students*



# Speculative Fiction Thinks Race, Sexuality, and the Environment



**ENGL671: Studies in Fiction, Speculative Fiction**  
Thursdays 9:30am – 12:15pm

In recent years, the “outsider” genre of science fiction and fantasy has become increasingly important to activism, activist-oriented schools of criticism, and American cultural production. 2018’s *Black Panther* brought Afrofuturism to world cinema; ecocritical science fiction dominates the NY Times bestseller list; and feminists such as Donna J. Haraway have made speculative fiction part of their critical practice. How do these recent engagements square with “classic” criticism on the non-realist genres united by the term speculative fiction (SF)? What contemporary scholarly and public conversations are taking place regarding speculative fiction? What does it mean, in the waning days of a global pandemic, to speculate about the future?

This seminar seeks to explore these questions via classic and contemporary readings, via conversations with guest speakers, and via experiments in writing. While we will revisit some classic primary texts, the emphasis of the seminar will be on twenty-first century texts and conversations. As the seminar title implies, primary readings will be selected for their

focus on “race, sexuality, and the environment” – not because these keywords exhaust the topics we will discuss in this class, but because they represent active sites of inquiry in contemporary SF scholarship and writing. Readings selected with this focus will include work by authors such as Octavia Butler, N.K. Jemisin, Sarah Pinsker, and Alice Sola Kim, as well as one 19th Century text (likely M.P. Shiel’s *The Purple Cloud*).

Students will have the option of working on a traditional, conference-length seminar paper for their final assignment, or a final pedagogy assignment that includes a syllabus and writing exercise; the course will also include a public-facing assignment in which students practice pitching and drafting a non-fiction article for a paying market.



Dr. Siobhan Carroll

# Introduction to Literary Theory



## ENGL684: Literary Theory & Criticism Mondays 12:20pm-3:20pm

As the late philosopher Michel Serres explains in *The Troubadour of Knowledge*, in one Greek tradition, the word *theoria* (theory) refers to a parade of idols or givens—concepts agreed upon that serve as the basis of what we do. Once a year these idols go on display or are ritually “paraded” so that a community can agree once more that they are considered to be “true.” Or, the parade is contested and new givens negotiated and so agreed upon. Taking the origins of the word “theory” to heart, this introduction to theory is structured as a “parade” or, more correctly, an inquiry into the givens of reading and writing about what we sometimes call “text,” “writing,” “literature.” We begin by telling the story of the origins of English Studies in the UK and the US, tracing 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 turn to historicism (1990s); the advent of science studies / eco-criticism / animal studies / the “post-human,” and the so-called “new materialism;” and the ongoing desire for literature and literary studies to produce something like a praxis that speaks to the challenges of composing a world in common or “common world.” Throughout the course, our focus remains on acquiring the skills to navigate theory and situating (explaining) how we choose to read and write about texts.



The format will be discussion-based. All seminar members will regularly take turns presenting materials. Weekly short reaction / response essays and longer assignments curating / applying concepts will make up the bulk of the writing component. Students will have the opportunity to add readings to the syllabus and we will fine tune individualized writing assignments as we go.

*\*Required for all first-year English PhD students*

Dr. Julian Yates

# Blue Humanities



## ENGL867: Special Topic in Environmental Humanities

Mondays 9:05am – 12:05pm

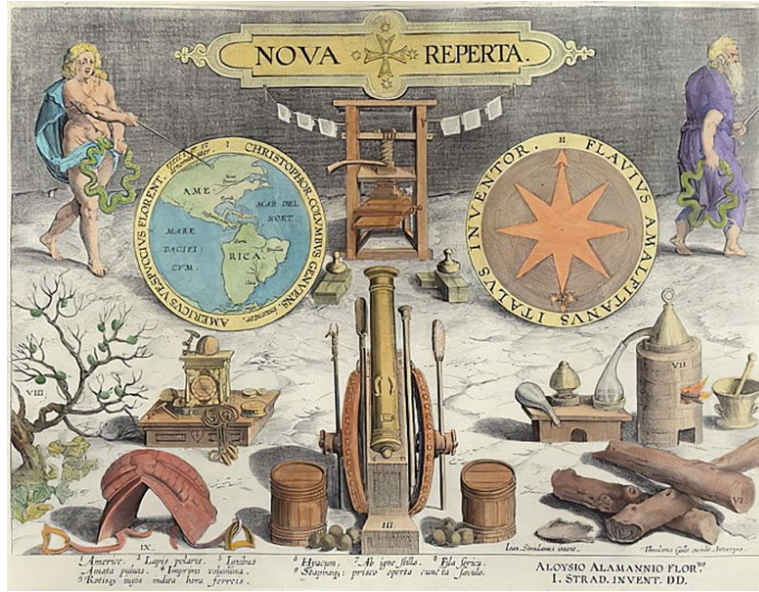
How do the blue humanities complicate our terrestrial ways of knowing and being in the world—our talk of “fields,” feeling “grounded,” or being “moored”? This course investigates watery thinking and its various interdisciplinary currents – like critical race, media, and animal studies – across a wide range of time periods and literary genres, from early modern drama to the modern-day documentary. We will pay particular attention to the perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and queer authors and the horizons they imagine. Readings will explore the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans; city blueprints; fresh and salty streams; and changing weather patterns. Class discussions will take place on campus as well as at wet sites around the state. (Delaware happens to have the country’s lowest mean elevation.) Experiential learning components may include visiting the College of Ocean, Earth, and Environment located in the coastal town of Lewes and a guided tour of local waterways led by an environmental justice organization. Through it all, we will ask: what openings do the blue humanities offer to environmental studies, and why should we follow their flows? What are their limitations – are they too focused on the “blue”? – and where else can they go?



Dr. Lowell Duckert



# New Things: Bodies, Sexualities, Objects, Discourse



## ENGL874: Special Topic in Material Culture

Wednesdays 9:05am – 12:05pm

The sixteenth-century image above, the title of which can be translated as, “New Things,” “New Inventions” or “New Discoveries,” is an invitation to the work of our class. The product of a high-end and extraordinarily successful printing shop in the Netherlands, this image suggests so many things, with such confidence, and such strangeness. Among its assertions is that the present is best represented by the naked female body, while the past is a clothed man; that the printing press and the cannon are central to newness, as are clocks, stirrups, silk worms, distillation, and certain trees; that the inventor of the magnetic compass was a 14th century Italian, Flavio Gioja, rather than an innovation of Chinese design brought to Europe by Muslims (as described in 1190 by Alexander Neckam); and that the landmass of the Americas is waiting to be written upon. All of this is presented through the difficult and relatively new process of the copper-plate book engraving, a form of printing requiring a new technology, the roll-press. *Nova Reperta*’s mix of the fabulous and the specific, the local and the global, its use of human, plant, and animal bodies, and its dependence upon new technologies of reproduction, offer narratives and change and fluidity that counter the era’s more obvious boundaries of place, sexuality, gender, power, and the human.

This class accepts the invitation offered by the early modern engagement with the new. We will consider the use of new objects in poems, such as in those of John Donne, and prose, such as that of Mary Wroth, as well as the collision of old and new stories prompted by objects in plays by William Shakespeare, John Webster, and Ben Jonson. We will consider the ways early moderns imagined the conversation between the natural, the mechanical, and spiritual in essays by Michel de Montaigne and in political and religious tracts. We will attend to the many bodies and sexualities on display in classical works such as Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and in political works, such as those focused on queenship. We will use our contemporary theories of gender, sexuality, hybridity, and materiality to explore sixteenth- and seventeenth-century conflicts over political and cultural power. And, we will consider how engagements with the early modern “new” can matter in our own struggles with the *nova reperta* that beckon us today.



Dr. Miranda Wilson

Assignments will include introducing discussions of readings during the semester and leading discussion, an annotated bibliography of a key idea, term, or work you wish to explore in more depth, and a final project taken through a structured drafting process. This final project may be a research paper of either 10 or 20 pages (to reflect the possibilities of conference length or article length), or another form appropriate to your topic, such as a public-facing podcast or web site, review essay, etc.

# Film Studies and Television Studies: Foundations, Methods, and Turning Points



## ENGL876: Special Topic in Film & Media

Tuesdays 9:30am – 12:15pm

This course offers an introduction to two distinct but interrelated fields at a moment when scholarship is evolving rapidly: the boundaries between film and television are blurring and streaming services are redefining the foundational concepts of TV scholarship. We do not assume a background in “screen studies,” instead we are geared to those who aim to teach and research media in conjunction with literature, rhetoric/composition, and other narrative and visual forms. We will begin with basic tools of textual analysis (mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound) before taking up theoretical debates and divides (realism vs. formalism, narration, psychoanalysis, “apparatus theory” and ideology, feminism). We will necessarily survey international film history and US TV history to provide context for the theory. I propose to center the second half of the semester on the theory and history of film and television genres (foregrounding gender).

In addition to assigned readings, we will have assigned screenings (probably streaming but possibly communal if conditions permit). Reading under consideration: Rick Altman, “Moving Lips: Cinema as Ventriloquism;” Andre Bazin, *What is Cinema vol. I*; Brunson et al, *Feminist Television Criticism*; Herman Gray, *Watching Race*; Amanda Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*. Screenings under consideration: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles), *Los Olvidados* (Luis Buñuel), *Illusions* (Julie Dash), *Top of the Lake: season 1* (Jane Campion), *Orphan Black: season 1* (Manson & Fawcett), *Law & Order: season 1* (Dick Wolf), *Ugly Betty: season 1* (Silvio Horta).



Dr. Peter Feng

Written work: 20-25 pages, format to be negotiated. (Advanced students will be urged to write a 1-page proposal, short bibliographic essay, and article-length essay. Other students might undertake a series of exercises in textual analysis.) *Subscription to Netflix and Hulu required (NB: Hulu has a \$1.99/month student rate).*