

Fall 2020
Graduate Course
Descriptions



English Department

Schedule Summary



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<p>ENGL634: Studies in Nineteenth Century Literature</p> <p>“Nonhuman Encounters: Plants, Animals, and Us in the Nineteenth Century”</p> <p>Mary Bowden 9:05am-12:05pm</p>	<p>ENGL680: Seminar</p> <p>“Writing for Publication”</p> <p>Melissa Ianetta 9:30am-10:45am</p>	<p>ENGL684: Literary Theory & Criticism</p> <p>“Recognition, Repression, and Representation”</p> <p>Peter Feng 9:05am-12:05pm <i>*Required for first-year graduate students</i></p>	<p>ENGL680: Seminar</p> <p>“Writing for Publication”</p> <p>Melissa Ianetta 9:30am-10:45am</p>
<p>ENGL870: Special Topic in Literary History</p> <p>“A Fool’s Errand: Reading American Literary History After the Civil War”</p> <p>John Ernest 12:20pm-3:20pm</p>	<p>ENGL600: Introduction to Graduate Studies</p> <p>Sean Zdenek 2:00pm-3:00pm <i>*Required for first-year graduate students</i></p> <hr/> <p>ENGL/HIST/MSST/MCST 674 Studies in Print and Material Culture</p> <p>“Archives Theory: From Manuscripts to Metaphors”</p> <p>Laura Helton 6:00pm-9:00pm</p>	<p>ENGL840: Special Topic in 20th Century Literature</p> <p>“Digital Intimacy: Studies in Contemporary Fiction”</p> <p>Sarah Wasserman 12:20pm-3:20pm</p>	

*Most courses require departmental approval to enroll. Please contact Jessica Venturi at jventuri@udel.edu to register.

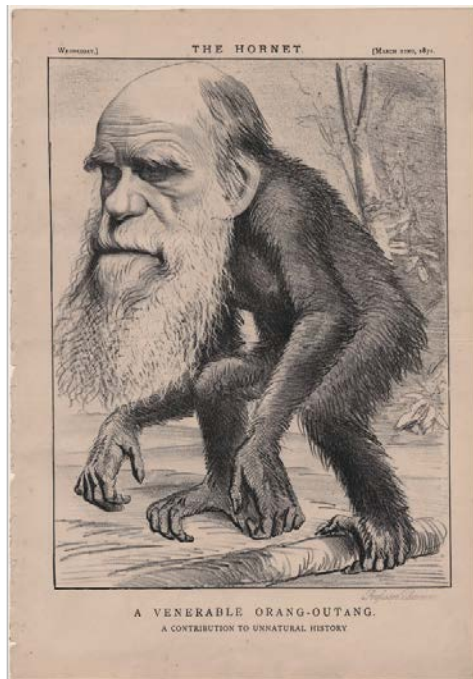
Introduction to Graduate Studies



ENGL600: Introduction to Graduate Studies
Tuesdays 2:00pm-3:00pm

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 graduate students

Nonhuman Encounters: Plants, Animals and Us in the Nineteenth Century



ENGL634: Studies in Nineteenth Century Literature
Mondays 9:05am-12:05pm

How do nonhuman beings experience the world? Are animals conscious? Can plants think? What are our ethical, environmental, and narrative responsibilities to nonhumans? This course will introduce you to critical animal studies and critical plant studies, two theoretical fields that seek to answer these questions.

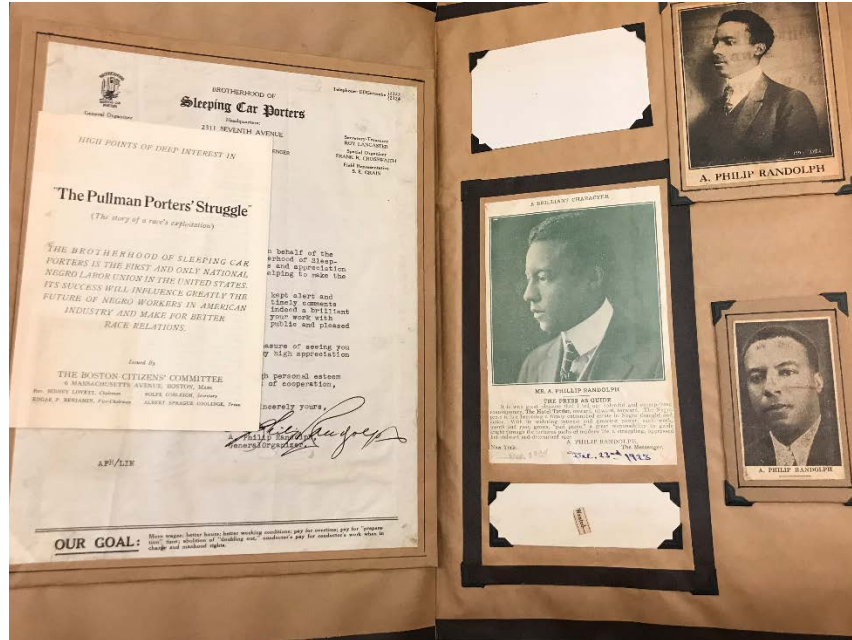
We will explore these fields' major critical concerns through readings from nineteenth-century Britain, a time and a place in which beliefs in human uniqueness were decisively challenged. In contrast to anthropocentric understandings of the natural world, nineteenth-century British anatomists, evolutionists, and plant scientists explored remarkable, unexpected similarities in the capabilities of humans, animals, and plants. Along with works by contemporary theorists such as Donna Haraway, Luce Irigaray, and Michael Marder, we will explore human-nonhuman encounters through nineteenth-century scientific texts, including works by Charles Darwin and T. H. Huxley, and literary texts, including poetry by May Kendall and Gerard Manley Hopkins, a play by Dinabandhu Mitra, and novels by Emily Brontë, Thomas Hardy, and H. G. Wells. Reading across disciplinary and generic boundaries, we will think through the relationships between these disciplines and genres, different ways of conceiving human-nonhuman relationships, and what lessons literature can teach us about encountering nonhumans.

Dr. Mary Bowden



Course assignments will include weekly student-led presentations, a conference-length paper, and a longer seminar paper; the conference and seminar papers may respond to students' own disciplinary orientations and research interests. Students are encouraged to use the conference paper as an opportunity to try out ideas that can then be further developed in the final paper.

Archives Theory: From Manuscripts to Metaphors



ENGL/HIST/MSST/MCST 674: Studies in Print and Material Culture
Tuesdays 6:00pm-9:00pm

Colonial archives; curio cabinets; slave ledgers; ephemera: once understood primarily as *sources*, archival objects are now *subjects* of inquiry in their own right. In this course we will trace the “archival turn” in the humanities while also immersing ourselves in personal collections at a range of cultural institutions beyond the academy. Through readings in theory and practice, we will consider how interpretations of the archive in one field reframe archival questions in another. In addition, with funding support from the Interdisciplinary Humanities Research Center, we will engage with visiting speakers and make site visits to regional collections—from pop-up museums to records offices to photography morgues. Along the way, we will ask: How do archives shape our inquiries and imaginaries? What gets saved, what gets lost, and why? What are the ethics and constraints of archival research? How can we work both along and against the archival grain?

Dr. Laura Helton



This cross-disciplinary seminar is designed for students engaged in traditional research projects as well as those pursuing public humanities work. As a result, each student will design an individual project tailored to their scholarly interests and career goals, as well as participate in a collaborative field survey focused on African American collections in Delaware and Philadelphia. By the end of the semester, students will: have a working knowledge of archival studies; develop relationships with regional repositories and curators; and develop a project that mobilizes or engages archives in the context of their ongoing research.

Writing for Publication



ENGL680: Seminar
Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:30am – 10:45am

Perhaps the most mystifying sentence of the graduate school experience: “You should revise this for submission to a journal.”

When I was a grad student back in the early 2000s, my seminar professors repeatedly stated – both to me personally and to my graduate cohort collectively -- that we should revise our seminar papers for publication, that all our papers should be working towards some kind of publication, and other advice of that ilk. Only with our closest of friends would we quietly admit: we had no idea what all that meant, exactly.

Most of us, eventually, with more or less self-inflicted injury, figured it out on our own, an inefficient and anxiety-producing process. Sounds scary, doesn't it? But thanks to Writing for Publication, you won't have to go down that dark and lonely path! Topics covered in this course will include: how to target and analyze a publication venue for submission, how to incorporate the creation of a cycle of submission into your research agenda, how to handle each stage of the submission process from publication to reprint. We will also consider the other relevant genres of academic writing, such as paper proposals, book reviews, prospecting letters, and reader reports. Finally, we will look at current issues of debate in academic publishing that are likely to influence decisions you make as a writer (ex, Open Access Publishing: Should everyone do it? Should I?). We'll also look at the publication process from other perspectives via guest lecturers, including journal publishers, copy editors and other journal editors. That last perspective is likely a constant, since I'm currently editing *College English* a flagship journal that surprises me regularly.

Dr. Melissa lanetta



Assignments will include reading responses, a journal analysis, a genre analysis, a semester work plan & revision checklist, and a series of diagnostic and revision exercises that lead up to the capstone project, the revision of an essay suitable for submission to a journal by the end of the semester. Readings will include Beth Luey, *Handbook for Academic Authors* and assorted essays and chapters on revision, publishing and the academic marketplace.

While this course is being offered in the English department, it will be structured to be helpful for writers from other academic disciplines as well.

Introduction to Literary Theory and Criticism: Recognition, Repression, and Representation



ENGL684: Introduction to Literary Theory
Wednesdays 9:05am-12:05pm

Location, location, location. All successful scholars are constantly asked to *situate* their approach in relation to their fields: it is not enough to offer an interpretation of a text, it is necessary to make a case for how your interpretation articulates an approach to literary studies specifically and/or textuality generally. To this end, we will be reviewing theoretical writings in an effort to understand the development of our field, and you will be asked to situate yourself in the tradition(s).

The goal of this course is to orient students toward the presuppositions and practices of contemporary (post-1960) literary theory and criticism. 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 (Jean Baudrillard, Judith Butler, Barbara Christian, Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault, Donna Haraway, Zora Neale Hurston, Julia Kristeva, Laura Mulvey, Eve Sedgwick, Gayatri Spivak, and the like) and literary theory in particular (such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Stanley Fish, Barbara Hernstein Smith, et al.).

Dr. Peter Feng



Three “proof texts” will serve as our touchstones throughout the semester: William Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Nella Larsen’s *Passing*, and *Blade Runner* (1982). These three texts intersect in intriguing ways: they are all about doubling, what counts as human, emotional violence, gender, race, and desire.

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

Digital Intimacy: Studies in Contemporary Fiction



ENGL840: Special Topic In 20th Century Literature
Wednesdays 12:20pm-3:20pm

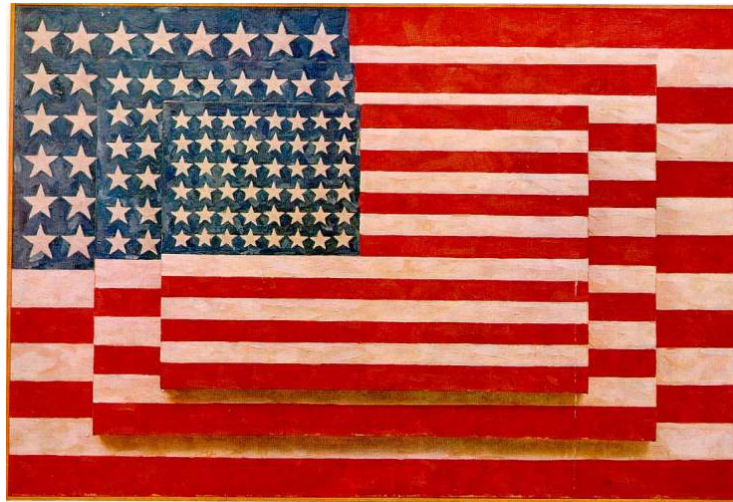
It's become something of a truism that the internet has dramatically changed how we understand and experience intimacy. The very concept of intimacy appears to be undergoing radical transformations due to the innovations of the digital age: instant and constant communication, matches made by dating site algorithms, personal languages built of emoji, and social media that seem to simultaneously increase our sense of connectivity and of solitude. Recent narratives—novels by Joshua Cohen, Jennifer Egan, Chang-Rae Lee, Gary Shteyngart, and Zadie Smith—have begun to register these transformations and ask if intimacy is really changing in response to new technologies. At the same time, these texts often point to histories that belie the dominant emphasis on newness and change. Might fiction reveal that despite fast-paced digital innovation, analog ideas of intimacy persist in unlikely forms? How can novels demonstrate that intimacy has always been mediated, entailed structures of projection, and relied upon simulation? What new forms are authors developing to address intimacy and digitality?



Dr. Sarah Wasserman

In this course, we will approach these questions by considering psychoanalytic concepts of intimacy alongside recent media theoretical texts about digital platforms and practices. Our goal is to track the intersections of intimacy and digitality as they appear in recent novels. Our reading will include a significant amount of theory at the beginning of the semester, followed by post-45 novels from a wide range of genres.

A Fool's Errand: Reading American Literary History After the Civil War



ENGL870: Special Topic in Literary History
Mondays 12:20pm-3:20pm

One of the most complex periods in American literary history is the era that extends from the ending of the Civil War through the early years of the twentieth century—arguably one of the most influential periods in American literary history, but also one that is difficult to capture in a single course. Beyond the official narratives of the war and Reconstruction were various and influential unofficial histories in the form of, as Alice Fahs summarizes, “war poetry, sentimental war stories, sensational war novels, war humor, war juveniles, war songs, collections of war-related anecdotes, and war histories—literature that has often been designated, then dismissed, as popular.” The nation’s regional, racial, and gendered battles were fought on the field of literature, but no course dedicated to a dozen or so “major works” can possibly hope to capture those battles, or to account for the lasting influence of the popular literature produced through these years. This is an extremely complex time, with hundreds of works shaping the meaning of the Civil War, defining and enforcing racial stereotypes that continue to shape the American cultural landscape, and both opening and closing doors for women to publish and manage the stories that would address the realities of their lives. “This variegated literature,” as Fahs puts it, “created not just one but a multitude of different imagined wars, complicating notions of what kind of national community was created through the auspices of print culture” (10).

In this seminar, we will be an attempt to get at not only the literature of this period but also the challenge of constructing a literary history of this period. We will explore the concept of literary history as both a theoretical and an historical problem. What is literary history, and how does that basic question change when we ask it in different contexts and for different practical purposes? And how might one study literary history, without simply attending to what are considered to be the major works of any given period?

Dr. John Ernest



In the beginning of the semester, we will read and discuss a range of theoretical approaches to conceptualizing literary history. In the second section, we will apply these methodological approaches to the racially and generically fraught literary scene in the United States from the Civil War to the early years of the twentieth century. Using this period as a case study, we will explore a series of unorthodox approaches, including reading excerpts of longer literary works, working out close readings of literary anthologies, and exploring the challenge of identifying “representative texts.” In the third and final portion of the semester, students will be expected to develop original research projects that engage with the core questions of the course, applying them to their own period(s) of study.