



Fall 2022

Graduate Course Descriptions

Department of English



<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>
<p>Bowden ENGL867 Special Topic in Environmental Humanities <i>Transforming Bodies</i> 9:05-12:05</p>	<p>Spaulding ENGL872 Special Topic in Race/Ethnicity <i>Sounding Black Culture</i> 9:30- 12:15pm</p>	<p>Ernest ENGL844 Special Topic in American Literature <i>What Was Race?</i> 9:05-12:05</p>	<p>Davis ENGL875 Special Topics in Transnational Studies <i>More Than Human Rights</i> 9:30- 12:15pm</p>
<p>*No Grad Classes After 3:30pm <i>(Reserved for faculty meetings/events)</i></p>	<p>1st Years TA ENGL110 12:30-1:45pm</p>	<p>*No Grad Classes After 3:30pm <i>(Reserved for faculty meetings/events)</i></p>	<p>1st Years TA ENGL110 12:30-1:45pm</p>
	<p>Zdenek ENGL600 Intro to Grad Studies 3:30pm-4:30pm</p>		<p>Wasserman ENGL684 Literary Theory & Criticism 3:30pm – 6:15pm</p>

Introduction to Graduate Studies



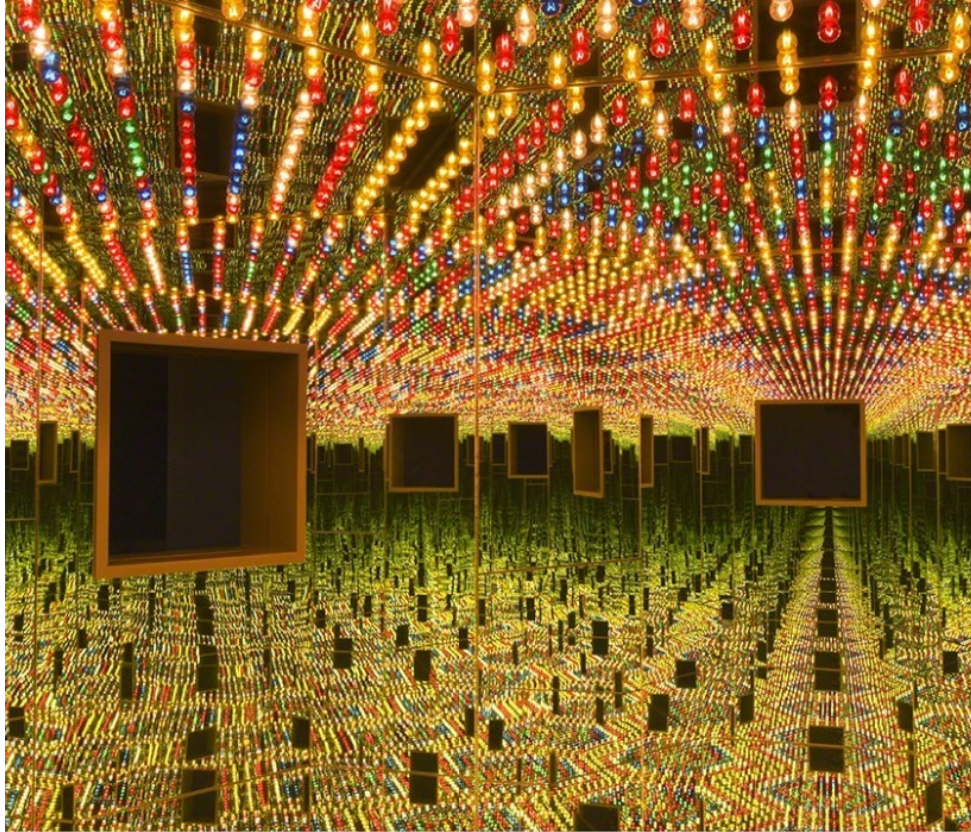
ENGL600: Introduction to Graduate Studies

Tuesdays 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*

Literary Theory & Criticism



ENGL684: Literary Theory & Criticism

Thursdays 3:30pm – 6:15pm

What is literary theory? What can it do? The goal of this course is to orient you toward the presuppositions and practices of literary theory and criticism. On one level, our goals for the course are straightforward: we will examine some of the major schools of thought within literary and cultural studies, ranging from structuralism to postmodernism. To this end, we will review theoretical writings to understand how “English” as a field has developed. On another level, our goals this semester are in fact a bit open-ended. At its core, literary and cultural theory asks us to contemplate the fundamental questions of how and why we analyze and interpret texts. We will also therefore ask these questions in and of our own work. What is at stake in the study of literature or culture? How do texts work? How do we work as readers or writers? Our challenge this semester will be striking a balance between understanding analyzing the specific texts included on the syllabus and discussing the implications these texts have on our own goals as scholars and teachers. This course is valuable to anyone interested in critical and political theory, the study of literature, and the intersections of literary theory with philosophy. Assignments will include short response papers and a final portfolio, rather than a conventional seminar paper.



Dr. Sarah Wasserman

What Was Race? Nineteenth-Century African American Literature and the Racial Order



ENGL844 Special Topic in American Literature

Wednesdays 9:05am – 12:05pm

This course will consider the ways in which early African American writers negotiated the nearly overwhelming structures and dynamics of race in the nineteenth century. Whether responding to the (inter)national realities of the system of slavery, battling the effects of racism and white supremacist thought, developing concepts of citizenship and justice, claiming authority over discursive practices that had made even the basic meaning of words like freedom deeply racialized, or attending to the needs of developing self-determined communities, African American writers could not avoid the realities of racial thought in the nineteenth century. They faced absurdities in virtually every realm of life, from ever-shifting legal definitions of race to white racial science to the assumptions and networks that guided literary and print culture. This course will focus on histories of racial thought rather than race theory. The theoretical aspect of the course

will emerge from the literature itself, considering African American writers as theorists of race in nineteenth-century American culture and literature. A governing assumption of this course is that the dynamics of race change over time, but that what Amiri Baraka has called “the changing same” remains a useful way of understanding the continuing influence of the nineteenth-century in today’s world. Accordingly, in our discussions, we will consider whether race in the US is what it used to be, and we will consider the extent as well to which the social dynamics and order of the nineteenth-century United States still influence our understandings and perceptions today. Given that this is a graduate course, you should expect heavy reading, thoughtful preparation for each class, a series of informal writing assignments, at least one class presentation, and a seminar essay.



Dr. John Ernest

Transforming Bodies: Science, Literature and Posthumanism



ENGL867: Special Topic in Environmental Humanities

Mondays 9:05am – 12:05pm

This course focuses on the science and literature of transforming bodies: from degenerated humans who live underground and develop the characteristics of moles, to utopian feminists who reproduce by budding, to genetically engineered killer plants, to the humans who transform the world's flora and fauna, including themselves.

This course will introduce you to the methodologies of science and literature studies, a field that seeks to understand the intersections and common inspirations of STEM and literature. Specifically, we will examine how assumptions about the stability of human and nonhuman forms have been challenged by reading texts from two key moments in scientific history: Charles Darwin's articulation of the theory of evolution by natural selection in the mid-nineteenth century and the development of genetic engineering technology in the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries. Reading scientific



primary sources, post humanist theory, and science and literature criticism, we will explore how scientists, writers, and critics have questioned and repeatedly redefined what it means to be human and nonhuman in a world of shifting forms. Our theoretical readings will likely include works by Gillian Beer, Donna Haraway, Bruno Latour, and Anna Tsing, while our literary texts will likely include H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's *Padmarag*, Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, and Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*. Assignments for the course will include short papers, which will be used to jump-start our class discussions, and a midterm paper. For the final assignment, students will have the option of either writing a traditional final paper or designing a course syllabus for an undergraduate class related to the course content.

Dr. Mary Bowden

Sounding Black Culture: African American Literary Sound & Culture



ENGL872: Special Topic in Race & Ethnicity

Tuesdays 9:30am – 12:15pm

In the last few decades there has been a marked shift away from the primacy of visual formations in critical examinations of race towards the importance of sound and sound culture in our conception of race and Black cultural expression. Of course, sound has always been a foundational dimension of Black conceptions of racial identity, history, and expression. From Frederick Douglass's accounts of Black song from "within the circle" in his 1845 *Narrative* to W. E. B. DuBois's examination of "The Sorrow Songs" in *The Souls of Black Folk*, from the power of musical protest in Billie Holiday's performance of "Strange Fruit" at Café Society to Nina Simone's transformation of Bertolt Brecht's "Pirate Jenny" at Carnegie Hall, from James Weldon Johnson drawing from the development of Ragtime in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* to Toni Morrison evoking the aesthetics of Black musicality in *Jazz*, African American writers, musicians and artists have engaged with race through the expression of sound.

In this course we will examine Black creative expression through the affordances of sound and sound culture: sound as resistance, sound as a vehicle of exploitation and appropriation, sound as liberation, sound as an act of hearing, listening, and voicing. Although there will be some emphasis on literary engagements with sound in the course (Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, the poetry of the Black Arts Movement), we will also focus on specific musical performances, sound in the visual arts, and sound as it impels the body to move. While my area of expertise is primarily in jazz studies, our class will be driven as much by the areas of interest of the students in the course. Students will be encouraged to develop their own projects based on their engagement with African American and African Diaspora sound culture.



Dr. A. Timothy Spaulding

Assignments of the course will include student-driven weekly presentations on primary and secondary texts, two interpretive essays (1000-1500 words), and an open final project driven by the individual student's interest. Options for the final project can be (but are not limited to): a seminar-length academic essay, a conference-length essay delivered in class, the development of a course expanding and developing some aspect of Blackness and Sound Culture, a creative project exploring some aspect of "Sounding Black Culture" for public presentation. All final projects will include a written proposal and a written reflection on the work students produce.

More Than Human Rights



ENGL875 Special Topic in Transnational Studies

Thursdays 9:30am – 12:15pm

In this course we will explore the ways in which literary representations of human rights have helped us imagine new forms of solidarity and shared humanity that take us beyond the mostly Eurocentric ideas about the citizen and the state in human rights discourse. Writers and artists 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 as well as questioning the priority of the human altogether (as in the course title’s reference to Abram’s “more-than-human world”). We will think through, beyond, and otherwise about how we figure and can potentially refigure rights as a shared language about freedom, mutual obligations, justice, abolition, vulnerability, migration, sovereignty, and the meaning of the good life. For the seminar 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 novels and poetry. Assignments will include introducing discussion of readings twice during the semester, an annotated bibliography of a key term you wish to explore in more depth, and a final project. This may be a research paper of approximately 20 pages or another project appropriate to your topic, such as a public-facing podcast or web site, review essay, course syllabus and assignment overview, etc.



Dr. Emily Davis