

LIST OF ENGLISH GRADUATE COURSES FOR 2008 – 2009
[updated 03-20-09]

FALL 2008

211	Old English	Ms. Minkova
217A	Medieval Welsh	Mr. Nagy
248	Earlier 17 th -Century Literature	Ms. Shuger
250	Restoration and 18 th -Century Literature	Ms. Nussbaum
253	Contemporary British Literature	Ms. Sharpe
254	American Literature to 1900	Ms. Rowe
255.1	Contemporary American Literature	Mr. Yenser
255.2	Contemporary American Literature	Ms. Lee
M262	Studies in Afro-American Literature	Ms. Streeter

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M215	Paleography of Latin and Vernacular Manuscripts, 900 to 1500	Mr. Fisher
217B	Medieval Welsh	Mr. Nagy
247	Shakespeare	Mr. Braunmuller
248	Earlier 17 th -Century Literature	Mr. Post
251	Romantic Writers	Ms. Mellor
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254	American Literature to 1900	Mr. Tobias
255	Contemporary American Literature	Mr. North
259	Studies in Criticism***	Mr. Reinhard
M266	Cultural World Views of Native America	Mr. Lincoln
M270	Seminar: Literary Theory	Mr. Makdisi

*** Please note that this Studies in Criticism course (New Directions in Experimental Critical Theory) will meet WINTER AND SPRING quarters.

SPRING 2009

244	Old and Medieval English Literature	Mr. Jager
250	Restoration and 18 th -Century Literature	Ms. Deutsch
251	Romantic Writers	Mr. Maniquis
252	Victorian Literature	Mr. Bristow
254	American Literature to 1900	Ms. Packer
255	Contemporary American Literature	Mr. Seltzer
259	Studies in Criticism	Ms. Ngai
M262	Studies in Afro-American Literature	Mr. Yarborough
263	Celtic Literature	Mr. Nagy
265	Postcolonial Literatures	Ms. DeLoughrey

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English 253

The Making of Black Britain
Contemporary British Literature

Ms. Sharpe

"To read black Britain in terms of a series of territories or dwelling places," writes James Proctor in *Dwelling Places: Postwar Black British Writing*, "is straight away to contradict the logic of diaspora discourse, which has tended to foreground the deterritorialized, itinerant nature of migrant cultures." Using Proctor's study as its roadmap, this course examines the place of regional—metropolitan center, suburbs, northern extremities—and diasporic locations—the West Indies, West Africa, South Asia—in the formation and expression of a black British identity. We will begin with the reclaiming of and tourist London in the fiction of Sam Selvon and Buchi Emecheta, before moving to the black metropolitan landscape of Southall, Brixton, and Notting Hill as expressed in the multimedia work of Linton Kwesi Johnson and the Black Audio Film Collective. We will then examine the white suburbs and northern extremities in the writings of Hanif Kureishi, Jackie Kay and Caryl Phillips, before returning to London via the diasporic consciousness that emerged following the collapse of black Britain's Afro-Asian unity in the late 1980s.

English 254

Origins of the American Novel: Captivity and Courtship
American Literature to 1900

Ms. Rowe

Did the novel spring full-blown from the imagination of Foster, Rowson, and Brown? Was the novel a British import, brought to the newly independent United States during the early years of the New Republic? Was it a product of enlightenment rationalism devoid of the strains of Puritan religiosity so prevalent in pre-Revolutionary America? Or was the American novel a creation *sui generis*, consumed with the issues of democratic individualism, the "family" romance of American politics, and the new passion for sentiment and the cult of sensibility? The answer might be "yes" to all of these questions--and more, given that the origins of the American novel reside in multiple strains of influence and prior narrative forms both trans-Atlantic and domestic. This seminar will examine two originating sources of ideological and narrative conventions that shade into and inform the construction of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novel in America, with particular emphasis on the gender relations that identify the earliest American novels with the sub-genre of romance--gothic, sentimental, domestic, historical, and national.

How, we might ask, do the early and persistent fascinations with "captivity narratives," dating back to Mary Rowlandson's *A Narrative of the Captivity* and Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, or the eighteenth-century captivity accounts of Kinnan and Bleecker, set the stage for American novels that place women at the nexus of national debates about the wilderness, unleashed passions, dangerous miscegenation, virtue threatened and redeemed, the unreliability of human desire, and the emerging myth of manifest destiny? Such questions flood into the national consciousness through the magazine culture and popularized retellings of captivity sagas or through novels, such as Rowson's *Reuben and Rachel* (1798), Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827) and Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* (1824) or *Joanna the Slave Girl* as well as Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* (1826), in which the romance of captivity and the captivity of romance suffuse the narratives. Set also against the backdrop of the American Revolution, the "captivation" with sensibility and with love itself that takes shape in the earliest epistolary romances is foreshadowed by the personal letters, such as those between Abigail and John Adams or those which recount the wooing of Anne Miller by Robert Bolling, that set the stage for public discourses. Predated also by the British novels of seduction and betrayal and by serialized fictions in magazines, the American fascination with romance both depends upon and derives from great awakening and enlightenment revisionings of the primacy of emotion, feeling, sensibility (and their attribution to both men and women), in which masculinity as well as femininity, gender roles, and courtship undergo social and literary redefinition. Whether drawn from the conduct book traditions or the governess manuals penned by Rowson, as in *Mentoria*, or *The Young Lady's Friend* (1794) or Foster, as in *The Boarding School* or, *Lessons of a Preceptress to Her Pupils* (1798), or from the burgeoning popularity of romance fictions, such as William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791), Foster's

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The Coquette (1797), or Murray's *The Story of Margaretta* (1798), the American novel of sensibility and courtship takes form coincidentally with the revolutionary and federalist agendas to construct a democratic nation state in and around the republican family. In the writings of Charles Brockden Brown and Catharine Sedgwick (*The Linwoods*), the tensions around nation-building and family/gender destabilization become metaphorically intertwined.

This seminar invites broad-based, student-initiated explorations and experimentation in reconceptualizing the origins of American fiction, including its trans-Atlantic links with British eighteenth-century traditions and its later descendents in the novels written by nineteenth-century authors. We will also bring into play the secondary theoretical/critical analyses by such scholars as Nancy Armstrong, Michelle Burnham, Cathy Davidson, Philip Gould, Shirley Samuels, William Spengemann. In addition to a class presentation and leadership of at least one discussion and a short prospectus with annotated bibliography for your research/critical paper, students will write a twenty to twenty-five page original paper.

English 255.1

New American Poetry: Writing (about) It
Contemporary American Literature

Mr. Yenser

We will be reading (at the rate of about one per week) books of poems written mostly or perhaps exclusively in the 21st century. Among the candidates are volumes by Joshua Clover, Karen Volkman, Robert Pinsky, Louise Glück, Frank Bidart, Kay Ryan, Terrance Hayes, Sally Van Doren, Cole Swensen... I welcome suggestions. Our aim will be to get a rough idea of the lay of the land in contemporary American verse. *Nota bene*: In addition to an oral presentation and one or two brief papers, each student will write either a substantial essay or a collection of poems.

English 255.2

Visceral, Voluble, and Virtual: Feminqueer Corporealities
Contemporary American Literature

Ms. Lee

The contemporary field of embodiment studies reflects commitments traceable to social movements of the 1960s which insisted that the specificities of gendered, racial and classed embodiment be understood as essential to the structure and production of humanistic knowledge. Today, efforts to think corporeality are intersecting with the ascent of biomedical and pharmacological discourses of the body, leading humanistic scholars to consider both the interrelations and the productive tensions among various humanistic and scientific approaches to embodiment. This seminar inquires into how struggles over the body and its various parts are struggles over the integrity of the self--as non-fragmented, vital, and autonomous--and struggles over whose mortality matters most in a given social formation. How have theorists, media artists, performers and writers used aging, ill and otherwise marked bodies to think about questions concerning racial identity, national belonging, femininity, queerness, collective experience, and authorities of truth? We will be examining in particular cultural stories narrated from the perspective of organ donors, the ill/diseased, the sexually and racially stigmatized, and other figures destined for premature death. This course will pair cultural works--poems, paintings, art photography and digital imaging, drama, stand-up comedy, and memoir--with critical essays historicizing various modes of bodily display and bodily knowing, from the early modern blazon, to the early 20th century freak show, to the early 21st century genome. We will also be focusing on four areas of body studies in relation to femiqueer and postcolonial critique: biopolitics, affects, kinesthetics, and disability. A major impetus for this course is the desire to think otherwise to the dominant modes of apprehending the body as a visual object and informational code to engage as well embodiment as a practice of movement and feeling. Readings include works by Michel Foucault, Rey Chow, Ann Stoler, Susan Foster, Achille Mbembe, Elizabeth Grosz, Brian Massumi, Kazuo Ishiguro, Suzan Lori-Parks, Nancy Mairs and others.

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English M262

Race, Gender and 'Big Books'
Studies in Afro-American Literature

Ms. Streeter

This course brings race and gender identity into an interrogation of what guides the selection of terrifically long books for the American literary canon. We shall read selected epic novels by women of color to discuss questions such as: are 'big books' their own type of literary genre? What precisely is the relationship of page count to "epic" status? Is it necessary for women of color to produce such novels in order to join the ranks of academia's most revered writers?

Novels on the syllabus include: *Almanac of the Dead* (Leslie Marmon Silko), *Those Bones Are Not my Child* (Toni Cade Bambara) and *Mosquito* (Gayl Jones).

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English M215 ***Insular Paleography: Vernacular Medieval Manuscripts*** Mr. Fisher
Paleography of Latin and Vernacular Manuscripts, 900 to 1500

Paleography, as the *OED* delightfully reminds us, is “the science or art of deciphering and interpreting historical manuscripts and writing systems.” This course will seek to situate itself somewhere between science and art, between deciphering and interpreting, and confront the rich ambiguities of the pre-print imagination. The primary emphasis will be on insular vernacular manuscripts (although Latin and continental codices will be considered alongside those containing Old English, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English), and more specifically on “the literary” as it emerges visually, textually, and aesthetically over the period. The first half of the quarter will be devoted to reading manuscripts in the fullest paleographical sense (script, *mise en page*, punctuation, decoration, codicological structure). The second half of the quarter will address the challenges of reading medieval texts without the transformative lens of modern critical editions, that is, to articulating what palaeographical literary criticism might be. Students will work with both facsimile reproductions, original manuscripts held in UCLA’s Special Collections, and electronic resources newly made available through Special Collections and the UCLA Digital Library. Frequent short papers, oral presentations, and a longer final paper will be required.

English 217B ***Medieval Welsh*** Mr. Nagy

English 247 ***Shakespearean Tragicomedy*** Mr. Braunmuller
Shakespeare

This seminar explores one author’s various approaches to a genre, tragicomedy, invented by early modern playwrights in England and Europe. To understand the varieties of “tragicomedy” in Shakespeare’s canon we will (a) consider what tragedy, comedy, and tragicomedy meant in Renaissance aesthetic-dramatic conversation (b) ponder a selected group of plays both for their individual qualities and for their contributions to a concept of “tragicomedy” (c) identify research foci for each seminar member leading to a final long paper (d) participate in student-led discussions of various ancillary texts. Likely plays: *Comedy of Errors*, *Pericles*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure*, *Much Ado*, *The Winter’s Tale*, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*. Critical readings range from Plautus to the present.

English 248 ***17th-Century Poetry*** Mr. Post
Earlier 17th-Century Literature

This seminar is designed as a sequel to Professor Shuger’s course on the theological and historical background of Caroline England, given in the fall, 2008, but with an expressed emphasis on the poetry of Donne, Jonson, Herbert, Marvell, and others, perhaps including the young Milton. The course will give attention to both textual and historical matters, major shifts in the interpretive landscape, and also to current critical trends. Depending on interest, it is hoped that the course will engage some interdisciplinary questions regarding both music and the visual arts of the period. It will also seek to draw a few lines between poetry written in this period and later responses. Enrollment in this course, it should be said, is not dependent on enrollment in Professor Shuger’s course in the fall quarter. The courses seek to complement each other historically but will function independently. Students generally interested in poetry are welcome.

Requirements: weekly short response papers and a final paper (15 pp. approximately).

English 251 ***Regency Romanticism*** Ms. Mellor
Romantic Writers

This seminar will explore the literary transition in Britain from the utopian Romanticism of the 1790s to the pragmatic reforms of the early Victorian era. We will focus on the Regency period (the Prince of Wales became Regent in 1811, then ruled as King 1820-1830) and the “second generation” of literary

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Romanticism. This literary culture was marked by an increasing philosophical, political and linguistic skepticism; by an explosion of print and visual culture that for the first time produced the author-as-celebrity and an international "Regency style"; and by a turn away from both aristocratic license and rural nature to suburban sociability, domesticity, and capitalist consumption. To help us understand the ramifications of this cultural transformation, we will employ a variety of theoretical approaches garnered from the new historicism; from feminist, race, and queer theory; and from post-colonialist theory.

We will read selected texts by Byron, Austen, Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley, Leigh Hunt, Keats, Felicia Hemans, Letitia Landon, Maria Edgeworth, and Catherine Gore.

English 252

The Nineteenth-Century Novel
Victorian Literature

Mr. Grossman

"The novel is a mirror on a highway" Stendhal famously suggested. In this seminar our basic aim will be to trace this strange mirror's history, surveying how the realist novel became the ascendant literary form of the Victorian period. To this end we will begin early with Walter Scott's breakthrough historical bestseller and then read carefully a serialized Dickens tale, one of Elizabeth Gaskell's industrial fictions, a masterpiece of plotting by Wilkie Collins, and finally a French tale by Jules Verne about circling this globe, which will make explicit the internationalist crucible that we will notice throughout the course forges the national cultural institution of the English novel.

Along the way we will pay particular attention to the material conditions of the novel's publication, literary genre, and the novels' self-conscious relations to historical context. Our secondary readings will likely include Georg Lukacs, Raymond Williams, Benedict Anderson, and M.M. Bakhtin. One important running motif will be the transportation and communications revolution that occurred in this era, redefining global and national spatial relations, standardizing time itself, and initiating a culture of acceleration that is still unfolding today, and we will explore how the novel participated in this revolution. I am also open to configuring this class's reading around students' wishes; please contact me to express your thoughts. Course requirements include participation in a final class conference and an 18-page final paper.

English 254

Slavery, Empire, and the Black Atlantic
American Literature to 1900

Mr. Tobias

Slavery, Empire, and the Black Atlantic focuses primarily on texts produced during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, within the temporal-spatial framework that Paul Gilroy has famously dubbed the "black Atlantic." In approaching these texts from "the bottom up," this seminar explores the contingent production, reification, and contestation of various racial identities within the Atlantic world, particularly their connections to chattel slavery, the triangle trade, and competing imperial projects. In addition to reading literature from prior eras (by Quobna Ottobah Cugoana, Mary Prince, and Martin R. Delany, among others) we will also engage with more recent literary, historical, and critical texts related to the black Atlantic and its relationships to modernity and the African diaspora.

The seminar is meant to challenge widely accepted models of literary-historical scholarship and periodization. Notably, the course's texts are not organized according to familiar periods, movements, or national traditions. Rather, the seminar is organized around what Mikhail Bakhtin has termed a "chronotope," an intellectual construct that emerges from a textual archive's ability to organize and combine temporal and spatial elements. The chronotope of the black Atlantic is meant to make visible the frequently ignored peoples, exchanges, and spaces that exist between more recognizable and seemingly stable social-political formations, such as nation-states, cultures, ethnicities, and religious traditions.

The course will employ a wiki-platform Web site to facilitate discussion, collaboration, and to foreground questions about how technology and textual forms mediate discourse and social relations.

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English 255

Atlas of the Modern Novel
Contemporary American Literature

Mr. North

This course will consider a group of novels, mainly but not exclusively American, that are explicitly trans-national in setting, in order to examine the relation in them between spatial dislocation and the specific patterns of literary “detritorialization” typical of modernism. Texts by James, Cather, Lewis, Barnes, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, McKay, Rhys and perhaps others.

English 259

New Directions in Experimental Critical Theory
Studies in Criticism

Mr. Reinhard

The seminar on New Directions in Experimental Critical Theory **will meet Winter and Spring quarters**, on Thursdays, 3:00-6:00 pm. Graduate students will take the seminar for credit, and faculty will also participate in the seminar. Each quarter, three or four distinguished visiting theorists will lead sessions of the seminar, and present a public lecture. The first quarter of the seminar will be on “the human” and the second will address “the collective.” Visitors scheduled for the winter are Barbara Cassin, Alain Badiou, Ronald Judy, and Etienne Balibar; visitors scheduled for the spring are Slavoj Zizek, Catherine Malabou, and Quentin Meillassoux.

The idea of *the human* is central to the humanities and the history of humanism, and constitutes a key line of questioning for the development of an Experimental Critical Theory. Historically, the question of the place of humanity between animals and divine beings was fundamental to developing notions of subjectivity, agency, and identity. Any certainty about the status of that place, however, was quickly dislodged by scientific, political, and cultural experience, and the human became increasingly difficult to isolate from the non-human – whether animal or inanimate. This quarter will investigate some key classical formulations of the nature of the human, as well as contemporary transformations of the concept around such questions as human rights and their critique; the relationship of biological existence or “bare life” and the cultural or political fields in which it emerges; and the status of the non-human, the “post-human” and the “inhuman” in the ongoing history of the concept of humanity. What – if anything – is essential to the concept of the human today? How are developments in science and technology transforming the experience and idea of human being? How have new concepts of the human in turn informed our political and ethical understandings of such experiences as diaspora, exile, refuge, and asylum?

The notion of *the collective* is equally fundamental to the questions asked by Experimental Critical Theory. Ethnic, political, religious, and cultural collectivity have all been sites for the expansion of human creativity and the production of new ideas and ways of being; concepts of collectivity however have also been manipulated for the exclusion or destruction of human beings, their artifacts, and the worlds they inhabit. Thinkers from Plato and Aristotle through Marx, Freud, Durkheim and Arendt, to Balibar, Ranciere, and Habermas more recently have investigated the conditions and contradictions that structure the modes through which groups coalesce, persist, and dissolve, and these continue to be some of the issues that most trouble our world. This quarter will examine some of the key theories of collectivity in classical and pre-modern texts, as well as modern and contemporary theories of collectivity.

Students interested in enrolling in the seminar should write a letter of application describing their interests and experience in critical theory by September 1st 2008 to:

The PECT Steering Committee
c/o Courtney Klipp
klipp@humnet.ucla.edu

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English M266

Seeing Tribally: American Indian Studies
Cultural World Views of Native America

Mr. Lincoln

Over the quarter we will discuss how poetry and prose cross in the works of Native American contemporary authors who write from tribally specific points-of-view. We start with an Oklahoma tribal Kiowa memoir, N. Scott Momaday's The Way to Rainy Mountain, and Peter Nabokov's gathering of oral traditional narratives, Native American Testimony. Next we read James Welch's Winter in the Blood, a dark comic novel about Montana reservation life, and set it against his surrealist poems from Riding the Earthboy 40. Then we look at Leslie Silko's Southwest, post-war novel of border cultures, Ceremony, and Joy Harjo's liberationist, pan-tribal song-poetry in She Had Some Horses. Louise Erdrich's expansive fiction about the northern plains, Love Medicine, provides the cultural context for her Dakota poems, backgrounded with Paula Gunn Allen's tribally feminist essays in The Sacred Hoop. Then we read Linda Hogan's eco-nativist lyrics and essays in The Book of Medicines and Dwellings, leading into Greg Sarris's biography of a California healer and artist, Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream. The course ends with Sherman Alexie's Red-on-Red activist poems, New Shirts & Old Skins, and Sherwin Bitsui's Navajo-English surreal fractals in Shapeshift. Throughout the course we will be asking how bi-cultural shifts in language, gender, and genre determine Native and American local knowledge and worldviews. *Who narrates the text, and what is the voice? Where is the tribal perspective, and how do characters see their world? Does the landscape speak? animals talk? ancestors whisper? spirits sing? trixters twist? What is the cultural context of the text? historical placement? academic debate? current theory? street gossip? rez rap? student riff? What makes this an Indian text, or not?*

English M270

Edward Said
Seminar: Literary Theory

Mr. Makdisi

This seminar will examine the development of the thought and work of Edward Said. We will read most of Said's major works, often in relation to some of the other major intellectual figures (e.g., Vico, Adorno, Gramsci) in relation to whom Said elaborated his own unique intellectual career. Readings will include *Orientalism*; *The Question of Palestine*; *The World, the Text and the Critic*; *Culture and Imperialism*; *Representations of the Intellectual*; and *On Late Style*, and will involve Said's approaches to literature, theory, music, aesthetics and politics.

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English 244

The Heroic, the Erotic, and the Religious
Old and Medieval English Literature

Mr. Jager

We will trace the medieval romance from its origins in classical and Christian antiquity through the *chanson de geste* to the late-medieval romance, with special attention to the interplay of the heroic, the erotic, and the religious. Principal texts: Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Augustine's *Confessions*, *The Song of Roland*, Chrétien de Troyes' *Lancelot*, *The Romance of the Rose*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*. Our final class will be devoted to a mini-conference on your research projects. Requirements: short weekly reports, a final in-class research report, and a 12-15 page research essay based on an original-language text.

English 250

Persons and Things
Restoration and 18th-Century Literature

Ms. Deutsch

This course appropriates the title of the brilliant critic Barbara Johnson's very recent book, while aiming to take a new perspective on over-familiar ground. "Things" have been the thing in literary studies in general and eighteenth-century studies in particular for at least the past decade, so much so that even Johnson's inclusion of "persons" in her title seems like a radical intervention. We'll be moving on two parallel tracks throughout the quarter—the first will be an investigation of why and how things have come to matter so much to today's scholars of the eighteenth century, the second will be an attempt to relocate things in the literary genres (e.g. lyric, it-narrative, satire, comic opera, novel) from which they are often too easily extricated. In other words, we will go beyond the usual critical emphasis on material culture to attempt a literary history of things. As we focus on the first half of the period, our authors may include John Gay, Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Daniel DeFoe, Aphra Behn, and Mary Leapor. We will also take up a range of critical and theoretical takes on things and the eighteenth-century, starting with Barbara Johnson and possibly including Lynn Festa, Jonathan Lamb, Deidre Lynch, Miguel Tamen, Barbara Benedict, Joseph Roach, and Susan Stewart. Throughout, a source of inspiration will be Ovid, whose influence on the eighteenth century has been underestimated, and who was the epic poet of the undying fluid relation between persons and things.

English 251

All About Murder
Romantic Writers

Mr. Maniquis

Something happened to *murder* from the eighteenth-century on. In the long history of mass murder, it achieved a new status in, for instance, the elaboration of the Black Legend, eighteenth-century paranoia of class extermination, and the Revolutionary Terror of the 1790s. The extermination of tens, even hundreds of thousands, entered the imagination as assignable, neither to God nor to Satan, but to an independent human psyche. *War*, the common name for definable political violence, yielded simply to the word *violence* as an impulse once understood and always finally controlled, as Hobbes argued, by the State, but now conceived, at least by intellectuals, as a new, uncontrollable mystery. Many eighteenth and nineteenth-century texts are indecipherable without understanding the need to represent violence in ways never before imagined. From the sexual cannibalism of the Marquis de Sade to Browning's *The Ring and the Book*, indeed to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Don DeLillo's sense of social terror, modern literature constantly faces the new mystery of violence. Murder incarnates that mystery, one reason why the murder mystery is an appropriate — and necessary — genre of both sophisticated and popular modern literature. Poetry, however, from the Romantics on, has emphasized in especially complex ways the effects of a mystery of violence upon religious symbolism, above all that of sacrifice. Murder and sacrifice are the poles of a modern literature of violence, the fundamental questions of which are defined by late eighteenth and nineteenth-century European writers.

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This seminar will explore several texts, or at least pieces of texts, by writers such as De Sade, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Cowper, Wordsworth, Blake, De Quincey, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. The text at the center of the seminar will be Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the most important of all modern English religious poems. We shall begin and end with that poem, returning to it, in one way or another, at most sessions, much as Coleridge returned to it throughout his life, always trying to understand what he himself had written.

A brief critical paper will be due at the end of the seminar. Students who have time in their schedule, during the Winter Quarter, might want to attend the sessions of English 140B (*Criticism : Special Topics*), a course in critical issues for advanced undergraduates, in which I shall be discussing *Theories of Violence and Sacrifice*, from Aristotle to Girard.

English 252

***Other Worlds, Otherworldliness:
The Supernatures of British Fiction, 1880-1920***
Victorian Literature

Mr. Bristow

In this seminar, students will have the opportunity to study a range of late-Victorian and early twentieth-century fictions that explore (to lesser and greater degrees) aspects of the supernatural—whether in the form of the modern fairy tale, the ghost story, the fantastic, or what has been called “imperial Gothic.” The readings will enable students to explore ways of theorizing the genre of short fiction, and our discussions will be supported by a range of scholarly articles that look not only at the specific kinds of supernaturalism that we find in these works but also at the cultural, social, and political contexts that inform the noticeable literary preoccupation with otherworldliness in this period. The syllabus encourages students to draw comparisons between narratives that focus on the ethereality, ghostliness or magical dimensions of domestic Britain and tales that raise questions about the grip that superstition has on the imperial imagination.

All of the writers whose works have been selected for discussion were leading exponents of short fiction in their own time. Not all of these authors, however, have enjoyed canonical status in the academic world. The syllabus includes a number of figures—including Vernon Lee, Arthur Machen, and Margaret Oliphant—whose writings have undergone serious reassessment in recent years, as well as ones (such as Mary Louisa Molesworth, Julia Horatia Ewing, and E. Nesbit) who hold a central position in the development of the sometimes marginalized tradition of children's literature.

English 254

The Transcendentalist Movement
American Literature to 1900

Ms. Packer

In 1832, when Ralph Waldo Emerson was about to resign from his position as pastor of Boston's Second Church, he wrote in his journal that he complained about most modes of worship because they failed to pay sufficient tribute to “One without whom no man or beast or nature subsists; One who is the life of things & from whose creative will our life & the life of all creatures flows every moment, wave after wave, like the successive beams that every moment issue from the Sun.” To discover a mode of worship that

could do justice to these pulses of energy and at the same time express the “awe & amazement” by which the human being is intertwined with the “Soul at the centre by which all things are what they are” was the first goal of “the Movement,” as Emerson called the group of young New Englanders who began to meet, talk, and publish in the early 1830s. In all areas of life—worship, education, conversation—they sought to replace rote learning with curiosity, tradition with originality, polite hypocrisy with truth.

Problems in the larger society, however, proved stubbornly resistant to transformation. Some, like slavery, were older than the Republic itself. Others were recurrent, like the periodic economic collapses that seemed endemic to capitalism. 1837, a year of self-assertion for the Movement, coincided with the

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beginning of a ten-year economic depression that led some Transcendentalists to found collectives for “agriculture and industry” that might replace competition with association and mutual aid. As for problems in the larger world, individual Transcendentalists took political stands opposing Indian removal in the 1830s, Texas annexation and the Mexican War in the 1840s, and slavery in all decades. Still, few felt entirely comfortable in conventional political movements. They were by temperament and conviction non-joiners, nonconformists, sayers of no rather than sayers of yes. Thoreau’s famous 1849 manifesto “Civil Disobedience” ends with praise for a hypothetical State that might be content to let its citizens alone.

The events of the 1850s—the threat of secession, the Compromise that postponed it, the Fugitive Slave Law that was part of that compromise—changed everything. The law now made it a federal crime to assist a fugitive slave. What is worse, many Northern citizens and legislators (including Daniel Webster) who urged submission to this law as necessary to preserve the Union. For the Transcendentalists the shock of discovering this moral corruption in their own communities was matched by the recognition that they themselves had tried to renovate society spiritually while chattel slavery still existed. That belief now seemed not only naive but culpable in its tolerance of moral evil. Nevertheless they remained more than ever convinced that the only defense against the expedient compromises with slaveholders advocated by their political leaders lay in the virtues that had animated their movement from the beginning: respect for individual judgment, uncompromising honesty, insistence that God must be found within the soul or nowhere. To carry these principles into the social, economic, and political world becomes the task of much Transcendentalist writing in the decade before the Civil War. Yet texts written during this decade—*Walden*, *The Maine Woods*--also remind readers of a natural world still innocent and hence a source of energy and strength.

Our goal in the course will be to read as many of the Transcendentalist primary texts as possible along with many of the classic scholarly or critical comments upon them and to conduct our own researches into scholarly and textual matters, remembering always that Transcendentalism was an intellectual and social movement before it became a collection of literary texts.

Students taking the course for credit will write three short (6-8 pp) papers to be read in class. Students taking the course P/NP will be asked to make one class presentation. Auditors may attend as many individual classes as they wish to attend, as long as they are willing to read the assigned material and participate in class discussions.

English 255

Games: Modeling Modernity
Contemporary American Literature

Mr. Seltzer

This seminar will look at the modeling of modernity via games: parlor games (games of strategy), real-life games (social systems), and form games (forms of art, here primarily novelistic and cinematic). Focus will include the fiction of, for example, Henry James, Agatha Christie, Patricia Highsmith, and Kazuo Ishiguro; the sociological accounts of, for example, Niklas Luhmann, Erving Goffman, and Michel Foucault; and the game theory of, for example, Roger Caillois and John von Neumann.

English 259

Aesthetic Theory and Contemporary Literary Studies
Studies in Criticism

Ms. Ngai

An introduction to classic and not-so-classic texts in philosophical aesthetics and the philosophy of art (all in translation), with a specific view to their relevance for contemporary literary studies. All texts will be read in translation. At least one week will be devoted to the problem of feminist aesthetics. Theoretical readings to include Kant, Nietzsche, Adorno, Bourdieu, Guillory, Kristeva, and others.

SPRING 2009 SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

English M262

From Native Son to Invisible Man
Studies in Afro-American Literature

Mr. Yarborough

Richard Wright's bestselling *Native Son* arrived on the American literary scene in 1940 with unprecedented force. Informed by Wright's radical political convictions and by his absorption of both naturalistic fiction and pulp thrillers, the novel fundamentally changed how mainstream readers viewed African American literature and it made him the most famous black author in the United States. Just over a decade later, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* was published, and the award-winning, experimental novel marked a new direction for African American fiction. Ellison had come of age as a writer partially under Richard Wright's tutelage and at one point he shared many of his friend's political views. The appearance of *Invisible Man*, however, represents his repudiation not just of his prior leftist involvements but also of key aspects of Wright's artistic agenda.

In this seminar we will read *Native Son* as well as other of Richard Wright's early fiction. We will then consider several African American novels published in the immediate wake of Wright's landmark text. Authors whose books we might cover include Ann Petry, Chester Himes, William Attaway, Dorothy West, Willard Savoy, and William Gardner Smith. The seminar will culminate with *Invisible Man* and a selection of Ralph Ellison's essays.

Requirements

attendance & class participation
an oral presentation
a short paper
a prospectus & annotated bibliography
a final term paper

English 263

Celtic Literature

Mr. Nagy

Enrollment by instructor consent.

English 265

Postcolonial Ecologies: Literature and the Environment
Postcolonial Literatures

Ms. DeLoughrey

This course explores the postcolonial literary representation of what Richard Grove has called "green imperialism" and Alfred Crosby has termed "ecological imperialism"---namely, the environmental impact of empire. By turning to poetry, film and fiction from the Anglophone Caribbean, Africa, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands (including New Zealand) we will explore how contemporary writers inscribe the history of ecological imperialism, their representations of current environmental crises, and their models of postcolonial ecology and sustainability. Some topics to be explored include epistemologies of nature, land and identity in the wake of colonial displacement, theorizing human/non-human relations, plantation monoculture, petrofiction, nuclear militarism, and planetarity. Authors may include Amitav Ghosh, Zakes Mda, Jamaica Kincaid, Olive Senior, Indra Sinha, and James George. This course is taught in conjunction with the Mellon Cultural Pre-History of Environmentalism Project speaker series and will incorporate visiting lecturers.