

LIST OF ENGLISH GRADUATE COURSES FOR 2012 – 2013
[updated 2-22-13]

FALL 2012

210	History of English Language	Prof. Minkova
250	Restoration and 18th-Century Literature	Prof. Nussbaum
252	Victorian Literature	Prof. Bristow
254	American Literature to 1900	Prof. Looby
255	Contemporary American Literature	Prof. Seltzer
257	Studies in Poetry	Prof. Yenser
M260A	Topics in Asian American Literature	Prof. Ling
265	Postcolonial Literatures	Prof. Behdad Prof. DeLoughrey Prof. Sharpe

WINTER 2013

200	Approaches to Literary Research	Prof. Kaufman
M215	Paleography of Latin and Vernacular Manuscripts, 900 to 1500	Prof. Fisher
246	Renaissance Literature	Prof. Post
250	Restoration and 18th-Century Literature	Prof. Deutsch
252	Victorian Literature	Prof. Grossman
253	Contemporary British Literature	Prof. North
257	Studies in Poetry	Prof. Cohen
259	Studies in Criticism	Prof. Lee

SPRING 2013

203	Computers and Literary Research	Prof. Shepard
244	Old and Medieval English Literature	Prof. Jager
247	Shakespeare	Prof. Fuchs
251	Romantic Writers	Prof. Mellor
254	American Literature to 1900	Prof. Colacurcio
255	Contemporary American Literature	Prof. Allmendinger
259	Studies in Criticism***	Prof. Reinhard
260	Studies in Literature and Its Relationship to Arts and Sciences	Prof. Heise
M262	Studies in Afro-American Literature	Prof. Yarborough
265	Postcolonial Literatures	Prof. Sharpe
M270	Seminar: Literary Theory	Prof. Kaufman

*** Part of the Experimental Critical Theory Series. Enrollment is by permission of instructor only.

FALL 2012 SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

English 254

American Literature, Aesthetic Questions
American Literature to 1900

Prof. Looby

Investigating the current "aesthetic turn" in literary studies by way of selected American literary texts from the late eighteenth to the twentieth century, this course will test out an enlarged concept of the aesthetic. Not only beauty and form, but materiality, affect, sensation, sex--and an expansive reintegration of formalism and historicism--might be counted as dimensions of the aesthetic. Readings in American literature will likely include Phillis Wheatley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Constance Fenimore Woolson, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Henry James, Susan Howe, Earl Lind, and W. E. B. Du Bois. Recent claims for the value of "just reading," "surface reading," and the "descriptive turn" will be considered.

English 255

Realism
Contemporary American Literature

Prof. Seltzer

What does it mean to understand "reality" as a genre? Or a world? What forms of literature, from the later nineteenth-century on, have informed modern and contemporary conceptions of (to borrow a phrase from an eighteenth-century novel) "real life"? We will look at novels, and perhaps some films and photography, in sampling realism from (for example) Zola (c. 1880) to Tom McCarthy (c.2005), looking in between at the work of writers such as Henry James, William Dean Howells, Theodore Dreiser, Agatha Christie, Cormac McCarthy, and W. G. Sebald. Additional readings in media studies, systems theory, art history, science studies, and what is called speculative realism.

English 257

Extravagant Engagements: American Poetry 1912-2012
Studies in Poetry

Prof. Yenser

The goal is twofold: to think about hard, beautiful poems (the term comes from Robert M. Adams) of the last one hundred years in basic aesthetic terms and to write about those texts in colorful, engaging ways. If we develop a sense of the flow of modern American poetry, so much the better. We will concentrate on several texts, most of them now canonical, that were sometimes considered extravagant on publication, and we will consider them in conjunction with other heuristic, perhaps eccentric works in prose.

Candidates for our four to six primary texts include Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*; T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*; Wallace Stevens, *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction*; Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (with an emphasis on John Shade's "Pale Fire"); James Merrill, *The Book of Ephraim*; Elizabeth Bishop, *Geography III*; John Ashbery's "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror"; and recent volumes by Fredrick Seidel and Alice Fulton.

The parallel texts might include William Gass, *On Being Blue: A Philosophical Inquiry*; John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After*; Wallace Stevens, *Adagia*; Norman O. Brown, *Apocalypse*; and/or *Metamorphosis*; Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*; and Jacques Derrida, *Positions*; along with Calvert Watkins, *Dictionary of Indo-European Roots*.

In addition to the obvious, the requirements are one short paper (with oral presentation) and one term paper written with an eye to publication.

FALL 2012 SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

English M260A

Asian American Literature and Narrative Form
Topics in Asian American Literature

Prof. Ling

This seminar examines the nature and evolutionary trajectory of several strains of narrative prose as they relate to Asian American literary articulations and production: autobiography, *bildungsroman*, fiction (long and short), and experimental form. Issues to be explored in the seminar include, among others, the debate over literariness and the nature of representation, contingency of literary values, the pros and cons of narratology, and the postmodern de-emphasis of the aesthetic (as well as its simultaneous textualization of the social). We will devote the first half (perhaps 5 to 6 weeks) of the seminar to digesting relevant theoretical materials, and the second half to making sense of selected Asian American texts in light of the focus of the seminar, as well as in conjuncture with the social and cultural milieus of these texts' construction as a type of racialized literary writing on the periphery of several interrelated cultural traditions. The authors to be read may include Younghill Kang, Carlos Bulosan, Chuang Hua, Karen Tei Yamashita, and such short story writers as Toshio Mori, Hisaye Yamamoto, Bienvenido Santos, Frank Chin, Russell Leong, and David Wong Louie. Course grades will be based on the following: 1) an in-class oral presentation (10%); 2) a take-home midterm examination (30%); and 3) a course paper of 16 to 18 double-spaced pages (60%). There will be, additionally, a required one-page, single-spaced weekly journal for the theoretical or literary materials scheduled on the syllabus.

English 265

Postcolonial Theory
Postcolonial Literatures

Prof. Behdad
Prof. DeLoughrey
Prof. Sharpe

Postcolonialism is not a unified field of theoretical inquiry. This seminar, therefore, does not offer a linear narrative of the topic, but takes instead an *episodic* approach that focuses on the works of some of the most prominent theoreticians for the field, including Franz Fanon, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak. It provides a framework for thinking about the theoretical and political implications of using "postcolonialism" as an umbrella term to designate the ensemble of writings by those subjects whose identities and histories have been shaped by the colonial encounter. This class will be co-taught by Ali Behdad, Jenny Sharpe and Liz DeLoughrey and will cover topics such as the politics of representation; postcolonial feminisms; nationalism and national allegory; literary form (modernism, realism, postmodernism, magical realism); and explore intersections between postcolonial and globalization studies.

WINTER 2013 SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

English 200

Proseminar
Approaches to Literary Research

Prof. Kaufman

This year's English proseminar is designed as a general introduction to literary research methodology and to a variety of contemporary critical approaches, with a more limited overview of older theories and methodologies. The weekly class sessions will vary considerably and participation in at least two outside events will be required. Over half of the sessions will feature pairings of UCLA English faculty guests who will cover such topics and approaches as the archive, formalism and history, postcolonial criticism, textual criticism, and work with foreign language source materials. We will read work by the faculty presenters as well as selections of their choosing. Other sessions will focus on approaches that are not covered by the faculty guests (possible topics include but are not limited to ancient criticism, New Criticism, and structuralism) with one session to be determined by the interests of the class participants.

There will also be lunches with four visiting English department speakers—Rei Terada on January 31, José Muñoz and David Eng on February 22, and Vincent Pecora on March 4—in which the proseminar students will have the chance to discuss pre-circulated work by the visiting speakers in a small, informal environment. Students will be asked to attend two of the outside lunches and/or additional lectures as part of the proseminar requirements (information will be forwarded about relevant lectures taking place during the second half of fall term to those students who have enrolled in the class by early November, so that it will be possible to get a head start on this requirement). It may be possible to coordinate with the English Graduate Union to integrate some of their professionalization events into our class activities, as well as with the Center for Primary Research and Training, which provides orientation to research in special collections.

Two short papers will be required, with the option of working on a specific text and tracing its reception history, etc., or of doing an additional critical analysis of one or more of the readings and methodologies presented. Students will also be asked to write one or two brief responses to the outside lectures or lunches they attend, and engaged participation in scholarly discussion with our visitors will be emphasized.

English M215

The Once and Future Book
Paleography of Vernacular Manuscripts from the British Isles, 800 to 1500

Prof. Fisher

In our increasingly digital world, there are many arguments to be made about the future of the book. At the same time, it is essential to consider what books once were – to trace the development of books through history and view books as historical and historicizable objects. This class will train students in the codicology and paleography of manuscripts produced in Britain, from the earliest books to the advent of printing. The seminar will address the challenges of reading medieval texts without the transformative lens of modern critical editions, and work to define and articulate paleographically-grounded literary criticism. We will conclude with a consideration of the role of technology in the study of medieval texts and books. The seminar will meet twice per week. One meeting each week will be held in UCLA's Special Collections, working hands-on with UCLA's remarkable and teaching-focused collection of medieval manuscripts, leaves, and fragments.

English 246

All About Shakespeare's Poetry
Renaissance Literature

Prof. Post

This seminar will address all of Shakespeare's poems: the sonnets, of course, in considerable detail, as well as the appendage attributed to the author, "A Lover's Complaint"; his extraordinarily popular Ovidian poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*; the exquisitely mysterious "Phoenix and The Turtle" ("Let the bird of loudest lay"); some songs; and: either 1) the sonnet in later English and American verse, or 2) several plays (still to be determined, but probably one early and one late in order to study stylistic mutations). Which of these last two options will depend a bit on feedback I receive from students; so please feel free to express your preference. There will also be attention paid to Shakespeare's contemporaries and sources, and to general matters of print culture in the period.

WINTER 2013 SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

Secondary readings will be from the collection of essays I am editing on Shakespeare's Poetry for Oxford University Press, and other important collections edited of late by Michael Schoenfeldt (Blackwell) and Patrick Cheney (Cambridge). There has been as well a burst of interest in Shakespeare's poetry, including several masterful editions (Colin Burrow's Oxford *Complete Poems* and the Katherine Duncan-Jones Arden edition of the *Sonnets*). If possible, we will also try to schedule at least one class at the Clark Library, to work from the original editions of Shakespeare's works as well.

Requirements: Oral reports or responses; a final paper of approximately 20 pp.

English 250

***Deformity, Disability and the Construction
of Modern Individuality***
Restoration and 18th-Century Literature

Prof. Deutsch

The course title juxtaposes "deformity" with "disability" in order to mark both a historical divide and a profound continuity. At the crossroads of visible excess and interior distinction, pre-modern monstrosity and modern abnormality, spectacular object and speaking author, the early modern discourse of deformity bears a particularly charged relationship to still-current ideas of individuality and embodied experience. Beginning with Richard III and his eighteenth-century legacy, and continuing with a range of authors that may include Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Colley Cibber, Sarah Scott, Mary Leapor and James Boswell, we will consider the following questions: How do ideas about disability in the eighteenth century create and enforce the divide between "normality" and "abnormality"? How does the period's concern with defining bodily differences scientifically and "objectively" overlap with the concurrent move to legislate and materialize sexual and racial differences? How does the study of early modern disability entail the invention of "normative" ideas of individual identity on the one hand, and "aberrant" exceptional genius on the other? If the eighteenth century culture of sensibility instituted our ideas of sympathy and sociability, what can eighteenth-century constructions of disability tell us about the limits of that sympathy? If Lennard Davis is right to define disability as a disruption in the visual field, how can we account for invisible forms of disability (what would have been termed, for example, "lunacy" or "idiocy") during the period? Put most broadly, what did it mean to "have a body" in the eighteenth century and what does it mean today; what did it mean to be deformed in the eighteenth century and what does it mean to be disabled today? My larger goal is to create a productive and nuanced connection between eighteenth-century studies (particularly of that erstwhile scholarly fetish "the body") and the largely twentieth- and twenty-first century-oriented field of disability studies; scholarship at this intersection has grown in recent years and we will read the work of thinkers responsible for this flourishing (e.g., Felicity Nussbaum, Christopher Gabbard, Simon Dickie, yours truly), along with and against more present-directed disability theory and criticism (e.g., Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Tobin Siebers, Ato Quayson). Both those interested in the eighteenth century and those interested in disability studies, whatever their historical specialization, are welcome. Course requirements: several short papers, an oral presentation, and a longer final paper.

English 252

Introduction to the Nineteenth-Century Novel
Victorian Literature

Prof. 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, and finally a masterpiece of plotting by Wilkie Collins. Along the way we will pay particular attention to the material conditions of the novel's publication, questions of temporality and narrative form, race and gender, and the international context in which these novels laid claim to instituting English culture. Our secondary readings will likely include Georg Lukacs, Raymond Williams, Benedict Anderson, Catherine Gallagher, and Irene Tucker. One running motif may 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. 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.

WINTER 2013 SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

English 253

Fiction and the Present
Contemporary British Literature

Prof. North

Both the university catalogue and the registrar used to describe most of our modern literature courses as ending at “the present.” This was a scary situation, and not just because the present is a moving target. From at least the time of St. Augustine, the present has been a seriously problematic concept. Philosophers, psychologists, phenomenologists, and, lately, neural scientists, have puzzled over the apparent tension between one version of the present, the dimensionless point used in physical and mathematical measurement, and another, the stretch of experiential time that William James called the “specious present.” The difference between these two versions of the present also involves other, less technical differences, like the difference between perception and memory, or that between sensation and representation. According to Paul Ricoeur, the purpose of narrative is to resolve these tensions in the meaning of “now,” to compose at the level of fiction a kind of time that mediates between “the cosmological instant and the lived present.” Though Ricoeur proposes his theory as universally true of narrative in general, all of his fictional examples come from the modern period, which at least raises the possibility that the present has become especially problematic in recent times. The purpose of this seminar, at any rate, will be to explore this possibility, which is generally not addressed in the vast bibliography of philosophical, psychological, and phenomenological speculation about the present. We will do some preliminary reading in Augustine, James, Husserl, Ricoeur, and Stiegler, then read some early 20th-century fiction by Ford, Woolf, and Beckett, and conclude with a look at some recent fiction that plays games with time, including novels by Amis and McCarthy.

English 257

Poetry and the History of Reading
Studies in Poetry

Prof. Cohen

What do you do when you read a poem? Since the 1920s, reading poems has most often meant interpreting or explaining them, usually in school. Poems were central to the new critical paradigm of “close reading,” and while new criticism has gone through several generations of critique, many of its assumptions about reading and interpretation remain unchallenged, the most fundamental being that reading is what you do with literature.

This class will challenge those assumptions about poetry and reading by thinking about other uses of poetry, in order to recover alternate histories but also to gain a sharper theoretical understanding of “reading” as a critical act. To those ends we will follow two paths, one material (history of the book and the historiography of reading), the other theoretical (media studies, genre theory, and “the new lyrical studies”).

Each week will offer a different case study in the history of reading poetry, which will combine a set of poems with critical efforts to imagine their reading or non-reading. While the center of gravity for this class will be in the nineteenth century, materials will range over different periods, and students will be encouraged to create final projects in their own areas of interest or specialization.

English 259

***Biopower, Posthumanism, Sideways Relations:
New Directions in Femmequeer Theory***
Studies in Criticism

Prof. Lee

This seminar contours some of the lateral movements in femmequeer theory in the past decade, paying special attention to the influence of science and technology studies (STS), critical biopolitical studies, new materialism, affect studies, scholarship on kinship and intimacy, and recent articulations of queer temporalities. Many of the readings emerge from scholars trained in humanities but who question the centrality of the “human” (the anthropocentrism) in the moral and ethical project of femmequeer studies. The (graphic) novels, short story, and poetry also featured on the syllabus either focus topically on the “microchimeric” assemblages that co-constitute animal, plant, and microorganismal life or through formal innovation cross-breed genres to reflect on the already porous boundaries between and amongst representational ecologies. Rather than a broad survey of femmequeer theory, this seminar draws from a more limited number of sources in order to ruminate at length on core texts. Readings include works by Kathryn Bond Stockton, Heather Love, Allison Bechdel, Teresa Brennan, Gary Shteyngart, Elizabeth Wilson, Hannah Landecker, Melinda Cooper, Rich Doyle, David Staples, Donna Haraway, Jane Bennett.

SPRING 2013 SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

English 203

Great Unreading: Digital Textual Analysis since 1957
Computers and Literary Research

Prof. Shepard

“Digital Humanities” has been making a big splash in the academy recently, and one of the clearest ways in which computing applies to humanistic work is large-scale textual analysis. We only have to think of the conversations surrounding Franco Moretti’s “distant reading” of the “great unread” to see a glimpse of the changes that digital reading promises. Unreading does not begin and end at Moretti’s Literary Lab, however. In this seminar, will we study not only how to “unread,” but also the history of, and the theoretical basis behind, large-scale textual analysis.

This seminar will introduce the toolset available to contemporary scholars for digital reading. Techniques covered will include word counting, topic modeling, part-of-speech tagging, sentiment analysis, text parsing, and network analysis. To understand these practical skills on a deeper level, we will look at how these techniques have developed over a number of decades. To get a better sense of where they come from, we will cover readings from the work of computing humanists in the 1960s to contemporary touchstones like Moretti’s work. We will examine the history of these methods to see how the assumptions of these workers has changed over time—and in some ways, how much still remains the same. We will explore two central questions: what can digital reading do that non-digital reading cannot, and, since everyone talks about synthesizing these two areas of reading, just what might that synthesis look like?

The course will conclude with a research project that may take a variety of forms. The general thrust of this project will be applying the methods we have learned to some large-scale document analysis, preferably related to your own research. The final project may be a paper or a digital project, but the emphasis will be on applying these techniques to do research instead of developing advanced ways to present it. Group work is encouraged, but not required.

English 244

Adam, Eve, and the Serpent: From Late Antiquity to Milton
Old and Medieval English Literature

Prof. Jager

In this seminar we will examine how an originally minor episode in biblical history (Genesis 3) assumed a key role in medieval tradition, with far-reaching results for European culture, as reflected in a wide array of literary texts (and visual art). Primary texts include Augustine, patristic poets, Old English literature, the medieval drama, scholastic commentators, courtesy books for women, medieval apocryphal writings, and Milton, who drew on many of these traditions. The primary texts are available in English translation, though work on original texts will be encouraged, especially in the research paper. Requirements: primary and critical readings; class reports; a 15-page final research essay.

English 247

Bardolatry
Shakespeare

Prof. Fuchs

This course will read Shakespearean texts with particular attention to the canonization, popularization, and apotheosis of the Bard. We will consider problems of literary biography, textual history, adaptation/appropriation, the Shakespearean canon, and global circulation. How is “Shakespeare” defined and delimited, as the canon waxes and wanes? What kind of ideological investments produce “Shakespeare” in different historical contexts? How is Shakespearean cultural capital distributed and allotted?

PLEASE NOTE: The course will meet at the UCLA Clark Library, in West Adams. Shuttle transportation to and from the campus will be provided.

SPRING 2013 SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

English 251

Jane Austen and Her Peers
Romantic Writers

Prof. Mellor

This seminar will analyze the fiction of Jane Austen from a variety of critical perspectives: biographical, formalistic, generic, new historical, feminist, post-colonial. We will place Austen's six novels in the context of the development of narrative technique, the major political and social events of her day (the French Revolution, the women's rights campaigns and the discourses of female subjectivity, the anti-slavery campaigns, the construction of the "public sphere," and the emerging Regency culture of consumption). To illuminate her interventions in these events, we will read examples of the Gothic novel (Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* and Wollstonecraft's *Maria*), the poetry of sensibility (Hannah More, Helen Maria Williams, Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Rights of Woman*), abolitionist poetry, and Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* and *The Grateful Negro*. In addition to reading Austen's juvenilia and six published novels (as well as her unfinished *Sanditon*), we will look at the history of the secondary criticism on Austen and the ways in which it has responded to specific political and cultural events in Europe and America since the 1950s. We will conclude by watching one of the films based on Austen's novels to analyze both the difference between verbal and visual media and the role of Austen films in promoting a national political agenda.

English 254

Melville in His Career
American Literature to 1900

Prof. Colacurcio

An elite author if there ever was one, Melville clearly began as a "popular" writer of travel and captivity narratives: what happened? Or, to put the question another way, what ominous predictors can we find in the "long foreground" of *Moby Dick*? And, besides the self-contrived disaster of *Pierre*, what aftermath? What to make of the sudden, brilliant reduction of mode, from tragedy and romance to the lucid irony that distinguishes so many of the magazine tales? Finally, when Melville's accomplishments have outrun our interest in precedent, two alternate endings: 1) as if to show that the Postmodern is not that far off from the Victorian, a chance to ask why we have been, all along, so very exercised over the random fantasies of the notorious *Confidence Man* we know as the novelist; but then, lest we conclude that it's all been just so much free-play, 2) the stark (un-)patriotic gore of the *Battle Pieces*. (What? You insist on having an extra class on *Billy Budd*? OK, but then what about *Clarel*, *Timoleon*, and *John Marr*?)

English 255

***Transformations of the West
in the 20th and 21st Centuries***
Contemporary American Literature

Prof. Allmendinger

Frederick Jackson Turner famously declared that the frontier "closed" in 1890. Since then writers have responded to this provocation in various ways, mythologizing the frontier in the formula western, romanticizing the past in order to escape from the present, protesting against changes that began to occur in the twentieth century with the rise of technology and industrialization, and examining social and political tensions that became exacerbated in the urban West. Many of these problems were addressed by gay and lesbian writers and people of color whose voices were heard for the first time in American literature. Authors to be covered include Owen Wister, Willa Cather, John Steinbeck, Wallace Stegner, Raymond Chandler, Chester Himes, Richard Rodriguez, Joan Didion, Annie Proulx, and Cormac McCarthy.

English 259

Experimental Critical Theory (Part Two)
Studies in Criticism

Prof. Reinhard

Part two of the Experimental Critical Theory Series. Enrollment is by permission of instructor only.

SPRING 2013 SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

English 260

Posthumanisms: Human, Animal, Machine
Studies in Literature and Its Relationship to Arts and Sciences

Prof. Heise

One of the most striking characteristics of contemporary Western culture is the sense that conventional humanism and common definitions of the human no longer quite capture our current experience and self-perception. In the 1980s, this sense of an always partly real and partly anticipated "posthumanism" crystallized in the figure of the cyborg. By the early 2000s, it shifted to a renewed concern about the animal and its connections and disjunctures from human identity and sociality. This seminar will trace varieties of posthumanism in literature, film, and philosophy from the 1980s to the present, focusing on the following issues:

- The human body and technology: Prosthesis to avatar
- Real ecologies and virtual environments
- Anthropocentrism and its alternatives
- Biopolitics and redefinitions of life
- The species concept and multispecies perspectives
- Animal welfare vs. environmental ethics
- What is a character?: Narrative and visual perspectives
- Thing theory and the agency of objects

The seminar will seek to situate posthumanist perspectives in relation to older poststructuralist paradigms and to the emergence of new materialisms in the present. Readings will include McLuhan, Foucault, Derrida, Latour, Haraway, Stiegler, Agamben, Singer, Wolfe, Jamieson, Alaimo, Anderson, Morton (theory); Dick, Gibson, Le Guin, Coetzee, Lethem, Boyle, Beukes (fiction); *Blade Runner*, *Street of Crocodiles*, *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*, and *District Nine* (film).

English M262

The Literature of Slavery and Abolition
Studies in Afro-American Literature

Prof. Yarborough

We encounter discussions of slavery, race, and American citizenship from the earliest days of the Republic. For obvious reasons, debates over these charged topics occur with increasing frequency and intensity through the first half of the nineteenth century as the nation careens toward the Civil War. In this seminar, we will examine a wide range of texts that engage directly the vexed question of chattel slavery in the United States. Although we may touch on materials from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (for instance, texts by Phillis Wheatley and Thomas Jefferson), the bulk of the assigned reading dates from roughly 1830 through 1865. We will cover full-length works by David Walker, Harriet Jacobs, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Mattie Griffiths, among others. We will also read shorter pieces—fiction, poetry, journalism, essays, and autobiography—by writers such as James McCune Smith, William Lloyd Garrison, Frances E. W. Harper, Lydia Maria Child, Henry Highland Garnet, and Frances Kemble. Issues to be discussed include the evolving construction of blackness in the United States, sentimentality and abolition, the role of women in the slavery debate, Christianity and slavery, and conflicting attitudes toward the use of violence in the antislavery struggle.

Requirements

- attendance and class participation
- weekly on-line posts
- an oral presentation
- a short paper (5-6 pages)
- a prospectus and an annotated bibliography
- a final paper (15-20 pages)

SPRING 2013 SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

English 265

Reading Beyond Postcolonial Literary Narrative
Postcolonial Literatures

Prof. Sharpe

The field of postcolonial studies has been driven by narrative theory, which is where this course will begin. We will examine the value of narratology through a classic study, Peter Brook's *Reading for the Plot*, and Faulkner's *Absalom! Absalom!* as a case history for charting alternative, postcolonial plots. We will proceed to theories of landscape, image, time, and affect as critical frames that work on a range of representational registers besides narrative. In particular, we will examine the relationship of these theories to a modernity that emerged out of empire and its ruins. In order to make this move, the course weaves the fiction of Faulkner, Cliff, Ghosh, and Ondaatje into the theories of Glissant, Stoler, Barthes, Bakhtin, Clough, Heise, Gilroy, and Trouillot. We will also consider how poetry can allow us to rethink the narrative drive and desire of the field. The following are some of the questions the course will address: What is the desire guiding the reading of any literary work? Are methods and theories derived from modernist and postmodernist texts only applicable to the literature of these periods? What are the advantages and limitations of one analytical frame over another? Rather than following a linear trajectory, this course will allow students to move across the various critical approaches and literary works.

English M270

Absolutely Theological
(The Church, the Person, the Kingdom, the Mystic, and Being)
Seminar: Literary Theory

Prof. Kaufman

This course investigates a striking re-resurgence of the theological in very contemporary Continental thought of the past few years. This is an embrace of the theological as such—and generally Christian theology insofar as it poses very particular numerical-ontological problems—even beyond the realm of political theology and biopolitics, and with a striking disregard for if not dismissal of debates around secularization. We will read the most recent trilogy by Giorgio Agamben on the topics of the kingdom, the church, and monasticism; Roberto Esposito on the Christian concept of “person”; Jean-Luc Nancy's second volume in the Deconstruction of Christianity series, Slavoj Žižek's God in Pain, and if time permits works from John Milbank and the Radical Orthodoxy Movement, and possibly selections from Alain Badiou and René Girard. We will conclude by comparing these contemporary works with three early twentieth-century French philosophers of religion: Étienne Gilson on Christian philosophy (especially his Being and Some Philosophers), Louis Massignon on Islam and sacred hospitality, and Henry Corbin on Islamic philosophy and mysticism. Student interest will be taken into account in determining the scope and trajectory of the readings.