

**University at Albany
State University of New York**

GRADUATE COURSES IN ENGLISH

Spring Session 2009

Course offerings for:

**Master of Arts
Doctor of Philosophy
Non-Degree Study**

**Department of English
College of Arts and Sciences
Edith O. Wallace Humanities Building
Room HU 336
(518) 442-4099**

Bret Benjamin, Director of Graduate Studies

FACULTY TEACHING SPRING 2009

BRANKA ARSIĆ, Associate Professor – Ph.D., University of Belgrade

JEFFREY BERMAN, Distinguished Teaching Professor – Ph.D., Cornell University

PATRICIA CHU, Assistant Professor – Ph.D., University of Chicago

TERESA EBERT, Professor – Ph.D., University of Minnesota

HELEN ELAM, Associate Professor – Ph.D., Brown University

MICHAEL HILL, Associate Professor – Ph.D., Stony Brook University, SUNY

PIERRE JORIS, Professor – Ph.D., Binghamton University, SUNY

ERIC KEENAGHAN, Assistant Professor – Ph.D., Temple University

TOMÁS NOEL, Assistant Professor – Ph.D., New York University

STEPHEN NORTH, Distinguished Teaching Professor – D.A., University at Albany, SUNY

MARJORIE PRYSE, Professor – Ph.D., University of California, Santa Cruz

MARTHA ROZETT, Professor – PH.D., University of Michigan

HELENE SCHECK, Associate Professor – Ph.D., Binghamton University, SUNY

LYNNE TILLMAN, Associate Professor and Writer-in-Residence – B.A., Hunter College

SPRING 2008 COURSES

Courses are by Permission of Instructor as noted, otherwise by Permission of Department only

ENG 500 – Textual Practices I: Reading American Poetry through Writing, the Unconscious, and Power
(Open Only to English MA Students) - Permission of Department is required

6139 Th 4:15-7:05 p.m. BA 216 E. Keenaghan

Three conceptual “optics” – writing, the unconscious, and power—will organize our reading of key theoretic essays. Each optic roughly corresponds to, and so will help you become conversant with, a major critical approach: deconstruction, psychoanalytic criticism, and historical materialism/cultural studies, respectively. Using optics rather than recognized “schools” of criticism will also let us examine where those critical approaches originated, how they evolve as responses to thinkers in other “schools,” and where they overlap. Since many literary authors can be said to be generally concerned with issues of writing, unconscious, and power, these three “optics” also supply readymade thematic connections between the theoretic and literary texts. Possible theory: Nietzsche, Sapir, Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Blanchot, Heidegger, Ransom, Derrida, de Man, Nancy, Racière, Marx, Gramsci, Sartre, Adorno, Benjamin, Freud, Lacan, Althusser, Fromm, Marcuse, R. Williams, Eagleton, Foucault, Kristeva, Butler, Irigaray, Cixous, Cavarero, Jameson, Barthes, Deleuze and Guattari, Lyotard, Fanon, Spivak, Bhabha, Gates, B. Johnson. We will work with 5-7 major American poets, any of whom you may write on for your final paper. Possible Poetry: Whitman, Pound, Stevens, Williams, H.D., Zukofsky, Rukeyser, Reznikoff, Bishop, Oppen, Spicer, Duncan, Blaser, Olson, O’Hara, Ginsberg, Jones/Baraka, Bernstein, Hejinian, R. Waldrop, Mackey, Mullen, Palmer. Requirements: (1) Attendance and participation; (2) Assessment Paper (2-3 pages) of a critical essay’s limits; (3) group presentation on critical approaches to a poet; (4) Critical Paper (6-8 pages) using 2 critical essays from the group presentation; (5) Final Research Paper (12-15 pages, staged). Before the first class, students should read *French Theory* by François Cusset (Minnesota, 2008).

ENG 515 – Workshop in Poetry

Permission of Instructor is required – Submit Writing Sample to Prof. Noel (tunoel@albany.edu)

6343 W 7:15-10:05 p.m. HU 123 T. Noel

How can poetry signify linguistic and political difference? This workshop/seminar will explore the promise and problematics of nonmonolingual poetics. We will seek out expressive terrain between the monolingualism of the nation state and an idealized bilingualism that assumes a free and easy commensurability. We will experiment with “translingual” writing and reading practices. Any interested in applying should email a 7-10 page sample of creative and/or critical writing to Tomas Urayoan Noel [tunoel@albany.edu].

While focusing on discussion of students’ work, the workshop will also involve readings from the work of poets engaged in various modes of nonmonolingual writing (and especially of Latin/o American poets such as William Carlos Williams, Alurista, Victor Hernández Cruz, Miguel Algarin, Bernice Zamora, Juan Felipe Herrera, Francisco X. Alarcón Edwin Torres, Rodrigo Toscano, Heriberto Yépez, Adrian Castro, Josefina Báez, Mónica de la Torre, and Tomás Riley). Since our approach to translanguage is critical-creative, we will also examine theoretical writings by the likes of Haroldo de Campos, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Emily Apter, Doris Sommer, and Julia Kristeva. (*There is no language requirement for this course.*)

ENG 516 – Workshop in Fiction

Permission of Instructor is required – Submit Writing Sample to Prof. Tillman (tillwhen@aol.com)

2166 T 4:15 -7:05 p.m. HU 115 L. Tillman

This is an intensive writing workshop for students with some degree of experience in writing fiction. Students are expected to have already been developing, thinking about, and working on fiction. Poets, similarly experienced in writing poetry, who are interested in writing fiction, are also welcome to apply. During the workshop, each student will present three or four stories to the group (depending upon our number), for engaged discussion. Each student is expected to be a full participant in the commentary on colleagues' fictions, stories, and consequent questions about issues in fiction. This is a permission by instructor course. Any interested in applying should email 7-10 pages of their writing to: Tillwhen@aol.com. In addition, indicate previous writing courses; major or area of specific interest in graduate school; reasons for wanting to take this workshop.

ENG 580 – Fitzgerald & Hemingway

5475 M 4:15-7:05 p.m. ED 022 J. Berman

The course will focus on the art and life of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway, emphasizing psychoanalytic and feminist approaches. We will read Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise, The Great Gatsby, Tender Is the Night, Zelda Fitzgerald's Save Me the Waltz, Hemingway's Collected Short Stories, The Sun Also Rises, A Farewell to Arms, and For Whom the Bell Tolls. There will be two fifteen-page essays, a class presentation, and several reader-response diaries.

ENG 581– Back to the Eighteenth-Century: What was/What is the Enlightenment? .

9071 T 4:15-7:05 p.m. BA 210 M. Hill

This course explores key themes associated with a period self-described in the eighteenth century as the "Enlightenment." The period considered will range from the lapsing of the Licensing Act in late seventeenth-century England, through the reading revolutions of the politically turbulent eighteenth century, particularly, as the discipline of "English Literature" originated in the Scottish Universities. Through close reading of eighteenth-century fiction and non-fiction prose, poetry, various critical and archival materials, as well as contemporary theory on the Enlightenment and after, topics of discussion will include: the relation between literature and civil society, the modern divisions of knowledge we now call "disciplines," the new legal and aesthetic emphases placed upon authorship and subjectivity, the rise of "rights," the new middle class, and the division of "races" in the context of imperial rule.

Throughout the course, we will attempt to turn our historical investigations toward questions of how literary expression and democratic citizenship are playing out given current media, political, and economic changes that evidently serve counter-points to Enlightenment ideals.

Reading for this course will include historical and contemporary writing that did not appear in the Spring 2008 ENG 720, "Enlightenment and the Analytics of War." An extended list of texts is available on request.

ENG 585 – Special Topics: Appalachian Writers/Appalachian Studies

9073 W 4:15 -7:05 p.m. SL-G02 M. Pryse

The premise of this course emerges from the convergence of culture, language, geography, modernization, representation, and environmentalism in shaping the contrast between the outsider's view of Appalachia and attempts by Appalachian writers and activists themselves to define their heritage, claim their identity, and explore the social and economic tensions that the region brings into relief. Although the majority of readings for the course will focus on fiction from the 1880s to the 1980s, about a third will explore interdisciplinary constructions of Appalachia, with an emphasis on the role coal mining has played in the economy and political structure of the region. Students will have free rein to explore the cultural study of Appalachia in at least one of two out-of-class papers. Documentary film and some attention to Bluegrass music will supplement discussion of literary and non-fiction texts. Class discussion and group work will organize the course format and students should anticipate a final exam as well as out-of-class writing. AENG 585 is cross-listed with Women's Studies.

The reading list for the course will likely include the following novels: Mary Lee Settle, Charley Bland (1989); Mary Noailles Murfree, In the Tennessee Mountains (short stories, 1884); Murfree, In the 'Stranger People's' Country (1891); Grace MacGowan Cooke, The Power and the Glory (1909); Chuck Kinder, Snakehunter (1973); Cormac McCarthy, Child of God (1973); and Lee Smith, Oral History (1983). In addition, the course will include journalist Michael Schnayerson's Coal River (2008), and likely include excerpts/segments from Mari-Lynn Evans, Holly George-Warren, and Robert Santelli, eds., The Appalachians: America's First and Last Frontier (2004) and Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt, Beyond Hill and Hollow: Original Readings in Appalachian Women's Studies (2005).

ENG 615 –Poetics and Literary Practice

9074 M 7:15-10:05 p.m. HU 113 H. Elam

Two eras in British poetry – Romantic and Victorian – have been marked off as distinct, and the divide has spilled over into 20th century poetry, with designations of modernist, high romantic, and so on. This course will focus on readings of major poems in both traditions and follow their inclinations into later poetry. Readings from Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Browning, Yeats, and others. Short responses per week, short mid paper, term paper, and seminar presentations.

ENG 642 – Seminar: Current Trends in Critical Theory – Class and Cultural Theory

9075 W 4:15-7:05 p.m. BA 212 T. Ebert

Class is the decisive condition of social life: it shapes people's birth, healthcare, education, eating, love, labor, aging, and death. Yet, as an explanation of cultural and social relations, it has more or less disappeared from contemporary theory which now represents society as an assemblage of cultural singularities and flows of fugitive meanings. The reasons vary for this fading of class in theory. Derrida, for instance, declares “any sentence in which 'social class' appeared was a problematic sentence for me,” and he meditates that perhaps class belongs to “another time” since our time is for him marked by links of “affinity” without a “common belonging to a class.” Antonio Negri regards Derrida's theory in general to be outdated and “exhausted”—“a prisoner of the ontology he critiques.” Negri reads “class” as an analytics of the “multitude” and argues for a new “post-deconstructive” cultural theory because capitalism itself has outdone deconstruction in the pursuit of de-totalization, difference and hybridity. The course will examine these and other arguments about class as lifestyle, status, income, taste, biopolitics.... It will also explore the theory of class as a relation of owning—not just owning commodities but owning the labor of the other because labor “possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value” (Marx, Capital). The relations of class, subjectivity, otherness, and difference will be studied along with class's relation to ideology and its place in cultural theory. The broad context of discussion is a social environment in which, as one theorist notes, “the class structure is being rigidified and polarized, when the hypermobility of capital gives the transnational bourgeoisie an unprecedented capacity for domination” and “the social safety nets set up in the course of a century of labor struggles” are being dismantled and “forms of poverty reminiscent of the nineteenth century resurge and spread,” and “where one would need an unflinching historical and materialist analysis” instead of “a soft culturalism.” What is the relation of class critique and literary and cultural theory now? Students will write two papers, give one seminar report and have the option of participating in a theory conference.

ENG 681 – Seminar: Texts/Authors: Medieval Women Writers

9076 M 4:15-7:05 p.m. HU 134 H. Scheck

Female experience and potential in the Middle Ages was shaped by various cultural forces that limited women's creative, social, spiritual, and political activity. And yet, women writers did flourish throughout the Middle Ages. This course surveys women's contributions to the rich literary traditions of the western Middle Ages, from early to late (ca. 750-1500 CE), and explores the ways in which women worked in, through, and against the limitations imposed by masculinist social structures. Situating their work within the various cultural milieus in which medieval women wrote, we will grapple with notions of authority, authorship, and canonicity in relation to class, gender, power, sexuality, and spirituality. Drawing on current critical, historical, and theoretical work, we will consider prominent women writers and their motivations (political, social, spiritual, etc.); reception of their work by contemporaries as well as by modern audiences; and issues of selection and preservation of texts to further our understanding of women's roles in cultural production as patrons, readers, and writers. We will also trace the ways in which women negotiate male-dominated discourses and genres, alternately promoting and challenging perceptions of womanly weakness (intellectual, spiritual, and physical), appropriating and revising historical and literary traditions, and advancing literary devices of their own. Primary texts will be read mostly in translation from Latin, French, Anglo-Norman, Italian, and Spanish, though we will also read some texts in their original early English form. Assignments will include an oral presentation, weekly short essays, and a final seminar paper.

ENG 685 – Early American Spirituality

6025 Th 7:15-10:05 p.m. HU 115 B. Arsić

In contrast to the inherited image of the “American self” as self-reliant, willful, insular and liberal, which served as a background to a number of interpretations of American exceptionalism and colonialism, we will explore the vein of American spirituality that advocated selflessness, involuntariness, disorientation and weakness as the premise for contriving personal identity. Epistemologically speaking, our question will concern those strategies of evacuation of the self that, by leading to “emptiness,” served, for authors we will discuss, as the necessary condition for “feeling alive.” Cognitively, we will want to know what kind of personal identity – if any – can be posited upon such an evacuation of the self. Ethically, we will ask how the depersonalized self can still claim to be a responsible subject mobilized in the service of revolutionary politics. Politically, how susceptibility toward the supernatural and even the mystical could lead to a passionate involvement against slavery. The cultural background to our discussions will be provided by texts as diverse as Margaret Cavendish’s empirical philosophy, the long discourses of the Buddha, Benjamin Rush and the early ages of American psychiatry, as well as opinions of the United States Supreme Court from the first half of the 19th century. Our main arguments, however, will emerge from close readings of texts by Mary Rowlandson, Anne Bradstreet, John Cotton, Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Paine, Emily Dickinson and Henry David Thoreau.

ENG 700 –The History of English Studies, 1880-Present

9077 M 7:15-10:05 p.m. HU 112 S. North

This course will consider the disciplinary/professional enterprise traditionally called English—and more recently English Studies—as that enterprise has operated in the U.S., where it has been funded primarily in and through universities and colleges. Topics will include the emergence of and relationships among its various specializations (e.g., English and American literature, creative writing, linguistics, rhetoric and composition); the role of professional organizations (Modern Language Association, Conference on College Composition and Communication, Associated Writing Programs) and scholarly/professional journals; and its modes of self-perpetuation (e.g., graduate education, professionalization). Readings will be drawn from such histories of and/or commentaries on the enterprise as Robert Scholes’s *The Rise and Fall of English Studies*, Sharon Crowley’s *Composition in the University*, James Sosnoski’s *Token Professionals and Master Critics* and Gerald Graff’s *Professing Literature*, but students can also expect to do research on specific journals, organizations and/or programs.

ENG 720 –Theory & Practice of Literary Translation

Permission of the instructor is required

7096 T 7:15-10:05 p.m. HU 115 P. Joris

Through a close reading of major texts on & of translation, this seminar addresses both theoretical & practical questions raised by the activity of writer-as-translator & translator-as-writer. An investigation of the ideological and socio-economic strictures of the translator's task and place will help refocus the central question of author-ity. Students will be expected to be simultaneously involved with writing & with translation work from a language of their choice into English. This seminar will attempt to invert the traditional relationship of original text & translated copy & reinscribe the activity of translation as the core process of the act of writing.

Reading list for ENG 720:

- Steiner, George. *After Babel*. (2nd edition) New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Lawrence Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader*, Routledge, 2000.
- Jerome Rothenberg, *Technicians of the Sacred*, Berkeley: California University Press, 1985. Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, Berkeley: California University Press, 1992.
- Dennis Tedlock, "Toward a Poetics of Polyphony and Translatability"
- in *A BOOK OF THE BOOK: SOME WORKS & PROJECTIONS ABOUT THE BOOK & WRITING*
- edited by Jerome Rothenberg & Steven Clay.
- Jacques Derrida, *Des tours de babel*, o.p. (handout)

ENG 770 –Teaching Writing and Literature

2182 Th 4:15-7:05 p.m. BA 210 P. Chu

In this course we will address questions of teaching literature, criticism and theory in an English department using a set of canonical texts. We will read a small number of writings on teaching generally but this will not be a course in pedagogical theory. Students will finish this course with a set of lesson plans for our texts, writing assignments in versions for different kinds of courses and students, and a set of syllabi.

