

[English home page](#)[administrative contacts](#)[Graduate studies](#)[undergraduate studies](#)[course Schedules & descriptions](#)[faculty](#)[faculty bookshelf](#)[Events Calendar](#)[Newsletter](#)[13th Moon](#)[Writing center](#)[the little magazine](#)[jawbone](#)[Journalism](#)[center for humanities and technoscience](#)[medieval & renaissance program](#)

Department of English

Undergraduate Schedules & Descriptions Archive

[Graduate Archive](#) | [Undergraduate Archive](#)

Spring '06

AENG 100Z - Introduction to Analytical Writing

[open to freshmen and sophomores only]

7876 MWF 08:15AM-09:10AM Ibrahim, Habiba

7877 MWF 12:35PM-01:30PM Marlow, Jennifer M

Introduction to the skills necessary for clear, effective communication of ideas through careful attention to the writing process, critical analysis, and argumentation. The course emphasizes a variety of rhetorical practices. Designed for non-English majors.

AENG102Z Introduction to Creative Writing

[Open to Freshmen and Sophomores Only]

2269 MWF 10:25AM-11:20AM Fitzpatrick, Kelly Ann

2270 MWF 09:20AM-10:15AM Craig, Allison

2271 TTH 11:45AM-01:05PM Cadeau, Charmaine G

5670 TTH 08:45AM-10:05AM Chirila, Alexander C

6975 MWF 12:35PM-01:30PM Truitt, Sam

8401 MWF 09:20AM-10:15AM Colton-Heins, Alyssa

Introductory course in creative writing. Practice in the writing of poetry, fiction, autobiography, and other literary forms. May be taken only by freshmen and sophomores.

AENG121 Reading Literature

2272 MWF 01:40PM-02:35PM Craig, Allison

2273 MWF 01:40PM-02:35PM Thompson, Aidan P

2274 TTH 02:45PM-04:05PM Skebe, Carolyn A

2275 TTH 08:45AM-10:05AM Hymowech, Steven

2276 MWF 08:15AM-09:10AM Gremmler, Daniel E

2277 MWF 11:30AM-12:25PM Jung, Anne S

MWF 12:35PM-01:30PM Ibrahim, Habiba

Introduction to reading literature, with emphasis on developing critical skills and reading strategies through the study of a variety of genres, themes, historical periods, and national literatures. Recommended for first and second year students.

AENG144 Reading Shakespeare

MWF 10:25AM-11:20AM Williams, Karen

This course will examine a variety of Shakespeare's works: tragedies, comedies, histories, the so-called problem plays, sonnets, and related critical works with an eye toward the ways that Shakespeare's works interacted with Elizabethan culture, and the ways in which his plays in performance today interact with our own culture. The text for this course will be the Norton Shakespeare. Regular attendance is required. Assignments will include short response papers, a performance project, and a final exam.

AENG205Z Introduction to Writing in English Studies

[Open to Freshman & Sophomores Only]

7281 TTH 10:15AM-11:35AM Greiman, Jennifer

7488 TTH 11:45AM-01:05PM Parry, David

MWF 09:20AM-10:15AM Marlow, Jennifer M

This course is an introduction to the forms and strategies of writing and close reading in English studies. The course emphasizes the relationship between writing and disciplinary context, and such concepts as genre, audience, and evidence.

AENG205Z Introduction to Writing in English Studies

MW 02:45PM-04:05PM Wilder, Laura A

This course is an introduction to the forms and strategies of writing and close reading in English studies. The course emphasizes the relationship between writing and disciplinary context, and such concepts as genre, audience, and evidence. This course is required of all English majors.

In this section we will investigate the writing practices of literary scholars in order to practice them in projects exploring a sampling of American short stories, poems, plays, and films. Throughout our focus will be on strategies for developing paper topics, informing an argument with close re-reading and literary theory, revision, editing, and giving and using feedback on works-in-progress.

AENG210 Introduction to English Studies

2280 MW 02:45PM-04:05PM Valentis, Mary B

This course Introduces students to the range of contemporary literary theory and the principal methods of current criticism, ranging from deconstruction to psychoanalysis, film and performance theory to gender and cultural studies. Critical works will be placed in the context of modern and postmodern culture, including visual arts and architecture, literature, film, and new media. David Lynch's film Mulholland Drive, Adaptation, Shelly Jackson's Melancholy of Anatomy will serve as reference points for the exploration of theoretical issues.

Readings will include representative works by Louis Althusser, Walter Benjamin, Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Judith Butler, Helene Cixous, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Donna Haraway, Fredric Jameson, Jacques Lacan, Ferdinand de Saussure, Jean Baudrillard, Slavoj Zizek, and others.

AENG210 Introduction to English Studies

TTH 10:15AM-11:35AM Hennessy, Rosemary

We begin with the question "what is reading?" and proceed to consider the interpretive strategies that inform the reading practices students bring with them to their work as English majors as practices with a history, with reasons for being, and with certain presuppositions. We will then

proceed to engage the question of English as a "field" of knowledge, of debate, and of variable reading strategies. We will pursue the questions "who reads?" "who writes?" and "what is "language?" through a series of theoretical, cultural, and literary texts [selected essays, short stories, poems] that introduce meaning-making as a signifying system and reading as textual decoding and analysis. We will consider what it means to read culture as a sign system, how to read by decoding texts, how language is saturated by differences and the implications for how we think identity—of the author, of readers, and social subjects. The last segment of the course will focus on the question "how are texts historical?" and address the social relations of reading, writing and representation as they affect the shape of English studies and your future work in the field.

AENG210 Introduction to English Studies

MW 05:45PM-07:05PM Elam, Helen Regueiro

This course will not presume to "go" anywhere fast, on the premise that "literature" forestalls critical "approaches" and "definitions" and is utterly resistant to critical grids of reading. Thus, we will avoid labels and enter, slowly and hesitantly, into the "problem" of "literature" that literature will not, and criticism does not know how to, raise. If you are a common-sense-bound, express-lane type, be prepared for something very different. Some readings will be difficult, others fun, all connected to a problem the nickname for which is literature. Midterm, in-class essay (with questions given in advance), 10-pp paper.

AENG210 Introduction to English Studies

TTH 11:45AM-01:05PM Phan, Hoang G

A survey of key texts (literary, philosophical, historical) within the discipline of English studies, specifically those that trace its history and signal its changing place in the Humanities. The course introduces the nature and scope of English studies.

AENG222 World Literature

6977 MWF 01:40PM-02:35PM Monaco, Peter

This course will begin with an exploration of those texts deemed "classics" of world literature. By exploring national, historical and linguistic boundaries, we will begin to compare and contrast the way the concept of "literature" is regarded in cultures beyond the contemporary U.S. Students will then be introduced to contemporary poetics from a global perspective in an attempt to demonstrate how the concepts of "literature" and "classics" often alienate cultural and poetic traditions in which the literary is a part of everyday life via, among other occasions, ceremony, ritual, and social and political "action" and critique. Readings may include but are not limited to: The Tao Te Ching, Antigone, The Bhagavad-Gita, selections from Rothenberg's Technicians of the Sacred, as well as selections from Joris and Rothenberg's Poems for the Millennium Vol. II.

AENG226 Focus on Literary Theme, Form or Mode

Exploration of a single common theme, form or mode using varied texts to promote fresh inquiry by unexpected juxtapositions of subject matter and ways of treating it. May be repeated once for credit when content varies. For Spring 2006, we are pleased to offer five options for 226:

AENG226 Machines, Monsters & Madmen: The Fantastic in American Philosophy, Literature, and Film

2284 MWF 09:20AM-10:15AM Pangborn, Matthew

This course will focus on American responses to and explorations of what philosopher and critic Stanley Cavell describes as the "drive to the inhuman" in modern thinking under the influence of skepticism. The class will begin by investigating Descartes' framing of the classical skeptical position on the possibility of knowledge of the world and other minds. We will then read Cavell and Transcendentalist philosophers Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau in order to come to an understanding of the "horror" skepticism poses and to study the possibilities each offers for recovery. For elaborations on the various fantasies offered by skepticism, we will discuss short literary works by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, and Carlos Fuentes, a writer of the Magical Realist tradition, which can be seen as a re-emergence of the fantastic in twentieth-century Latin America. Film viewings will include Mulholland Drive, Alien, The Stepford Wives, Ravenous, Blade Runner, and Dawn of the Dead. Students will be expected to write three short papers that present their own original fantasies of skepticism, as well as to produce a longer (five-to-seven-page) essay on a specific work which references one or more of the themes or

historical issues brought up in class.

AENG226 Love & Loss in Literature & Life

MW 02: 45PM-04:05PM Berman, Jeffrey

Love inevitably ends in loss: this is one of the oldest themes in literature. In this course we will focus on the ways in which writers portray love and loss and seek to find consolation through religion, art, or memory. The reading list includes selected eulogies and elegies, the Book of Job, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Dickinson's poetry, Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, C. S. Lewis's *A Grief Observed*, John Bayley's *Elegy for Iris*, Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, Anna Quindlen's *One True Thing*, and Jeffrey Berman's *Empathic Teaching*. There will be weekly reader-response diaries and short essays (which will constitute 50 percent of the final grade, a mid-term exam (25 percent), and a final exam (the remaining 25 percent). This course will be emotionally challenging without, I hope, being depressing.

AENG226 The American Short-Story Cycle: Traditions and Innovations

TTH 01: 15PM-02: 35PM Clerico, Bethany

This course will be an examination of the American short-story cycle as an influential genre within the American literary tradition, from its origin in the 1800's to its evolution in contemporary literature. Questions of form and content (i.e., What makes it cyclical? Why is this form advantageous to certain narratives?) will inform our initial discussion of the cycle as a genre often viewed mistakenly as a failed novel or incomplete artistic vision. On the contrary, we will study the short-story cycle as a narrative form particularly conducive to the exploration of communal identity as it is shaped by a single setting or region. As we trace the development of the short-story cycle, we will observe how contemporary models challenge and reinvent traditions established in the 19th century. Our investigation will include a look at early texts such as Washington Irving's *The Sketch Book* and Herman Melville's *The Piazza Tales*, as well as more experimental forms of the cycle, such as Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives* and Jean Toomer's *Cane*. While studying the role setting plays as a crucial unifying element in a short-story cycle, we will consider such questions as: Does the rubbing together of character and setting in the short-story cycle produce a new aesthetic form that can translate best the peculiarities of a region? How have contemporary minority writers appropriated this form as a way to create new discursive traces between regional and national cultures? Finally, we will analyze the myriad representations of life in the United States this literary tradition has generated, giving full consideration to how writers have used this genre to challenge myths of a unified national culture and identity.

AENG226 Tragedy and the Tragic

MWF 12: 35PM-01: 30PM Gremmler, Daniel E

A survey of tragedies from three distinct historical periods: fifth century Greece, first century Rome, Renaissance England. Throughout the course, students will develop a working definition of tragedy. Authors will include Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Seneca, Marlowe, Shakespeare. Supplementary readings, including Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* and William Storm's *After Dionysus: A Theory of the Tragic*, among others, will feature prominently in articulating the question of a 'tragic mode.' All versions in English translation where necessary.

AENG226 Hyper-Literature

7568 TTH 04: 15PM-05: 35PM Parry, David

With the rise of digital literacy, what was once marginal "geek culture" has come to dominate the social landscape. Criticism has ranged from outright dismissal ("nothing has changed") to hyperbolic ("nothing will ever be the same"). Regardless of where one takes up position along this spectrum, the now ubiquitous potential of the digital text raises two crucial questions: What/How much changes in the digital text? And perhaps more importantly, how does this move to the digital text affect us as readers? In class we will ask these questions (along with a host of others) of a variety of literary texts: print based (*House of Leaves*, *Pattern Recognition*), digital (*Victory Garden*, *Afternoon*) and alternative (video games and Flash Media), as well as cultural and critical responses to these works.

AENG240 Growing Up in America

2285 MWF 08: 15AM-09: 10AM Jung, Anne S

2286 TTH 10: 15AM-11: 35AM Jonik, Michael

2287 MW 02:45PM-04:05PM Secovnie, Kelly

5778 TTH 11:45AM-01:05PM Mason, John T

7354 TTH 01:15PM-02:35PM Peters, Michael

7853 MWF 09:20AM-10:15AM Seiler, Sabine H

7854 MWF 12:35PM-01:30PM Needham, Tara

Introduction to problems of social significance related to growing up in a multi-ethnic society through the study of American literature and culture.

AENG260 Forms of Poetry

2288 MWF 09:20AM-10:15AM Hanifan, Jill E

A study of the forms of poetry, such as the ballad, sonnet and dramatic monologue, and poetic modes, such as meditative, lyrical and satiric. Students will examine why certain forms are popular at certain times, and how British and American poets adopt or change the forms they inherit.

AENG261 American Literary Tradition

7522 T 04:15PM-07:05PM Byrd, Donald J

Introduction to representative works in the American literary tradition, emphasizing major developments in American literature. Readings will include texts by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, H.D., Allen Ginsberg, Thomas Pynchon, and William Burroughs.

AENG261 American Literary Traditions

7855 TTH 10:15AM-11:35AM Goldberg, Shari

If bearing witness seems critical to our country's determination of justice, then seeing and testifying are just as crucially bound to its narrative tradition. Yet these concepts are, if fundamental, certainly not transparent and involve a range of questions that develop throughout American literary history. This course will survey American literature beginning with its inception, looking at the concepts of witnessing, authority, humanity, speech, freedom, and spirituality as they are represented by writers of different historical periods and political conditions. Primary texts will include works by Mary Rowlandson, Frederick Douglass, Herman Melville, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Dickinson, Henry James, Toni Morrison, and others, as well as contemporary media.

AENG291 British Literary Traditions

6987 TTH 10:15AM-11:35AM Jury, David F

This course will introduce students to major authors, movements, genres, forms, themes, and ideas in British literature after Shakespeare. To try to focus what will be a broad survey, we will organize our study around the concepts of "authorship," "tradition," and "modernity," which we will explore in relation to such topics as religion, gender, and national identity. The aim will be to discover, trace, and examine—across historical and generic boundaries—conversations, continuities, and conflicts (regarding the above-mentioned topics as well as any others that capture our interest) as they emerge in our movement from one text to another. Writers encountered (some through just one or two short poems, essays, or stories; others at greater length, through novels, long poems, and plays) may include George Herbert, John Milton, John Bunyan, Aphra Behn, Daniel Defoe, Anne Finch, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Mary Shelley, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Robert Browning, Christina Rossetti, William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Samuel Beckett. Brief historical, critical, and theoretical readings will supplement the primary texts. In addition to keeping up with the reading and participating in class discussions, students will be required to deliver an oral presentation and write a series of short, informal papers that will culminate in the crafting of a formal, focused essay.

AENG295 Classics of Western Literature:

The Homeric Quest and the Modern Novel

6988 TTH 01: 15PM-02: 35PM Hymowech, Steven M

Homer's *Odyssey* is widely considered the first great epic quest narrative in Western literature, and this theme has remained central to it. This course will sample modern questing narratives that have shaped the Western literary canon, specifically how they have maintained, challenged, and transformed the Homeric epic. Appropriately, the survey will start with Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, and then move to two very long and involved canonic novels of quest: Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and Melville's *Moby-Dick*. The last novel is a very short, yet involved "postmodern" quest: Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*. Critical and historical pieces will guide our individual and comparative analyses, and there will be reading quizzes, critical response papers after the first two novels, one larger comparative project addressing the "historicity" of the Homeric quest in lieu of Pynchon's novel, and each student will either lead a class discussion or participate in a group project (to be determined in light of class size). Attending class and participation are mandatory. (Note: this is a reading intensive course. Plan on, approximately, an hour of reading every day in order to keep up with the class schedule).

AENG300W Expository Writing

[Permission of Instructor]

2290 MWF 11: 30AM-12: 25PM Monaco, Peter

2291 MWF 10: 25AM-11: 20AM Wilkie III, Robert A

For experienced writers who wish to work on such skills as style, organization, logic and tone. Practice in a variety of forms: editorials, letters, travel accounts, film reviews, position papers and autobiographical narrative. Classes devoted to discussions of the composing process and to critiques of student essays. Intended primarily for junior and senior English minors and non-majors.

AENG300W Expository Writing

[Permission of Instructor]

2289 MW 04: 15PM-05: 35PM Berman, Jeffrey

This course will emphasize personal, exploratory, expressive, and therapeutic writing. I'm particularly interested in the extent to which writing about personal conflicts leads to heightened self-awareness and psychological well-being. The assignments and readings will come from my book *Risky Writing*. The minimum writing requirement is forty typed pages and will include essays on divorce, eating disorders, binge drinking, suicide, and sexual abuse. Prerequisite: empathy.

AENG302Z Creative Writing

[Permission of Instructor]

2294 W 02: 45PM-05: 35PM Tillman, Lynne M

In English 302Z, we will write stories, short prose pieces, and do a variety of writing exercises. The class will consider questions about narrative, and other aspects and issues in fiction, including time, structure, character, voice, etc. To become better writers, we will write frequently; to that end, we will do in-class writing exercises as well as exercises and stories to write at home. Some of these will be read aloud in class and will be the subject of group discussion.

Please email a writing sample to [Tillwhen@aol.com] of a few pages of fiction, or prose, and indicate your major, any other writing courses you have taken, and whatever else you think is relevant.

AENG305Z Studies in Writing about Texts

[Reserved for English Majors]

7856 MW 02: 45PM-04: 05PM Yalkut, Carolyn

A workshop in writing critically and analytically about literature. Attention to utilizing the skills of persuasive and expository writing in the construction of a coherent, concise argument. Students will

study critical models for their own essays on fiction, drama, and poetry. Literature to be studied may include *In Our Time* and other short fiction by Ernest Hemingway; *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner; and a range of poems from the Renaissance English to the New York School and their granddaddy, Walt Whitman. Students should expect to do a lot of writing, a fair amount of reading, and an invigorating amount of revising of their own work. Prerequisite: 205Z

AENG 305Z Studies in Writing about Texts

[Reserved for English Majors]

MW 05:45PM-07:05PM Craig, Randall T

Intensive study of the forms and strategies of writing in English studies. Students will engage a variety of literary, critical, and theoretical texts. The course emphasizes students' own analytical writing.

The course focuses on the changing understanding of critical writing from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, especially in relation to creativity, on the one hand, and to society at large, on the other. Prerequisite: 205Z

AENG305Z Studies in Writing about Texts

[Reserved for English Majors]

7858 TTH 08:45AM-10:05AM Winter, Kate H

This upper level writing workshop is designed for English majors or any student eager to learn to write critically about literature. It is assumed that you are conversant with various theoretical approaches to literary talk. You should have already mastered the fundamentals of writing, at least in academic modes. While we will touch on critical approaches to texts and review research procedures and tools, this class will be first and foremost a writers' workshop. We will be working on developing a distinctive voice, experimenting with style and analyzing audiences as well as using problem-solving strategies in various writing situations. All our work will be based in an awareness of writing as a process that involves sets of decisions made by the writer. Writers must photocopy their work and submit it for the workshop to discuss before final revision. The texts we engage with will be literary works about or set in Hawaii, including a novel, a short story, travel writing, essays and poetry. A rigorous attendance policy is enforced. Prerequisite: 205Z

AENG305Z Studies in Writing about Texts

7859 MWF 11:30AM-12:25PM hanifan, jil

Intensive study of the forms and strategies of writing in English studies. Students will engage a variety of literary, critical, and theoretical texts. The course emphasizes students' own analytical writing. Prerequisite: 205Z

English 305Z Studies in Writing about Texts: Borderlines and Boundaries

[Permission of Instructor]

8717 MW 4:15-5:35 Keenaghan, Eric

This section of 305Z will be concerned with studying the tropes of the "borderlines" and the "boundary." Both are politicized and ethical ideas that describe how we identify discrete nations, individuals, and communities. They also can be used more figuratively to describe how we conventionally conceive of reading and writing, literature and theory, criticism and creativity as distinct entities or activities. In our course, we will consider how these tropes function to control and legitimate certain forms of knowledge and certain subjects, while ruling others "illegitimate." We will be most interested in thinking through and writing about the value of the so-called illegitimate. Good critical writing requires original argumentation, and original argumentation requires creative thinking and sometimes even creative writing. Our studies will concentrate on how various literary, cultural, theoretical, and critical texts continually challenge the borderline and the boundary. We will focus mostly on those narratives that question borders not only topically or thematically, but also in styles that mix forms and genres. So, we'll study texts that represent boundary crossings in diasporic literatures, transgender existence, sexual migration, racial and sexual and gender "passing" and hybridities, coalitional politics, freedoms in penitentiary cultures. What is more, we'll do so mostly by studying texts that mix various forms/genres of writing or production (documentary with avant-gardism, poetry with photography, poetry with theory, creative writing with critical writing,

multimedia and/or hypertext). Students are required to do several short writing assignments (including one creative/hybrid assignment); written and oral auto-critique and peer review; active class discussion; two brief oral presentations and/or creative readings; and one longer researched critical paper written in stages over the last half of the semester. Students will also be required to attend the lectures and special seminars by visiting or resident scholars, who will be speaking at the UA Albany English Department in the Spring about sexual migration and anti-metropolitan sexual cultures (Scott Herring); globalization and prison culture (Michael Hames-Garcia); and literatures and politics in the Americas (Glyne Griffiths).

AENG310 Reading and Interpreting English Studies

7860 TTH 11:45AM-01:05PM Arsic, Branka

What kind of an object is literary object? Is it something that we can gain or lose, something we can love or hate? And what kind of work is writing: is it real work that describes unreal things or perhaps a labor that constructs realities? This question refers both to the "status" of the persons and things produced by literary writing, and also to the "reality" status of writing itself. In asking such questions about the phenomenal nature of literary objects we will be interested in learning something about the "work" that produces them: is it a labor of love or mourning, is it possible to treat writing and/or reading as processes of mourning, celebrating, losing, loving and so on? If so, why and how? Readings: Nicolas Abraham, Roland Barthes, Anne Carson, Sigmund Freud, Jean-Luc Nancy, Henry David Thoreau. Pre-requisite: C or better in AENG 210, or permission of the instructor.

AENG310 Theories of Reading

7863 TTH 08:45AM-10:05AM Ebert, Teresa

Reading is the practice of making sense of texts—even if the "sense" is "no(n)-sense." As such, it is part of the strategies of cultural intelligibility. Contrary to the dominant views, even in its most seemingly personal moments, reading is not personal but a collective, social and historical practice shaped by codes, conventions and class. The complexities of reading and its relation to the subject, culture, history, agency, and pleasure can be best scrutinized by examining specific issues. Therefore, unlike English 210, which is a broad survey of "English Studies," this section of 310 is a "problems" course. It focuses on several specific "problems" in literary and cultural studies (which this semester are Textuality, Class, Spectrality, and Popular Culture) as a way of developing a more complex understanding of reading and the interpretation of texts and cultural intelligibilities in general. The course moves along two interrelated tracks: general questions about the place of literary and cultural studies in (an advanced technological) society, and specific issues concerning strategies of sense making and their material conditions.

What is the role of the literary and cultural studies in contemporary society? Should they produce, through culturally transgressive and politically progressive interpretations, a theoretical consciousness in readers, who can therefore grasp issues "by the root" and intervene in the hegemonic culture of capital and the commodifying logic of its market? In other words, is the responsibility of literary and cultural studies now to produce modes of knowing that are self-reflexive; tolerant of plurality and its ambiguities; at home with difficult non-linearity, and committed to social and economic justice? Or, is the only responsibility of literary and cultural studies to the text itself? Reading should focus, accordingly, on the immanent workings of texts and tease out the complexities and subtleties of their self-problematizing language. Any cultural or social effects of reading, in other words, would be the outcome of close readings of the text's displacing rhetoric which resists the closure of cultural meanings. Textuality, Class, Spectrality, and Popular Culture are among the problem-terms that complicate these and related issues and thus provide the space in which to examine reading and interpretation in depth.

Beginning with the "text" itself: we take the text not in its empirical sense (words on the page) but as the site of cultural signification. Among other things, this means that anything that means anything is a text. Textuality, consequently, becomes a space for examining language and its excess (ive) difference and, most important, its relation with "reality." Do texts correspond with reality and reflect it, or do they "make" what they represent? Are there non-textual (un-made) realities that are immediately present to themselves? Derrida says, "What I call 'text' implies all structures called 'real,' 'economic,' 'historical' socio-institutional, in short: all possible 'referents'" (Limited Inc). What are some of the implications of his theory for reading? Is reading a "reflection" of what is already in the text or is it, itself, a writerly act, as Barthes argues (S/Z)? How are these theories of reading at odds, for example, with a Marxist view that begins with the idea that "language is practical consciousness" (The German Ideology) and, therefore, part of the dialectics of "social metabolism" (Capital)? The course will stage these differences through comparative readings of Kafka's writings by Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, and Lukacs.

Like "textuality," the concept of "class" is a productive place for analyzing reading. It questions the spontaneity of personal "experience," which is the frame of reading for many, and points out that what is treated as "experience" is far from being individual and private and is instead shaped by the historical and material conditions of the subject. Class, in other words, leads us to an inquiry into

reading and its relation to capitalism and allows us to discuss the outlines of a new labor theory of reading. "Spectrality" extends the range of our inquiries into reading and interpretation by posing the fundamental question of the mode of existence beyond the conventional oppositions of existence/nonexistence, actual/virtual, dead/alive. It thus raises not only the question of "presence," alluded to in the discussion of textuality, but also enables us to analyze the ghostly in cyberculture and the ghost of the real in ideology, and as cybercapitalism traverses national boundaries, it marks ghostly nation-states and a globalization that is haunted by the specter of class.

Part of the transformation of "English Studies" into cultural studies involves new attention to popular culture, which has also become spectral. At the core of the reading and interpretation of popular culture is the encounter between what a recent writer calls "High Theory and Low Culture." We will look at this encounter and examine its consequences for cultural intelligibilities in general.

As we move on, we will look at such issues as the ideology of close reading, the politics of broad reading, and the relations of reading to critique, explanation, and resignification. We will also examine the conditions under which specific readings are taken culturally seriously or treated as "silly," "dogmatic," "off the wall"... and WHY. Why is de Man's reading of Proust seen as open, plural and complex, but Trotsky's reading of Malraux is marginalized as totalizing? What are some of the assumptions in these judgments? What is the relation of the "reader" to reading, and how do gender, race, sexuality and other cultural identities affect reading?

The course consists of lecture-discussions and collective work in small theory groups. There will be no conventional examinations; students will undertake three (3) major projects: two papers and one oral presentation. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in a theory conference at the end of the semester. Prerequisite: C or Better in A Eng 210, or permission of the instructor.

AENG323 The 19th Century American Novel

2297 TTH 02:45PM-04:05PM Greiman, Jennifer

This course will examine the peculiar formation of the American novel amid the violence and political turbulence of the 19th century. Organized around themes of revolution, dissolution, and reconstruction, we will consider how these ideas operate both historically – describing the periods before, during, and after the Civil War – and aesthetically – defining the strategies of narration and formal categories that emerge during this century. We will examine genres like the historical romance, the sentimental novel, the (capital-R) Romance, the realist novel, and the naturalist novel, while constantly thinking about the relationship between social transformation and the invention of formal categories. Issues we will consider: the legacy of the revolution as both a static object of nostalgia and a continuing promise of liberation; configurations of "history"; representations of race; legal and narrative constructions of citizenship; the formal properties of the Romance and the aesthetics of realism and naturalism. This will be a challenging course with a heavy reading load; in addition to reading 7-8 novels, we will be examining several theories of the form to consider the development of the American novel against its European counterparts. Primary authors may include: Charles Brockden Brown, James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frank Webb, Mark Twain, Henry James, and Pauline Hopkins.

AENG324 The Novel and the Image in 20th Century American Fictions

2298 MW 04:15PM-05:35PM Cohen, Thomas D

The course will do selective readings in 20th century fiction in several genres, including film, to ask how figures of technology and time are dealt with. Authors and auteurs that will interest us include Faulkner, O'Connor, Philip K. Dick, Burrough, Demme, Hitchcock, Morrison, Nabokov, R. Scott, O'Butler.

AENG342 Authors Before 1750: John Milton and his Revolutionary World

7871 TTH 10:15AM-11:35AM Cable, Lana

The poetry and prose of John Milton had an impact on the political and creative thinking of nearly every major writer in the western world since his time. This course will help you to understand the causes of that impact, as well introduce you to significant critical issues that surround Milton's works. Close reading will give you insight into the man himself: a radical thinker and iconoclast as well as classically disciplined poet, who made a public commitment to fulfill his artistic promise by devoting his talents not only to literature but to political and religious reform. By the end of the semester you should be a competent reader of Milton, able to think and write about his work with confidence and critical intelligence. You should also have gained a general sense of the political, religious, social and philosophical issues with which Milton was concerned, issues that helped to define the modern world and that remain subject to debate in the present day. Readings will include, but not be limited to, L'Allegro and Il Penseroso; Lycidas; A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle (Comus); the Sonnets;

Areopagitica; Paradise Lost; Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes. Course requirements include, in addition to reading and participation in all class activities, at least one paraphrase, weekly study questions, two or three short papers, and two exams.

AENG343 Comparative Study of Authors: Poe and Hawthorne

6997 TTH 10:15AM-11:35AM Thornton, Kathleen K

This course will explore the works of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, two prominent figures of the nineteenth century, as they inform one another. Poe, a Southerner, and Hawthorne, a Northerner, although separated by geography each explore the nature of sin and guilt and the boundaries between reality and fiction. We will begin by reading the poetry, selected letters, and critical essays of Poe before moving to his "tales" (grotesques, arabesques, ratiocinative). We will then read Hawthorne's short fiction and end with his novel, *The Blithedale Romance*. Students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to do close readings of the text and to explore the critical commentary that surrounds the work of these two writers. To that end, students will write one hourly exam focused on each writer, will engage in library research locating and reading critical commentary about each writer's work, and submit one final critical paper that draws on that research and compares the two writers. The critical commentary project will consist of students finding three critical articles for each writer. The articles should be focused on either the same story or the same aspect of the writer's style (e.g. Hawthorne's use of mirrors; Poe's first person narrators, etc.) but separated in time by at least 10 years. Students will then provide a summary outline of the salient points of each article and will use these as the basis for their final critical paper. This course satisfies the author requirement of the English major and an upper-level elective for the English minor. Students enrolled in this class are assumed to have junior status and/or at least one introductory literature class.

AENG343 Charles Dickens

6999 MW 04:15PM-05:35PM Craig, Randall T

A concentrated study of Dickens's major novels. Students will be expected to read a biography of the author, along with other material relevant to the writer and the period. Some attention will be given to the concept of the author itself, along with the related issues of authority, genre, and the writer's function in society.

AENG345 Later Works of Shakespeare

[Cross Listed with A THR 324]

2301 TTH 08:45AM-10:05AM Brown, W. Langdon

In this course we will read plays from Shakespeare's great tragedies as well as late works of romance and comedy. While considering the plays in their cultural and performance context, we will closely examine language, ideas, and structure. The reading list will include *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. Course requirements will include short papers and a staged reading project.

AENG346 Shakespeare's Power Plays

7864 MW 05:45PM-07:05PM Williams, Karen

This course will focus on plays in which questions of power, both domestic and public power, come to the fore. Among the works we are likely to read are *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *King Lear*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *Titus Andronicus*, as well as relevant sonnets and poetry. In reading these texts we will consider historical context as well as modern adaptations to examine manifestations of power. The text for this course will be the Norton Shakespeare. Regular attendance is required. Assignments may include a performance project, a midterm exam or project, and a final exam.

AENG346 Shakespeare's Greek and Roman Plays

7865 TTH 01:15PM-02:35PM Thornton, Kathleen K

This section of Studies in Shakespeare will focus primarily on the plays Shakespeare set in Greece and Rome. We will read *Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Timon of Athens*. We will also read the poems "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece." Students will be expected to engage in research that produces two short papers. The

first explores Shakespeare's source material and the second examines critical commentary about the plays/poems. Students will also write one 10 page paper that draws on two or more of the works studied. Students may be asked to develop a performance project.

AENG350 Contemporary Writers at Work

2302 TTH 04: 15PM-05: 35PM Schwarzschild, Edward

In this course we will read and discuss published work by the authors appearing on campus in the New York State Writers Institute Visiting Writers Series. We will meet, hear, and speak with the visiting writers in colloquia devoted to in-depth conversations not only about the authors' works, but also about the issues facing writers today. Some recent visitors have included Margaret Atwood, Spike Lee, Caryl Phillips, Robert Pinsky, Dava Sobel, Jane Smiley and many others. We will read from a wide variety of genres and, by the end of the semester, after a great deal of reading and writing and discussion, students will hopefully have a deeper, richer appreciation and understanding of what it means to work as a writer in our world. There will be frequent short papers, a midterm exam, and a final project.

AENG355 Studies in Film: Plays Into Film

7866 MW 07: 15PM-09: 15PM Yalkut, Carolyn

This course will study Western drama as it has been transformed from Biblical, folkloric, and mythological antecedents into live theatre and from thence into cinema. Considering the multiple perspectives of playwright, performer, director, audience, and reader, we will read plays and then watch movies (or scenes from movies) based on those plays, often in competing versions. Possibly beginning with Shakespeare (Hamlet, Henry V), we will move to modern British and American plays, perhaps even including Continental drama by authors whose work has gone from stage to screen: Bertold Brecht, Harold Pinter, Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee, David Mamet, Tony Kushner, among others. The plays we study will be considered as literary texts, performance scripts, historical and cultural artifacts and — when revised and reinterpreted on film — as vehicles of popular culture. The course will investigate issues such as challenges to genre conventions and boundaries; the role of history and the past; the revisioning of love, sexuality, family and the American Dream in contemporary theatre; silence in minimalist drama; and the resurrection of theatrical modes and tropes in popular culture and cinema.

AENG356 Studies in Nonfiction: Cultural Encounters

7867 MW 07: 15PM-08: 35PM Bass, Thomas A

An examination of nonfiction prose, its basic forms and historical development, in a course organized around the theme of cultural encounters. Readings include works by Franklin, Orwell, Baldwin, Thompson, Wolfe, Didion, and others.

AENG357 Studies in Drama

7868 TTH 11: 45AM-01: 05PM Barlow, Judith E

This section of English 357 will survey modern American drama beginning with works presented by the "little theaters" at the turn of the 20th century and ending with contemporary plays. We will consider these dramas as works of literature and performance art as well as reflections of the culture (s) from which they come. In addition to exploring the major dramatic movements of this period — realism, naturalism, expressionism and absurdism -- we will address the roles of race, class and gender not only within the plays themselves but in the American theater as a whole.

AENG358 Studies in Poetry: The Politics of Difficulty in American Modernist Poetry

7869 MW 04: 15PM-05: 35PM Keenaghan, Eric C

Course cancelled

AENG359 The Modern British Novel: From Realism to Postmodernism

TTH 10: 15AM-11: 35AM Catalan-Balinova, Zelma

The course will explore the major developments in the British novel from the end of the 19th century to the late 20th century. It will consider transformations in the thematics and aesthetics introduced by the Modernists and the new challenges posed by postmodernism. Special attention will be paid to aspects of formal experimentation and stylistic innovation. Novelists include Hardy, Conrad, Joyce, Woolf, Lawrence, Fowles, Barnes, Graham Swift.

AENG366 "Black Is and Black Ain't": Ethnicity in Theory and Practice

[Cross Listed With A WSS 366]

5945 TTH 08:45AM-10:05AM Payne, Walter D

This course undertakes a critical exploration of ethnicity in literature focused on African American writing and historical experience. Literary and theoretical readings are organized around three major topics: (1) problems of boundaries which propose to define the ethnic group, as exemplified in narratives of "passing" and amplified by poststructuralist theory; (2) the search for roots or principles of ethnic coherence in various aspects of history and culture; and (3) the transformation of ethnic identities under the pressure of specific social conflicts. Material includes some consideration of other ethnicities for comparative purposes and works by David Bradley, Nella Larsen, Toni Morrison, Anna Deavere Smith, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Molefi Kete Asante, and others.

AENG368 Women Playwrights

[Cross listed with AWSS 368]

TTH 08:45AM-10:05AM Barlow, Judith E

What themes, styles and techniques characterize dramas written by women? Is there an identifiable tradition and/or aesthetic that links plays by women across cultures? Which feminist dramatic theories seem the most useful interpretive tools, and why? These are among the questions to be addressed as we study plays by the most important contemporary female dramatists as well as the role of women in the theater in the United States. We will also apply these questions to a selection of works by Canadian, British and/or Australian playwrights. Dramatists studied may include Paula Vogel, Tina Howe, Wendy Wasserstein, Caryl Churchill, Ntozake Shange, Rebecca Gillman, Susan-Lori Parks, Maria Irene Fornes or Sharon Pollock.

AENG373 The Discourse of Bondage and Freedom in the Americas

TTH 04:15PM-05:35PM Griffith, Glyne A

"Freedom, like love and beauty, is one of those values better experienced

than defined..." -Orlando Patterson

"Emancipate yourself from mental slavery, none but ourself can free our

mind." -Bob Marley

This course will examine selected prose fiction produced in the Americas and organized around two of the major concepts undergirding the nature and spirit of the Americas, that is to say, bondage and freedom. Engaging the selected fiction with these interconnected themes in mind, we will consider the ways in which bondage and freedom, materially and ontologically, inform and are in turn informed by the fiction we will read. In addition, we will consider relevant texts such as Frederick Douglass' slave narrative, Jose Marti's essay, "Our America," and selections from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality Among Men*, for example, to provide ourselves with a contextual backdrop against which we will position the fiction. The novels to be read include Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Caryl Phillips's *Cambridge*, Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, Wilson Harris's *Palace of the Peacock*, Alejo Carpentier's *The Lost Steps*, and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*.

AENG373 Four Caribbean Writers

8360 MWF 10:25AM-11:20AM Nepaulsingh, Colbert

This course is a close post-colonial reading of Claude McKay's *Longway from Home*; Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*; Derek Walcott's *Another Life*; and Caryl Phillips's *Cambridge* and the *European Tribe*. The intent is to improve the student's skills in textual analysis, and to begin to explore the themes of colonialism, post-colonialism, nation-building, and exile as they are represented in these classic

texts.

AENG399Z Honors Seminar: Imperial Adventures

[Permission of Instructor]

6372 MW 02:45PM-04:05PM Benjamin, Bret Elliot

The adventure novel was the quintessential literary form of British Imperialism. Crusoe, Kim, King Solomon, Kurtz, among others, come quickly to mind. Today, it appears to be a preferred genre of anti-imperialist critique as well; witness recent fiction by novelists including John LeCarré, Varda Burstyn, and Jamaica Kincaid. This course will use the (anti) imperialist adventure novel as a vehicle through which to examine a series of contemporary debates within the fields of English, postcolonial, and cultural studies. In addition to a selection of novels we will read historical texts from the imperial archive (including materials from the present day) to provide context for the literary texts, and more important, to raise theoretical questions about how and why to read historically. We will explore debates about mass and popular culture, and how the commodification of art has changed, if at all, between the era of British Empire and the era of globalization. We will examine the study of "everyday life," and its connection to the novel as a specific literary form. Moreover, we will examine the intimate relationship between Imperial rule and the study of English literature, and ask questions about the value and function of literary and cultural study in the contemporary moment.

In addition to our broader investigation of methodological approaches to literary and cultural study, the class will include instruction in research methods and scholarly writing. Students will be conducting independent research throughout the semester, and the course will culminate in a substantial research project. Readings will likely include four novels (two from the 18th or 19th centuries and two contemporary texts). Possibilities include Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Kipling's *Kim*, Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, LeCarré's *The Constant Gardener*, Burstyn's *Water Inc.*, Kincaid's *A Small Place*, and possibly others. Theoretical selections may include works from Marx, Viswanathan, Guha, Radway, Benjamin, Adorno, Hall, LeFebvre, Lukács, Jameson, Said, McClintock, Hardt and Negri, and others.

AENG402Z Advanced Writing Workshop

[Permission of Instructor Required]

7872 TTH 11:45AM-01:05PM Schwarzschild, Edward

Workshop for experienced writers of fiction. Students interested in this course should submit a 3-5 page writing sample to the instructor. Please email a writing sample to [schild@albany.edu] of a few pages of fiction, or prose, and indicate your major, any other writing courses you have taken, and whatever else you think is relevant. Permission of the instructor is required.

AENG404Z Writing Drama

[Cross Listed with ATHR 406Z]

7214 W 01:40PM-04:40PM Farrell, James

Advanced workshop in writing for the stage. In this course the student will develop, in a workshop environment and through a series of exercises addressing various aspects of the craft of playwriting, an original one act play. Admission is limited, and those seeking to enroll are required to ask for permission of the instructor. May be repeated once for credit. Intended primarily for juniors and seniors. Only one of AEng 404Z & AThr 406Z may be taken for credit.

AENG411 Arthurian Legends

7873 MW 02:45PM-04:05PM Fitzpatrick, Kelly Ann

In naming his retelling of the Arthurian legend *The Once and Future King*, T.H. White acknowledged not only the mythical promise of Arthur's return but also the continual reemergence and mutation of Arthurian legend itself. This course uses White as a touchstone for a selective survey of the evolution of Arthurian Legend through medieval and modern Welsh, English and French texts. Our survey will also span various genres and media, and will pay particular attention to classifications of "history" and "art." While we will read a number of texts in translation, students should be prepared to examine some texts in their original Middle English forms. Course requirements are likely to include two exams, an internet project and a final research paper. Prerequisite: C or better in English 210 or permission of the instructor.

AENG422 Literature of the Early Renaissance: Identity and Empire in Early Modern England

7874 TTH 02: 45PM-04:05PM Cable, Lana

This course focuses on representative poetry, prose and drama written during the English 16th and early 17th centuries, primarily during the reigns of Henry VIII through Elizabeth I. Our main focus will be on constructions of individual identity in the context of English efforts to solidify a sense of nationhood while also working to exercise a more prominent role in the new, substantially mercantile, internationalism. By approaching a variety of literary texts from the dual perspective of individual and national identity, we will discover that literary works traditionally thought to transcend historical context also bear witness to conflicts that underlie their construction. Religious debate, economic and social turmoil, confrontations with cultural others, and the exercise of arbitrary political power are all reflected in the ways early modern English writers crafted character, situation and self in their creative work. By discovering how historical forces shaped ideas of self and nationhood in the English Renaissance, we will gain both a new understanding of that era's creative achievement and a better understanding of the relevance of early modern English experience to our own. Writing requirements include: paraphrase exercises, a number of short papers (1-3 pages), and a final paper (about 10 pages). Prerequisite: C or better in English 210 or permission of the instructor.

AENG426 The Romantic Period

7875 TTH 02: 45PM-04:05PM Shepherdson, Charles

This course focuses on the poetry of the British Romantic period, especially the work of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, with additional attention to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The course involves close reading of the poetry, and attention to the philosophical background of the Romantic period, from Kant's account of the beautiful and the sublime, to Romantic interests in consciousness, subjectivity and imagination. Prerequisite: C or better in English 210 or permission of the instructor.

AENG432 American Literature to 1815

7003 T 04: 15PM-07:05PM Bosco, Ronald A

This course examines the historical, intellectual, religious as well as literary foundations of American culture from the Pilgrim landing at Plymouth Rock through the opening of the nineteenth century.

Students interested in this course should note that the course as I will be approaching it also has a subtitle: "The Poetics of Earlier American Experience." For roughly the first third of the course, we will read through various historical, sermonic, political, popular and personal writings left to us by English settlers in the New World from 1620 to 1800; of particular interest as we consider these writings will be the ways in which English settlers dealt literarily with the American landscape, either as they first experienced it upon arriving in the New World or as they responded to it after spending a portion of their lives in the New World. Then, for the remainder of the course our studies will concentrate on the ways the American landscape was drawn and expressed in poetic forms. Our specific concern will be with the significant body of writings left to us by the New England poets Anne Bradstreet, Michael Wigglesworth, Edward Taylor, and Mather Byles, but we will also explore more "everyday" forms of poetry: the elegy, early newspaper verse, and the broadside publication of verses written for momentous or commonplace public occasions. For all practical purposes, this course will be reading and writing intensive. Requirements include midterm and final examinations, three in-class essays, and two in-class collaborative group presentations on assigned topics. Prerequisite: C or better in English 210 or permission of the instructor.

AENG433 American Literature 1815-1865

5446 TTH 02: 45PM-04:05PM Arsic, Branka

The class will focus mainly on the Transcendentalist movement, its literature, politics and cultural context. In an effort to understand the literature of the Transcendentalists we will work on reconstructing the intellectual issues of Unitarianism, the miracle controversy, Lyceum culture, and the scientific and broader intellectual context within which the Transcendentalist writers thought. Special attention will be paid to their relation to the abolitionist movement and the question of slavery. Through close reference to Jonathan Edwards and William James we will try to understand how the Transcendentalists developed out of their intellectual inheritance and in what ways they, in turn, influenced the "arrival" of pragmatism. Our main interest will nevertheless be to analyze closely their thinking and texts. Readings: Emerson, Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Bronson Alcott, Theodore Parker, Frederick Douglass. Prerequisite: C or better in English 210 or permission of the instructor.

AENG435 American Literature 1920 to Present

7004 M 05:45PM-08:35PM Valentis, Mary B

American Literature from 1920 to the present is, in one sense, a line of flight through modernism and its "shock of the new" aesthetic to postmodernism and its self-conscious, performative aesthetic to the present, a condition that some have called "afterculture." This course studies these lines of flight, their cultural and theoretical contexts in the fiction, poems, plays and essays of Edith Wharton, Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, William Faulkner, Nathaniel West, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Vladimir Nabokov, John Updike, Rita Dove, Toni Morrison, Tony Kushner, William Gibson, Chuck Palahniuk, Giles Deleuze and others. Prerequisite: C or better in English 210 or permission of the instructor.

AENG449 Topics in Comparative Literature

7883 MW 02:45PM-04:05PM Elam, Helen Regueiro

A study of poetic language and the problems it makes manifest without regard for particular language, period, or even genre. Readings from some of the following: Hölderlin, Dickinson, Mallarmé, Emerson, Keats, Baudelaire, Wordsworth, Rilke, Stevens and contemporary poets like Carson and Stewart. Focus on poetry's 'concern' for its 'task' and issues of naming and desire that articulate it. Intense class participation, position papers every two weeks, midterm, short paper, term paper. Prerequisite: C or better in AENG 210, or permission of the instructor.

AENG450 Tutoring and Writing

[Permission of Instructor required]

8361 TTH 11:45AM-01:05PM North, Stephen M

This course is designed to train tutors to work in the Writing Center. To that end, we will focus first on how writing gets done: i.e., we will study the writing process, in part by means of reflection, and in part by reading the relevant professional literature. Second, we will work at producing useful responses to another writer's work-in-progress--readings that are, e.g., responses as opposed to corrections, and as much about questions as answers. Third, we will explore the dynamics of conversation about writing by studying transcripts, analyzing videotapes, role playing, and so on. Despite the 400-number, the course is intended primarily for sophomores and juniors (because they will still be around to work in the Writing Center after the course). Non-English majors are also welcome. (Permission of the Instructor required.)

AENG460 Toward a Diasporic Avant Guard: The New Literature from North Africa and Beyond

7008 TTH 01:15PM-02:35PM Joris, Pierre

This course will deal with the literature (novels, poetry, essays) of the post-colonial moment, with specific reference to the areas of North Africa, but also of the Caribbean and elsewhere. We will investigate how the problems of the struggle for independence from the colonizing Western powers and the ensuing questioning of social and political models for the newly independent countries played itself out at the levels of both content and form on the literary works of that period. Given the current world situation, we will look predominantly at the ways this has shaped the literatures of the Arab world. A book list will be available shortly on our website and on mine (<http://www.albany.edu/~joris/>). Prerequisite: C or better in AENG 210, or permission of the instructor.

AENG485 Topics in Cultural Studies: High Theory/Low Culture

7884 TTH 11:45AM-01:05PM Ebert, Teresa

Is popular culture the "moral placebo" of a mass society. Is it a manipulated reproduction of reality to entertain, divert, and produce passive consumers in whom "conformity replaces consciousness" (Adorno, "The Culture Industry"), and democratic participation in social life becomes a "choice between buying or not buying" (Dwight MacDonal, "A Theory of Mass Culture")? Is it an "anodyne to the repressive trends of capitalism"? Or is it the active language of desires, knowledges and pleasures that write the everyday texts and shape the cognitive and affective structures by which people decode their personal and collective lives? Is popular culture a "pernicious rubbish" (George Orwell, "Boy's Weeklies"), or the most robust mediatory language of socialization after the death of "folk culture" in post-feudal societies? Does the power of popular culture derive from providing "spurious, vicarious experiences" for passive consumers--"reveries about people who

are happy, healthy, and always successful"? Or do its texts have the textual thickness and aesthetic effect of all complex writings, including "the 'great' canonical texts of European literature that [are] always being used to demonstrate the poverty of popular culture?" Is popular culture aesthetically sophisticated, or does it simply use some avant-garde strategies to "purchase sophisticated credibility"? What makes popular culture "popular"? Is the "popular" an immanent and inherent quality of texts or is it a historical and social effect that makes the popular of one age (Shakespeare, Dickens, Mark Twain...) the "classic" of another. These are among the questions with which the course opens.

What makes questions about popular culture so philosophically and pedagogically interesting is that they are part of a larger concern, as Leo Lowenthal puts it, "about the inner fate of the individual under the impact of the leveling powers of institutional and organized forms of leisure activity" and lead to a quandary over "how to live out the stretch of life which is neither sleep nor work" (Lowenthal, "Historical Perspectives of Popular Culture"). The responses have varied over the centuries, but the basic arguments are articulated in early modernity in the writings of Montaigne and Pascal. In his meditations, Montaigne praises "diversions" as a strategy of survival (Essays, II, 291 ff) while Pascal thinks that "all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber...they have a secret instinct which impels them to seek amusement and occupation abroad, and which arises from their constant unhappiness" (Pensees, 44).

One of the arguments of the course is that this unhappiness is not moral, or existential but social and historical: "The conditions of earning one's bread in this society creates the lonely modern man" who is the main audience of modern popular culture. These conditions explain the "need, sometimes feverish, for an entertainment that so repetitively presents the same reveries, the same daydreams, the same childish fables of success and happiness" (James T. Farrell, *The League of Frightened Philistines*). Popular culture, in other words, is intimately related to the economies of labor and capital and the ways they shape both the cultural (un)conscious and individual consciousness.

The course examines the identity, construction, working, value, and politics of popular culture and analyzes them through a network of questions about the origin, economics and ideology of popular culture.

Does popular culture originate from "below" in the work, desires, and experiences of people or is it imposed from "above" as an instrument of manipulation and repression? Is it essentially a commodity culture produced for profit or the articulation of people's imagination unconstrained by the market? Is popular culture there, as Dominic Strinati puts it, "to indoctrinate the people, to get them to accept and adhere to ideas and values which ensure the continued dominance of those in more privileged positions who thus exercise power over them? Or is it about rebellion and opposition to the prevailing social order?"

Does the audience of popular culture consist of "passive" receivers of messages to shop or active cultural agents who, for instance, use their consuming power to bring about social change (Nestor Garcia Canclini, *Consumers and Citizens*)?

We will also examine how binaries in the interpretation of popular culture (above/below; active/passive; people/corporations...) are being rewritten by some theorists as complex hybridities that regard popular culture to be artistic and commercial, repressive and resistant.... This raises the question whether the hybridizing of popular culture is itself part of the cultural politics of power in order to make any political stance on the issue impossible.

Technology is an important factor in the development of popular culture. We will ask, as we read Walter Benjamin, how technologies affect art ("The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"), and will also examine the effects of technologies on the emergence of popular culture and mass media (popular press, radio, best-sellers, film). We will analyze their cultural impact (mass consumption, for example) as well as their political influence (the relation of mass media and fascism, for instance).

The main focus of the course is on the theories of popular culture from the early theories of "mass culture" through the Frankfurt School and theories of the culture industry to cultural studies and especially on what Mikita Brottman calls "high theory/low culture"-- the encounter between contemporary theory (structuralism and semiotics to poststructuralism, Marxism, Feminism, and globalization theories) and popular culture. The course will evolve around popular culture texts (Hollywood films, women's romances, videos, internet writings, style magazines, shopping,...) and analyze the way they engage matters of race, technoculture, subcultures, representations of sexualities, foods, sensualities, terrorism, nationalism, and war.

Throughout the course, we will discuss the fate of "English Studies," and their relation to "popular culture" and will examine in some detail the arguments that have questioned the normative hierarchies that organize texts of culture into "high" (canonic) and "low" (popular) and ask why in the normative discourses "popular culture" is the name of the place for texts of culture in exile? What are the relations of humanities, popular culture, and democracy? How are the powers that set the cultural norms related to market and empire?

The course consists of lecture-discussions and collective work in small theory groups. There will be no conventional examinations; students will undertake three (3) major projects: two papers and one oral presentation. They will also have the opportunity to participate in a theory conference at the end of the semester.

Students who are interested in the course but have no background in contemporary theory and its relations to "popular culture," may want to read any one of these texts over the semester break: Mikita Brottman, *High Theory/Low Culture*; Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*; Carla Freccero, *Popular Culture: An Introduction*. Prerequisite: C or better in AENG 210, or permission of the instructor.

AENG490 Internship in English

[Permission of Instructor]

ARR ARRANGED Winter, Kate H

Internships are practical apprenticeships in real-world work situations using the skills gained in English Studies such as critical reading, analysis, writing, research, editing, etc. Interns work between 10 and 15 hours per week and complete an academic component as well as weekly reports.

Internships count as upper-division electives and carry 3 credit hours pass/fail. Internship placements include: advertising/marketing, public relations, publishing, the arts, television, radio, state agencies, literary journals and organizations, law, education, community outreach, the New York State Writers Institute, and the English department's Advisement Office. Available to junior and senior English majors. Application forms are available in the Advisement Office and from Professor Winter (HU 326).

*The Department of English
University at Albany
State University of New York
Humanities 333
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12222*

Phone: (518) 442-4055
Fax: (518) 442-4599

[▲ TOP](#)

[University at Albany Home Page](#)

[Contact UAlbany](#) | [Directories](#) | [Calendars](#) | [Visitors](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Search](#)
[Admissions](#) | [Academics](#) | [Research](#) | [IT Services](#) | [Libraries](#) | [Athletics](#)