Summer Session 2017
Fall Session 2017

ENGLISH GRADUATE COURSE OFFERINGS FOR:
Master of Arts
Doctor of Philosophy
Non-Degree Study

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Unless otherwise noted, all Courses are by Permission of Department. Please Contact James Lilley (jilley@albany.edu) with questions.
SUMMER SESSION 2017

Four Week 1 (May 30 – June 23, 2017)

2401  AENG518: Blackness & Cinema (Shared Resource with AENG412Y)
MTWTHF   08:30AM – 10:50AM     Derik Smith

This course is a historical survey of the representation of African Americans in popular American cinema. It will begin with D.W. Griffith’s brutal vision of race in The Birth of a Nation, and it will end exactly one hundred years later with discussion of films released in 2016. Considering a century of American movie-making, the course will chart and analyze evolving representations of blackness through historicization. In other words, we will spend a lot of time thinking about how Hollywood depictions of “African-Americana” have both reflected and informed American culture in the past century. The approach will require students to read a variety of critical and theoretical writings that will suggest a “subversive” (and usefully portable) method of textual analysis. So, rather than searching for the intended meaning of films, we will be more interested in their unintended meanings—in the cultural anxieties, longings and repressions that show up in these texts when they are considered closely. As we work our way through several dozen films—some quite influential and others merely representative—we will develop strong understandings of individual filmic texts, of traditions of racial representation in Hollywood texts, and of the various forces that shape racial representation in these texts.

As is usual in college courses, students will have to produce written work that analyzes course material, and students will be expected to participate in regular classroom discussions. But in this course students will also be asked to demonstrate their understanding of studied texts in some unconventional ways: In this course you will be challenged to creatively engage with course content, and with your fellow course participants. In this course you will be involved in an active community of learning in which each individual contributes to the collective through movement, voice, and performance. You won’t just be watching performances, you’ll be making your own as well.

❖ Open only to Masters Students. ❖
FALL 2017 COURSES

9513  AENG 500 - Textual Practices I
T  04:15PM-07:05PM  Helen Elam

This course explores some of the debates that have shaped the context of literary study. Readings will move across genres and disciplines, structured as a conversation between literary and critical texts, and will comprise writers such as Nietzsche, de Man, Derrida, Wordsworth, Carson, Freud, Agamben, Nabokov, Proust. Two short papers leading to term paper, weekly responses to readings, and class presentations.

10079  AENG 516 - Workshop in Fiction
T  07:15PM-10:05PM Edward Schwarzschild

In this course, each student will be expected to complete and revise two or three pieces of fiction (short stories or novel excerpts) during the semester, to be submitted for workshop discussion. Most of each class period will be devoted to this workshop discussion (for which prepared written comments will be expected). Time will also be spent studying and discussing isolated aspects of effective writing, such as description, dialogue, character depiction, openings, endings, vocabulary and syntax. There will be various texts for reading, as well as occasional in-class writing exercises and supplemental brief assignments.

Permission of Instructor required. Please submit a sample of your fiction writing with a brief cover letter about yourself and your writing to Prof. Schwarzschild (eschwarzschild@albany.edu).

10081  AENG 522 - History and Theory of Rhetoric (Reading Course)
TH  04:15PM-07:05PM Laura Wilder

This course will provide a survey of Western rhetorical theory, a “zoom” overview of excerpts of texts on the teaching and practice of rhetoric from the Ancient Greek Sophists to The New Rhetoricians of the 1960s with studies of Medieval, Renaissance, Enlightenment, Belletrist, and Nineteenth Century rhetorical theories. This dizzying breadth is intended to support the goal of our department’s "reading" courses: “the acquisition of foundational knowledge that would serve as the basis for more specialized study [in this case, of rhetoric] in the future.” Our weekly study will be comparative in nature: together we will compare different systems and theories of rhetoric as they emerged in the West over 2,500 years. The course aims to give students a clear sense of how rhetoric manifested itself differently in different historical periods and how rhetoric has been conceptualized in comparison to philosophy, theology, politics, literature and other bodies of knowledge. We will pay particular attention to rhetoric’s diachronic relationship to writing instruction. Required Text: Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg’s anthology, The Rhetorical Tradition, 2nd Ed
The literature and language of early England (up to about 1100 C.E.) has inspired poets, novelists, and scholars, including Milton, Tolkien, and Pound, and continues to excite the modern imagination. A film adaptation of the Old English epic, *Beowulf*, appears every two or three years, it seems, and Benjamin Bagby performed his artful recitation of the poem to a full house at Lincoln Center and continues to attract audiences in Europe, England, and America. Indeed, poets from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Seamus Heaney seemed to view translation of *Beowulf* as a measure of poetic achievement. The legacy of Anglo-Saxon England has political significance as well. Henry VIII hearkened back to Anglo-Saxon letters to prove that the Church of England had always been independent of the Church of Rome. Thomas Jefferson was an avid Anglo-Saxonist and even proposed as a design for the national seal the first Anglo-Saxon leaders, Hengist and Horsa. Old English language, literature, and culture offer much, therefore, to writers and scholars seeking greater historical and linguistic depth.

This course will help students to develop the skills necessary to read poetry and prose of early England in their original form. Rather than dwelling on the development of the language and philological minutiae, we will move quickly to the literature in its cultural context. In addition to learning to read Old English, students will consider some of the intellectual and social issues facing the Anglo-Saxons, as well as the uses to which Old English and Anglo-Saxon studies has been put in later centuries, especially in England and the United States. Secondary readings will enrich our understanding of the texts and culture of the Anglo-Saxons and help us to think critically about their legacy.

No experience with Old English or language learning is necessary: though it looks very different from the current form of English, Old English is in fact an early form of our language, and students typically achieve a fairly high level of reading proficiency by the end of one semester.
In this course we will read a number of postcolonial novels (and one epic poem) alongside some of the theorists that have tried to describe them. Our interest will be in the various thematics common among these texts—the struggle for national liberation, the disillusionment of the independence period, the forms of culture clash and hybridity that attend the colonial encounter—as well as the differences between their national situations. Readings will likely include Rushdie, Naipaul, Jameson, Ahmad, De Assis, Devi, Djebar, Fanon, Ghosh, Jameson, Naipaul, Rushdie, Schwarz and Walcott.

“What happens if the ‘fixed’ borders of a nation are recognized not only as historically produced political constructs that can be ignored, imaginatively reconfigured, and variously contested but also as component parts of a deeper, more multilayered series of national and indigenous histories?” Questions like these posed by Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine in their essay collection Hemispheric American Studies (2008) have reshaped early American literary scholarship. Yet, syllabi and reading lists can often retain a firm hold on the nation as their implicit guiding principle. This reading course will present graduate students with the opportunity to expand their sense of what constitutes early American literature by surveying a rich set of texts that have become central to hemispheric scholarship. Focusing on texts from the sixteenth through the first half of the nineteenth century, students will explore analytical and research methods as well as create their own hemispheric American literatures syllabi.

Texts, among many others, will include Cabeza de Vaca, The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca (1542), Gaspar de Villagra’s, History of New Mexico; Bernal Díaz del Castillo, History of the Conquest of New Spain; Christopher Columbus, The Book of Prophecies; Hopi Legend, “The Coming of the Spanish and the Pueblo Revolt”; Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, selected writings; Olaudah Equino, The Interesting Narrative; Robert Montgomery Bird, Calavar, or, The History of the Conquest (1834); Edgar Allan Poe, The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket (1838).

Consider the following recent writing projects—a poet travels to her home state of Indiana in search of remaining traces of the Underground Railroad; another reproduces newspaper excerpts about mining disasters in China, interleaving them with photographs and worker transcripts regarding the 2006 Sago Mine disaster in West Virginia; yet another composes a long poem that only uses words from titles, catalog entries, or exhibit descriptions of Western art objects that depict a black woman. “Documentary Poetry” will assess this documentary turn in late twentieth and early twenty first century poetry. If, according to Horace, poetry is meant to “delight and instruct,” then a major strand of contemporary poetry is now embracing—over and against a delightful lyricism—a pedagogical, historical, or memorializing function. We will study important modernist precursors such as Muriel Rukeyser and William Carlos Williams and then proceed to a range of contemporary practitioners that may include Philip Metres, M. NourbeSe Philip, Vanessa Place, Robin Coste Lewis, Rachel Zolf, Jordan Abel, Rob Fitterman, Mark Nowak, Dionne Brand, Claudia Rankine, Julie Carr, C.D. Wright, Rob Halpern, Brenda Coutsas, and Collier Nogues. In addition, reading thinkers from Michel Foucault to Maurizio Ferraris will bolster our sense of what we mean by the
term “document.” Requirements include regular attendance and participation, an in-class presentation, and an article-length essay by the end of the semester.

10110 AENG 642 - Literature in the Anthropocene
M 07:15PM-10:05 PM Kir Kuiken

This course will interrogate the role of literature in relation to recent attention in the Humanities to the term “the Anthropocene”: a period which entails the recognition that humans are altering the Earth’s systems (geological, biological, climatological etc.) to such an extent that these changes will be registered in the geological record of the planet for millennia. How does literature become a site for taking stock of the meaning of these changes, for how they alter our conceptions of the human, of nature, and of time? We will begin by situating these questions within what is arguably the first literature of the Anthropocene (before this term came into use): late 18th and early 19th century Romanticism. In an era of the advent of modern democracy, of rapid industrialization and urbanization, how did Romantic writers shape our current conceptions of our relation to nature, of the relation between humans and non-humans etc.? We will explore Romantic authors’ fascination with notions of “deep time,” which called into question not just prior theological conceptions of the world, but human-centered ones as well. Why were Romantic authors so fascinated with “apocalypses” of various kinds, from Mary Shelley’s novel “The Last Man” to Blake’s “prophetic” poems? We will also explore the way in which the Romantics considered the socio-political consequences of these questions. Co-extensively with these discussions, we will read 20th and 21st century theorists and philosophers who have extended and elaborated on these questions in various ways, examining the close connections between Romantic era concerns and the way that these have been picked up (and reshaped) in contemporary critical theory. The course will then conclude with a brief exploration of the recent rise of “speculative fiction” as well as non-fiction (e.g. Kolbert’s “The Sixth Extinction”) as genres in which “the Anthropocene” has been confronted most recently. Authors studied will include Blake, Hölderlin, Kleist, Keats, the Shelleys (Percy and Mary), and Wordsworth. Theorists/Philosophers studied will include Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Heidegger, Latour, Levinas, Nancy, and Serres. Assignments will include a presentation and seminar paper.

4473 AENG 681 - Contemporary Writers
TH 07:15PM – 10:05PM Carolyn Yalkut

This is a course about the life and work of the artist. In this course, students study the work of the authors appearing on campus with the New York State Writers Institute Fall 2017 Visiting Writers Series. The Institute invites a broad array of writers whose work ranges from short and long fiction to nonfiction, poetry and drama and film. We will analyze (critically and creatively) one major work by each author considering it the context of the writer’s complete oeuvre as well as the intellectual, historical, aesthetic, and pragmatic issues at play in each author’s work. In addition to course meetings students will be expected (whenever possible) to attend relevant sessions of the Visiting Writers Series which often, although not exclusively, are scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays (craft seminars at 4:15 and evening readings at 8). Students will be expected to make presentations in seminar sessions, produce a short critical paper, and write a substantial critical final paper.
The determinations of race and gender are forms of reading: reading bodies, reading gestures, reading histories. In this spirit of intersectional feminist inquiry, this course introduces graduate students to a range of theoretical traditions – psychoanalysis, Marxism, post-structuralism, historicism, affect theory, etc. – through critical writing that thematizes reading race and gender in its diverse forms: literature, photography, cinema, performance, and new media. The main objective of this course is to familiarize students already adept at literary analysis with theories that both open up key topics in textual studies and interrogate the racial and sexual politics – the operations of power – inherent in those topics. The course will be organized around the following textual concepts: word, voice, name, author, reader, body, subject, aesthetics/history, performance, photograph, film, and technology. Our authors span Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault, Hélène Cixous, Susan Sontag, and Louis Althusser to bell hooks, Gayatri Spivak, Judith Butler, Stuart Hall, Eve Sedgwick, and José Muñoz.

Enrollment Prerequisites: Ph.D. students who have successfully completed ENG 770. This course provides support for graduate students who are beginning a teaching assignment in the English Department. English 771 offers a workshop environment in which students will observe and reflect on each other’s pedagogical skills, research and discuss solutions to common problems in the college classroom, design effective lesson plans, develop innovative assignments (focusing on recent developments in the digital humanities and other modes of digital literacy), formulate cogent assessment rubrics, and prepare statements of teaching philosophy for future employment opportunities.
Course Concentration Distribution Spring 2017

Reading Courses:
Wilder AENG 522 - History and Theory of Rhetoric
Barney AENG 580 - Biopolitics and 18th-Century British Literature
Roberts AENG 581 - Hemispheric Turn in American Literature
Stasi AENG 581 - Postcolonial Literature

Literature, Modernity, and the Contemporary
Kuiken AENG 642 - Literature in the Anthropocene
Leong AENG 615 - Poetics and Literary Practice: Documentary Poetry
Yalkut AENG 681 - Contemporary Writers

Writing Practices
Leong AENG 615 - Poetics and Literary Practice: Documentary Poetry
Scheck AENG 555 - Translation Theory
Wilder AENG 522 - History and Theory of Rhetoric (Reading Course)
Schwarzschild AENG 516 - Workshop in Fiction

Cultural, Transcultural, and Global Studies
Roberts AENG 581 - Hemispheric Turn in American Literature (Reading Course)
Stasi AENG 581 - Postcolonial Literature (Reading Course)

Theoretical Constructs
Fretwell AENG 710 - Textual Studies: Intersections
Kuiken AENG 642 - Literature in the Anthropocene
Barney AENG 580 - Biopolitics and 18th-Century British Literature (Reading Course)

Coming in the Spring! (Tentative)
Cohen AENG 582: William Faulkner (in context)
Elam AENG 651: Theories of Language
Griffith AENG 660: Reading course: Anglophone Caribbean literature
Hill AENG 642: Digital Humanities
Murakami AENG 500: Textual Practices I
Shepherdson AENG 720: Esthetics and Emotion
Schalk AENG 682: Disability Studies
Smith AENG 661: Reading course: Representing Slavery
Carey AENG 770: Teaching Writing and Literature
Tillman AENG 516: Workshop in Fiction