ENGLISH GRADUATE COURSE OFFERINGS FOR:

Master of Arts
Doctor of Philosophy
Non-Degree Study

James D. Lilley, Director of Graduate Studies
Department of English
Humanities Building, Room 333
518-442-4127

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

6468 AENG500 Textual Practices I
Thursday 04:15PM-07:05PM Elam, Helen R

This course will deal with some major writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and with theoretical and critical essays whose arguments have shaped contexts of literary study. Readings from Beckett, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Proust, Dickinson, Kafka, Davis, others. Two papers, term paper, presentations.

1873 AENG516 Fiction Workshop
Wednesday 04:15PM-07:05PM Wolff, Rebecca

Intensive practice in writing fiction. Emphasis on development of fictional technique and individual styles. Students' work is discussed and criticized by all participants in the workshop. Instructors may bring to bear on the criticism of students' work a discussion of writings by pertinent authors. May be repeated for credit. S/U grading. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

9998 AENG521 History & Theory of Composition
Monday 04:15PM-07:05PM Wilder, Laura

This course will provide an introduction to composition theory, a body of thought and research on how writers write and how writing should be taught at the postsecondary level. We will locate the historical starting point for this ongoing conversation in the mid-to-late-20th Century, when Rhetoric and Composition emerged as a viable scholarly field within English Studies. But this starting point includes within it historical work which looks backwards to the 19th Century (when formal college writing courses were first offered in the U.S.) and earlier to oratorical traditions. We will read together key scholarly articles from the emerging tradition of composition theory. We will also examine three recent edited collections which purport to introduce and provide an overview of the current state of composition theory: Ritter and Matsuda's Exploring Composition Studies (2012), Tate, Taggart, Schick, and Hessler's A Guide to Composition Pedagogies (2014), and Adler-Kassner and Wardle's Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies (2015). We will attempt to draft a map which surveys this complex terrain of competing camps. Students should gain a nuanced understanding of key terms from the history of composition theory such as expressivism, cognitive rhetoric, social epistemic rhetoric, and discourse community as well as gain a sense of how emerging concepts such as genre theory, writing about writing, and teaching for transfer are shaping the future of the field.

4819 AENG581 Renaissance Bodies Politic
Tuesday 04:15PM-07:05PM Murakami, Ineke

This course explores some of the earliest literary meditations on the trope of the body politic: a corporate entity of the church and/or state that was intimately tied to understandings of the individual human body, with its physical and affective vulnerabilities. The latter body found itself the object of intense scrutiny and debate in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries. Those invested in a bounded, and scrupulously regulated Protestant body attacked disturbing rival conceptions of a
more fluid, permeable body, one that could meld amorously with other subjects and objects, or be moved through the powers of charisma or rhetoric to become what Deleuze and Guattari would now call a “body without organs.” Reading a variety of Renaissance plays, poetry, paintings, and prose pamphlets in relation to modern theoretical texts, we will consider some of the ways the English of this period understood themselves as embodied creatures negotiating a relationship to larger political forces. Figures of dismemberment, infection, and metamorphosis—man and woman becoming hermaphrodite, Christian “turning Turk,” human transforming into wolf—will ground our exploration of Renaissance meditations on the governance of individual and collective bodies, revealing a prelude to modern biopolitics.

Texts include: More’s *Utopia*, Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine I*, Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair*, Middleton’s *Revenger’s Tragedy*, and excerpts from Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* and Hobbes’s *Leviathan*.

Course requirements include: response papers, an annotated bibliography, a substantial presentation on your final paper topic, and a term paper produced in steps.

10004  AENG581  Theories of the Secular and American Literary History
Tuesday  07:15PM-10:05PM  Roberts, Wendy R

Histories of American literature typically trace the emergence of new aesthetic forms, readerships, and political identities to the decline of religion. For instance, Puritan literature often represents the highpoint of religious enthusiasm in early America (Bradstreet, Edwards) and its decline made evident by the rise of a new canon of writers (Hawthorne, Melville) who have outgrown such superstitions. But contrary to such trajectories, several recent measurements show that Christian practice was at its lowest in early America and at its highest in the twenty-first century—evidence that points to America’s Christianization over time not its secularization. Even so, this narrative does not seem entirely satisfactory because it continues to place religion and the secular in opposition. A reevaluation of our terms and their uses is in order.

This course will stress the relationship between developing theories of the secular and the study of early American religion and literature. It will progress in two parts. First, we will read two landmark books that have invigorated an entire rethinking of the secular, Talal Asad’s *Formations of the Secular* (2003) and portions of Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age* (2007), as well as several important responses to them. Second, we will explore how these theories come to bear on the study of American literature and culture. To do this, we will read Americanist scholars who are changing the way we conceive of religion and the secular, including selections from Michael Warner’s forthcoming book *The Evangelical Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*, John L. Modern’s *Secularism in Antebellum America* (2011), and Tracy Fessenden’s *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature* (2007), as well as a number of important essays. Students will pursue a course-long case study in pre-twentieth-century American materials to flesh out what their chosen selections can tell us about the formation of the secular in America. This will include crafting one presentation and writing an article length seminar paper. Students interested in later American periods, English literature, or global studies will be encouraged to mobilize theoretical readings from the course toward a paper that best furthers their interests and goals.
This course takes a close look at sonnets to understand the workings of symbolic power from a theoretical perspective, with emphasis on Pierre Bourdieu’s arguments for linguistic habitus, discursive style and market forces, and individual or collective misrecognition as shapers of cultural authority along with other dynamics perceived in poetic activity. Our focus on the sonnet, from its invention in the 13th century Sicilian court of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II to its present-day revival, provides a concrete test for the role played by linguistic form in symbolic power, as it brings logic and purpose into play with poetic inspiration, as distinct from the common notion that inspiration comes to mind full blown and needs only to be poured into preset forms in order to make poetry. After looking into the intellectual and political character of the imperial court that gave rise to the sonnet, we will discern causes beyond self-expression that led thinking people to take up this new form. We will discover how it can be used as a tool for intellectual analysis and problem solving; a vehicle for witty disputation; a guide to moral or spiritual inquiry; a device for social or political control; an instrument of aesthetic theory, philosophical speculation, scientific or sensory description; a definer or redefiner of emotional experience; a refuge for identity in crisis; even a lifeline for individual sense of self under torture. While exploring sonnets written from the 13th through 21st centuries, we will also create and evaluate examples of our own. Additional course requirements include written notes and assigned discussion leadership on passages from theoretical texts, and an article-length analysis of exactly what it is in particular sonnets and the circumstances that have inspired them that might explicate the nature of their symbolic power.

At a time when self-described “uncreative” conceptual poetry gets a lot of attention, and following the Language poets’ shift from voice to discourse/the New Sentence, “lyric” seems a fraught term, especially for the world of so-called “experimental” poetries. Yet, the word has been revisited and promisingly recast in bracing studies like Jonathan Culler’s recent *Theory of the Lyric* (2015), which urges a rethinking of lyric forms as refiguring (rather than just “expressing”) subjectivity and experience. While performing this work through what we conventionally conceive of as lyric—usually, shorter forms resembling songs—many modernist and contemporary poets refigured lyricism’s possibilities by moving into other, often longer forms. Epic is typically conceived of as narrative rather than lyric, but American writers cast doubt on that before modernism even hit the scene. Just think of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. No lover of Whitman, the biggest (and littlest) epic was written by T.S. Eliot in order to evacuate personality and lived emotion from poetic voice, giving us what we might call the first impersonal lyric: *The Waste Land*. “Il miglior fabbro” of that poem, Eliot’s collaborator Ezra Pound, would go on to challenge presuppositions about lyric even further, while putting a bit of the person back into impersonal persona. Anyone reading the opening of his *Cantos* is introduced—by its very title—to a series of songs “sung” in the form of a first person voice, that of the “poet” in a library reading Homer aloud. (Or is it aloud only because we’re in his head?) Quickly, Pound’s songs become written documents. *The Cantos* offered William Carlos Williams a challenge he took up late, in his own readerly lyric epic *Paterson*; and Pound also offered Charles Olson a model for his *Maximus*, a tone-deaf lyric that forsakes singing altogether to present voice mediated through letters and documents. Louis Zukofsky’s *A* might be likened to what would
happen if Spinoza started singing Marx, while trying to harmonize with Bach fugues when wearing the ass’s head of Shakespeare’s Bottom. But should we make facile distinctions between “lyric” and “narrative” poetry? Gertrude Stein, oddly enough, might be the one to help trouble that distinction, not so much with her poetry but with what she once said of narrative in her Narration lectures: “Narrative concerns itself with what is happening all the time, history concerns itself with what happens from time to time.” It’s that “all the time” that puts lyric in a new, narrative light. (As C.D. Wright notes in Cooling Time: “Narrative is. You have to know when to enter in, when to egress, when to let be, be.” Note that “you,” the writing hand, are present for her, always, in that is, all the time.) “All the time” is pretty visionary stuff, and that’s what other modernists transformed epic forms into, all those visionary vehicles, often falling short of “epic” proportions and scope, as in Hart Crane’s The Bridge. Or, consider H.D.’s Trilogy or the even stronger later (and understudied) long poems Helen in Egypt and her posthumously published Vale Ave and Hermetic Definition. There is something visionary and epic (and epochal) about Langston Hughes’ recording the rhythms of an entire communities, making black neighborhoods sing in the multiple but as a common voice, in his late-career jazz and be-bop fiats Montage of a Dream Deferred and Ask Your Mama.

Alongside epic runs the series, another modification of lyric forms. George Oppen’s Discrete Series was his farewell to poetry, a paean on the impossibility of wartime Leftism (after which he and his lyric self disappeared for a quarter century). Muriel Rukeyser’s Elegies turned her antifascist yet pacifist politics into a recurrent thread in over a decade’s worth of volumes from roughly 1936 to 1950. Robert Duncan, innovating on his friend Jack Spicer’s idea of the book-poem (each book conceived as one poem), opened the series even further by introducing a literal open series poetics, in which different recurring poems mirrored his life and language assumed a body all its own, in the form of different songs that occurred over decades, interwove with one another, and braided, only to split into separate songs again. Duncan’s friend Ronald Johnson would make the body and matter itself sing in a humanist epic called ARK that began as an abandoned gay series, “Wor(l)ds.” Or there is Johnson’s own book-poem where he finds his voice by erasing another’s, his erasure of Milton’s Paradise Lost to bring us Radi Os (the title itself nodding to Spicer, whose lyric poetry are just broadcasts of the Martians and the dead). And then there is Diane di Prima, who, since before Stonewall, has connected a queer feminist politics with a visionary song of social justice in the anarchist agitprop of the decades-long series Revolutionary Letters and her shamanistic Loba, a feminist re-vision of Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl.” Then, there’s the queerest book-poem to end all book-poems, John Wieners’ collagist, enigmatic Behind the State Capitol; or, Cincinnati Pike, published by Good Gay Poets, Boston Gay Liberation Front’s publishing arm. Over the intervening decades between then and now, “lyric” epic, series, and book-poems have recurred in the work of several major contemporary experimental poets who play with their predecessors’ work in these major forms. In the process, lyricism is transformed further.

Lyric, voice, personhood, and enunciative subjectivity—we will set out to trouble such terms such. Our studies will entail immersive reading in epics, serial poems, and book-poems written in the United States during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, alongside poetics or craft essays and/or interviews. We will devote our attention each week to a different poet, going as far as we individually can in a major work by the likes of: Pound, Zukofsky, H.D., Crane, Olson, Rukeyser, Hughes, WCW, Spicer, Duncan, Oppen, R. Johnson, Ginsberg, di Prima, Wieners, Stephen Jonas, Julian Beck, John Ashbery Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Lyn Hejinian, Nathaniel Mackey, Alice Notley, Ed Roberson, Beverly Dahlen, Claudia Rankine, C.D. Wright, Ron Silliman. The emphasis will be on the poetry, but throughout the semester each week we also will read one or two brief selections from theories of lyric and personhood, including: classic selections of lyric theory (included in Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins’s The Lyric Theory Reader), sections from Jonathan Culler’s Theory of
Lyric, from Roberto Esposito’s Third Person, and essays by Gilles Deleuze, Denise Riley, Susan Stewart, James Longenbach, Robert von Hallberg, Judith Balso, Reginald Gibbons, Fred Moten, and others. Recommended readings will include critical essays about the assigned poets and their works.

A list of required books will be sent to registered students in January, so that everyone might find cheaper copies. To start our conversation for the first class, students will be asked to purchase and read Ben Lerner’s long essay The Hatred of Poetry (2016) for the first class and a few “classic” twentieth-century lyrics (available on Blackboard, two weeks before class).

Requirements for BA/MA and MA students: Class attendance and participation; one class leader session (structured presentation synthesizing the secondary readings and posing related questions about the poetry, to frame our conversation; 10 minutes); midterm paper (critical, not researched; 8-10 pages); final paper (critical or hybrid, researched; 12-15 pages and developed in stages).

Requirements for PhD students: Class attendance and participation; once class leader session (structured presentation synthesizing the readings and posing related questions about the poetry, to frame our conversation; 10 minutes); seminar paper or creative project with poetics essay (researched, 20-30 pages and developed in stages).

10007 AENG641 Critical Methods: Testing the Limits- The Frankfurt School and Contemporary Culture Critique

Monday 04:15PM-07:05PM Ebert, Teresa

Is it possible to have a "true life" in a false system? We begin by thinking about this question, which Theodore Adorno raises, and relate it to his maxim: "The whole is the false" (Minima Moralia). We tease out the implications of these ideas which have had a deep impact on contemporary cultural theory and literary and digital studies. With this prelude, we continue examining some of the contributions of "The Frankfurt School" (of "Critical Theory") to social and cultural analysis through its engagements with Marx and Freud. Why, for example, do people accept as normal the social and economic conditions that alienate them from their work, from other people, from the world and from themselves? What are the responsibilities of literature and the arts in unmasking these conditions that produce "mystical consciousness"? How to understand the relation of culture and environment—what, for example, are some of the problems of bourgeois "climate change" without class critique? Is "the Anthropocene" a "myth" that blames "all of humanity for climate change" and "lets capitalism off the hook"? How to analyze the way capitalism transvalues all values ("all that is solid melts into air") but at the same time makes some "obsessed" with the erosion of "traditional standards" and renders many so powerless in dealing with social change that they blame the "other" (the Jew, the gay, the communist, the immigrant)? What does Marcuse mean by "repressive tolerance"? Is tolerating difference, debate and opposition a means of control in democracy? Is democracy itself an elaborate game played to pretend that people, through "free" elections, participate in the way social life is organized? How does the "aesthetic" engage the social in a technological age? Walter Benjamin argues that art and technology come together in film which he sees as a process of awakening people to other social arrangements. If, he writes, fascism renders politics as aesthetics, then resistance to it is by politicizing the aesthetic (“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”); this opens up the space for our reading of Ernest Bloch’s concept of the "ontology of the Not-Yet Being" and his notion of utopia. We will examine the relation of these and other concepts—such as materialist aesthetics, Benjamin’s "the angel of history," "modernity," "Enlightenment," "reification" (e.g. Alex Honneth’s interpretation of it as "recognition"
and Marcuse's "one dimensional man"), as well as, "biopolitics," "control society," "desiring production," "deterritorialization," "Accelerationism," "Vitalism," “New materialism” and "the idea of communism" in the writings of Deleuze, Negri, Badiou, Zizek and Butler. We will pay special attention to Bruno Latour’s critique of critique and to a critique of his critique of critique.

The seminar will be a plural place of lectures, discussions, reports and a theory conference. Students are required to actively participate in seminar discussions every week; write one short paper (about 10 pages); present a seminar report on specific theoretical problems, and write a long theory paper (about 20 pages). All students will have an opportunity to participate in the end of semester “Theory Conference”

_The bourgeois … is tolerant. His love of people as they are stems from his hatred of what they might be._

8951  AENG660  Transnationalism & Globalization: Anglophone Caribbean Literature & Criticism
Wednesday 04:15PM-07:05PM  Griffith, Glyne A

This course will examine issues that situate the study of literatures in English within the broader contexts of transnationalism and globalization.

It will address trends, movements and problems that cannot be adequately comprehended within the boundaries of national literatures and cultures.

Our assigned texts will include Lucy by Jamaica Kincaid; When I was Puerto Rican by Esmeralda Santiago; She’s Gone by Kwame Dawes; The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid and The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao by Junot Diaz. We will also read the following works to provide critical context: Discourse on Colonialism by Aime Cesaire; Black Skin, White Masks by Frantz Fanon; A Small Place by Jamaica Kincaid; Culture and Imperialism by Edward Said and An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire by Arundhati Roy.

10008  AENG685  Poetics of the Hyper – Incarceration Era
Thursday 07:15PM-10:05PM  Smith, Derik

Reading theoretical, critical and primary texts produced after the Moynihan Report of 1965, the course will consider the aesthetics and politics of recent African American poetry. By some accounts the release of Moynihan Report precipitated a policy logic that lead to rapid expansion of the American carceral state, and also to the rise of affirmative action programs. We will test the premise that these and other developments in post-civil rights era political economy played a determinative role in the post-1965 trifurcation of black poetry into overlapping, yet recognizably distinct, modes: rap, spoken word, and high-literary. Students will study these class-marked and separately institutionalized poetic modes relationally, and also as responses to social acceleration, the ascendance of visual culture, the general entrenchment of neoliberalism and other postmodern developments.

The syllabus will include poetic texts by Claudia Rankine, Nasir “Nas” Jones, Terrance Hayes, Onika “Nicki Minaj” Maraj, Douglas Kearney, M. NourBese Philip, Public Enemy, Lawerence “KRS One” Parker, Saul Williams, Patricia Smith, Nikki Giovanni, Amiri Baraka, Etheridge Knight, Robert Hayden, Gwendolyn Brooks, and theoretical and critical texts by David Harvey, Paul Gilroy, Richard Iton, Loïc Wacquant, Kenneth Warren, Mahdu Dubey, Adolph Reed, Zygmunt Bauman, and Angela Davis.
The Enlightenment (the late seventeenth, through the early late eighteenth centuries) is traditionally regarded as a period that brought forth the fundamental tenants of Western modernity. These might be summed up as: the sanctity of the individual in politics as much as in literary life; subjective mastery over the material world; the division between human experience and technology; and, especially for the purposes of our discipline, the institutionalization of English with an emphasis on the uniqueness of literature per se. Common to all of these topics is a strong reliance on qualitative over quantitative forms of knowledge: deep thought, not data; identity, not multitudes; distinction and good taste, not the incalculable hordes of written media that would be impossible, let alone desirable, to squeeze on to a literary canon. This course will ask a series of questions about the Enlightenment and our discipline, with a focus on subjectivity and numbers. Our case study will be the origins of the first truly popular literary (as in strictly print based) enterprise known as the eighteenth-century novel. Did subjectivity really prevail in the Enlightenment in the sense that novels are said to produce? If not, what did? If so, is qualitative study all there is in our discipline? Alternatively, how might we think about quantitative analysis then and now? Our reading will include novels and writing about novels from the eighteenth-century, contemporary theory about them, and a series of historical and current philosophical texts that variously forbid or affirm ways of thinking with numbers. Reading list available on request (mhill@albany.edu).

In this course, we will explore the connections between our ongoing discussion of a fairly broad question—i.e., What is the purpose of teaching English in higher education today, and how are people going about it?—with the narrower form it tends to take in our own lives: What am I supposed to do when I teach Eng ###? We will read a range of commentators on both questions, but the term’s major writing assignments will entail creating syllabi for two of the courses (one in literature and culture, the other in writing) you will likely teach during your time at UAlbany.
Course Concentration Distribution Spring 2017

Literature, Modernity, and the Contemporary
- Murakami ENG 581: Renaissance Bodies Politic
- Roberts ENG 581: Theories of the Secular and American Literary History
- Cable ENG 600: Symbolic Power and the Sonnet
- Keenaghan ENG 615: American Lyric Re-visited: Epic, Series Book-Poem

Writing Practices
- Wolff ENG 516: Fiction Workshop
- Wilder ENG 521: History & Theory of Composition
- North ENG 770: Teaching Writing and Literature

Cultural, Transcultural, and Global Studies
- Roberts ENG 581: Theories of the Secular and American Literary History
- Griffith ENG 660: Transnationalism and Globalization
- Smith ENG 685: Poetics of the Hyper-Incarceration Era

Theoretical Constructs
- Wilder ENG 521: History & Theory of Composition
- Ebert ENG 641: The Frankfurt School