GRADUATE COURSES IN ENGLISH

Summer Session 2011
Fall Session 2011

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

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Room HU 336
(518) 442-4099

Bret Benjamin, Director of Graduate Studies

Courses are by Permission of Instructor as noted, otherwise by Permission of Department only. Please Contact Bret Benjamin (bret@albany.edu) with questions.
FACULTY TEACHING SUMMER & FALL 2011

RICHARD BARNEY, Associate Professor – Ph.D., University of Virginia
BRET BENJAMIN, Associate Professor – Ph.D., University of Texas, Austin
JEFFREY BERMAN, Professor – Ph.D., Cornell University
LANGDON BROWN, Associate Professor – Ph.D., Cornell University
LANA CABLE, Associate Professor – Ph.D., Johns Hopkins
THOMAS COHEN, Professor – Ph.D., Yale University
RANDALL CRAIG, Professor – Ph.D., University of Wisconsin
LYDIA DAVIS, Associate Professor and Writer-in-Residence, B.A., Barnard College
JENNIFER GREIMAN, Assistant Professor – Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley
ERIC KEENAGHAN, Associate Professor – Ph.D., Temple University
JAMES LILLEY, Assistant Professor – Ph.D., Princeton University
MARTHA ROZETT, Professor – PH.D., University of Michigan
PAUL STASI, Assistant Professor – Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley
LISA THOMPSON, Assistant Professor – Ph.D., Stanford University
SUMMER SESSION COURSES

Six Week 1 (May 23 – July 1, 2011)

ENG 681—Authors and their Critics

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<tr>
<td>1756</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>6:00-9:30 p.m.</td>
<td>ED0123</td>
<td>H. Elam</td>
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A study of relations between literature and criticism, this course will focus on five or six major literary texts (from different centuries and in different genres--novel, poetry, drama, nonfiction), accompanied by a critical essay on each. The critical essays are chosen not because they deploy any particular theoretical model but because they were in their time (and are) an important reading of a particular text.

Possible pairings: Homer (Odyssey) and Erich Auerbach; Molière (Don Juan) and Shoshana Felman; Kafka (Metamorphosis) and Walter Benjamin; Wordsworth (one or two poems) and Paul de Man; Browning (two poems); and Grenier’s The Difficulty of Being a Dog.

This last does not have an accompanying essay; it really is about dogs, some famous in literature, and embeds its own critical reflection. There will also be a showing (DVD) of a Mozart opera—Don Giovanni—to go with Molière’s Don Juan.

Critical texts will be on reserve as well as in a Reader available at Mary Jane Books. Requirements: one short essay, one final paper, absolutely faithful attendance and class participation.

Six Week 3 (July 5 – August 12)

ENG 585—Baseball Literature

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<tr>
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<td>TTH</td>
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<td>R. Craig</td>
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This baseball madness,“ as George Bernard Shaw described the American national pastime, is the subject of a course with a dual objective. First, the class introduces students to the long tradition of writing about baseball in America and considers the role of baseball in American life and culture. Second, the course concentrates on fiction in order to analyze the narrative modes and genres illustrating the development of the American novel during this time. The course will begin with forms of romance (e.g., Malamud, Roth), consider the tradition of realism and naturalism in the novel (e.g., Lardner, Harris), and conclude with experiments in metafiction and magic realism (e.g. Coover, Kinsella).

Related questions of literary mode (comedy, satire) or genre (short story, detective fiction, film) will be introduced throughout the session.
FALL COURSES

ENG 500—Textual Practices I
(Open Only to English MA Students) - Permission of Department is Required

1981 M 4:15-7:05 p.m. HU0115 L. Cable

This course is designed to introduce students to the broad range of theoretical issues and interpretive strategies that historically have shaped, and continue to reshape, the multiform discipline of English literary studies. Our objective will be to understand contemporary critical practices by tracing their historical, political, and cultural roots alongside the intellectual cross-currents that energize them. In a series of seminar-style investigations of critical issues and theoretical approaches (e.g., Formalism, Structuralism & Deconstruction, Reader-Response Theory, Psychoanalytic Theory, Marxist Criticism, New Historicism & Cultural Studies, Feminist Criticism, Gender Studies & Queer Theory, Postcolonialism & Ethnic Studies, Postmodernism), we will inquire into the intellectual experiences and logical assumptions that have led to particular ways of thinking about literary art. Requirements include: weekly one-page oral and written reports on the relation of selected readings to a specific issue or analytical approach; class presentation of a prospectus with annotated bibliography for the anticipated term paper; a final paper.

Required text:


ENG 516—Workshop in Fiction

Permission of Instructor required. Please submit a sample of your fiction writing with a brief cover letter about yourself and your writing to Prof. Davis (cote@albany.edu). Any student who is an undergraduate or who is a graduate student from a department other than English should e-mail the Director of Graduate Studies <bret@albany.edu> with student ID# to inquire about workshop eligibility requirements.

1982 W 4:15-7:05 p.m. HU0115 L. Davis

In this course, each student will be expected to complete two to three pieces of fiction (short stories, short-shorts, 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), but time will also be spent studying and discussing isolated aspects of effective writing, such as description, dialogue, character epiction, openings, endings, vocabulary and syntax. In support of this, there will be some short texts for assigned reading, as well as occasional in-class writing exercises and supplemental brief assignments. One book may be assigned to be read in full.
ENG 580—Sublimations: Aesthetics, Medicine, and Politics in 18th-Century Britain

This course will track the emergence of modern aesthetics as the convergence of biological, literary, critical, and political discourses related to the topic of the sublime during the so-called long 18th century in Britain. While drawing on the vocabulary of early modern empiricism, which stressed that all knowledge came from individual experience, as well as on traditional views of the sublime’s power to shock and elevate those who experienced its often mysterious power, we will stress the sublime as a process of radical transformation rather than, as in earlier perspectives, as an elusive object of rational understanding. Radical transformation, in fact, will prove a common theme in terms of physiological trauma and response, psychological impairment and recovery, spiritual distress and edification, and, finally, dramatic sociopolitical change, especially in the dynamics of revolution, one of the hallmarks of Enlightenment history both in the Americas and Europe. For the medical component of the sublime’s effects, we will consider the period’s innovative views of processes such as nervous reaction, the eye’s response to trauma, and the visceras’ constitution of emotional sensitivity. While also reading recent theoretical treatments of biology’s relation to modern politics (for instance, in discussions by Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Ed Cohen), we will study examples of the period’s poetry, fiction, expository prose, and literary criticism in work such as Aphra Behn’s Oronoko, Anne Finch’s poems, Joseph Addison’s and Edmund Burke’s essays on sublimity, Burke’s equally famous response to the French Revolution in his Reflections, Mary Wollstonecraft’s post-Revolutionary views on aesthetics and political reform in her Letters, and Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein.

ENG 581—Romance, Race, and the Aesthetics of Ruin in Atlantic Modernity

This course explores the ways in which various modes of romance—sentimental, gothic, historical, and frontier—work to both reinforce and resist emerging discourses of racial and national difference. In particular, we will examine aesthetic regimes shared between politics and literature that undergird modern forms of sovereignty and community. Authors to include: Henry Mackenzie, Thomas Jefferson, Charles Brockden Brown, Robert Montgomery Bird, Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville. Other readings from: Locke, Esposito, Lacoue-Labarthe, Rancière, Bataille, Nancy, Simondon, Benjamin.

ENG 581—Victorian and Edwardian Fiction (Reading Course)

This course concentrates on British fiction from about 1875 to 1914. Through the a series of paired works, we will explore questions relating to the novel and society; literary language and the theory of fiction; genre and popular literature; colonial rhetoric and post-colonial theory—all as they were considered in, or might be applied to, fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Possible pairings include: Carroll and James, Conrad and Wells, Meredith and Ford, Huxley and Forster, Stevenson and Kipling.
ENG 582—Shakespeare, Marlowe, and the Challenges of Biographical Speculation (Reading Course)

8480  T  4:15-7:05 p.m.  BA0216  M. Rozett

This course has two linked objectives: to read Shakespeare's and Marlowe's plays against one another with an eye to influences, echoes, and the development of dramatic strategies from the late 1580s to 1600; and to investigate the ways in which scholars have attempted to reconstruct the lives of Shakespeare and Marlowe from the fragments of evidence and imaginative speculation that have surrounded these two dramatists for four centuries. Readings will include Doctor Faustus, Tamberlaine, The Jewi of Malta, Edward II by Marlowe, and Hamlet, Henry V, The Merchant of Venice, and Richard II by Shakespeare. Also, parts of The Reckoning by Charles Nicholl, Will in the World by Stephen Greenblatt, Contested Will and 1599 by James Shapiro, The Genius of Shakespeare by Jonathan Bate, Shakespeare's Wife by Germaine Greer, and other recent critical biographies.

ENG 582—James Joyce

9245  TH  4:15-7:05 p.m.  HU0116  P. Stasi

This course will be an examination of the major works of James Joyce. We will begin by reading some of Joyce’s predecessors and contemporaries (Yeats, Synge, Ibsen). Then we will tackle Dubliners, Portrait and Joyce’s Critical Writings before spending the bulk of the course on Ulysses. In addition we will read selections from the enormous body of secondary literature that has arisen around his work, identifying various trends in contemporary Joyce scholarship.

ENG 615—Poetics and Literary Practice: American Modernist Poetry (as Humanist Experiment) (Reading Course)

8482  W  7:15-10:05 p.m.  ES0108  E. Keenaghan

This course will provide a solid introduction to an array of major (and some “minor”) figures in experimentalist poetry and poetics from a past literary moment: modernism. It is common enough now to define “modernism” as American literature’s interwar period inclusive of the First and Second World Wars (circa 1914-1945). Modernist art often is also thought to be especially concerned with innovative or experimental literary styles. For over a century, though, determining which writers deserve inclusion in the category of “modernist” has been a fraught, often elitist, exercise intent on patrolling the standards of “true” aesthetic experimentalism. Laura Riding and Robert Graves’s definition of poetic modernism from their Survey of Modernist Poetry (1927) is an early example of this trend, yet is useful despite their obvious aristocratism: “The real task is, in fact, not to explain modernism in poetry but to separate false modernism, or faith in history, from genuine modernism, or faith in the immediate, the new doings of poems (or poets or poetry) as not necessarily derived from history.” Riding and Graves’s formulation doesn’t erase history and context from poetry; rather, it establishes modernism as a mode of experimentation rooted in the present, in experience, from which poetry helps to realize suppressed human truths. The humanistic, ethical project underlying most modernist poetry’s experimentalism is often overlooked, thus leading to misunderstandings of modernisms as merely difficult or opaque poetries that are just politically retrogressive, fatuously individualistic, superficially stylized, or reflective of confusions resulting from rapidly changing economic, scientific, technological, political, social, and even philosophic realities. Riding and Graves problematically believed that modernism’s humanism precluded political commitment, but we will consider how both ethical and political concerns contributed to and informed modernists’ humanistic projects. We will focus our reading on modernist poetics and praxis, supplemented with one article per week from current literary criticism and brief selections from the sciences, visual arts, economics, political theory, and philosophy that influenced the poets themselves. The semester will conclude with two weeks devoted to Robert Duncan (1919-1988), who, despite his own “postmodern” historical moment, characterized his work as continuing American modernism’s legacy. Duncan will help us rearticulate at semester’s end our responses to our primary question: What were the purposes for heavily stylized or
experimental arts one hundred years ago? And he will open for us a new question: What might be the impetus for continuing such a tradition now, in our supposedly postmodern, post-human, or antihumanist age?

Recommended for students intending to teach or research twentieth-century American literature, intending to teach or research in the fields of modern and/or contemporary poetry studies, or are active in creative poetry and poetics.

**Requirements for MA students:** frequent class participation, weekly Blackboard posts (300-500 words), midterm essay (10-12 pages), researched final paper (12-15 pages) or original poetry project plus researched poetics statement (12-15 pages total). **Requirements for PhD students:** frequent class participation, weekly Blackboard posts (300-500 words), researched class leader presentation (20 minutes); researched seminar paper (20-25 pages) or substantial original poetry project plus researched poetics essay (20-25 pages total).

Possible poetry and poetics texts for study (Note: Some titles may change, and several will be omitted from the final list.): Steven Axelrod and Camille Roman (ed), *New Anthology of American Poetry, Vol. 2: Modernisms* (Rutgers UP); Bruce Nugent, Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman, et al., *FIRE!!* (The Fire Press, reproduction of 1926 Harlem Renaissance little magazine); Alain Locke (ed.), *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance* (Touchstone, 1925 Harlem Renaissance anthology); Eugène Jolas, *The Man from Babel* (Yale UP, excerpts) and selections from his poetry and his little magazine *Transition*; William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All* (New Directions) and *In the American Grain* (New Directions), excerpts) or *The Embodiment of Knowledge* (New Directions, excerpts); Hart Crane, *The Bridge* (Liveright) and selected essays and letters; H.D., *Trilogy* (New Directions) and excerpts from prose; Mina Loy, *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* (FSG) and selected prose; Lorine Niedecker, *New Goose* (Rumor Books) and selected prose; Ezra Pound, *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (New Directions) and *ABC of Reading* (New Directions); Marianne Moore, *The Complete Poems* (Viking/Penguin) and selected prose; Louis Zukofsky, *A* (New Directions) and selected prose; Kenneth Patchen, *Sleepers Awake* (New Directions) and selected picture-poems; Jean Toomer, *Cane* (Liveright) and “The Blue Meridian” and selected prose; Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons* (Dover) and *Picasso* (Dover) and selected “portraits” and prose; Laura Riding, *Selected Poems in Five Sets* (Persea) and excerpts from prose; Robert Duncan, *The H.D. Book* (U of California P, excerpts) and *Selected Poems* (New Directions).

[Note: Most required books will be placed on reserve at the Library or are available for discounted purchase online. Registered students may email Prof. Keenaghan after July 30 (keenaghan@albany.edu) for finalized list of required texts and for their Reserve Desk availability.]

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**ENG 680—Imperialism in the Age of Decolonization** (Seminar Course)

9246 T 7:15-10:05 p.m. BA0224 B. Benjamin

This seminar takes up the counterintuitive formulation of imperialism in the age of decolonization. How could the two co-exist simultaneously? After all, mid-century decolonizing movements in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean put paid to the European “empires” of the late-Nineteenth and early-Twentieth Centuries, promising to usher in new economic and geopolitical alignments. However as many of the thinkers of the time understood, and as hindsight has made all the more clear, the apparent end of empire both gave rise to a set of new imperial formations, and enabled the continuation of older imperial forms in new guise.

This seminar, then, attempts to develop a theory of imperialism sufficiently robust to account for the radical pluralism of post-WWII anti-imperial and/or decolonizing movements, as well as the economic and geopolitical relations established during this period of global transition. As such we will spend roughly half of the semester reading the critical tradition of (mainly Marxist, though also Liberal) theories of imperialism by authors such as Marx, Hobson, Lenin, Hilferding, Luxembourg, Bukharin, Arendt, and Amin. (If time allows, we may also read some contemporary work on imperialism by Harvey and Callinicos.) The other half of the semester will be spent examining the rich body of literary, autobiographical, historical, political and theoretical writing by anti-colonial and anti-imperial thinkers of the decolonizing era. Among the texts and figures we may examine will be the Indian national debates between Gandhi and Ambedkar; the documents of the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung Indonesia; African activists and intellectuals including Nkrumah, Nyerere, Cabral, Senghor, Ekpo, Ransome-Kuti,
Mem; Caribbean figures including James, Césaire, Fanon, and Rodney, among others. We will ask whether the analytical category imperialism can provide a meaningful frame for understanding this transitionary post-war period; simultaneously we will ask what, if anything, the mid-century anti-colonial thinkers can illuminate about the nature of imperialism, both in their day and in our own.

ENG 681—Black Cultural Trauma: Representations in Theory, Literature & Performance (Seminar Course)

5580 T 4:15-7:05 p.m. BA0215 L. Thompson

This course will consider how writers and scholars of African American studies narrate existential questions about black subjectivity in light of past and current racial traumas. The class will begin by exploring recent scholarship that places the African American experience within the emergent field of trauma studies. This course will also take up post-traumatic representations of black experiences in African American literature by examining the strategies that novelists, playwrights and poets deploy in their representation of significant historic traumas—specific tragedies, brutalities, horrors, such as slavery, lynching, rape, and riots—as well as the repetitive soul crushing quotidian slights and injuries from social, workplace and housing discrimination. Situated at the intersection of theatre, performance studies, literature, trauma studies and African American history, this course asks participants to examine how literary and theatrical interventions present the notions of black subjectivity in light of destabilizing traumatic moments. We will conclude by pondering the role that theatre, literature and other arts play in representing cultural or collective traumatic memory during an era increasingly labeled as “post-racial.”

Texts under consideration include:
Glenda Carpio, Laughing Fit to Kill: Black Humor in the Fictions of Slavery
Cornelius Eady, Brutal Imagination
Ron Eyerman, Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity
Jacqueline Goldsby, Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature
Saidiya Hartman, Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America
Robert O’Hara, Insurrection: Holding History
Toni Morrison, Beloved
Lynn Nottage, Ruined
Sapphire, Push
Gwendolyn Du Bois Shaw, Seeing the Unspeakable: the Art of Kara Walker
Anna Deavere Smith, Fires in the Mirror
August Wilson, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone
Tracy Scott Wilson, The Good Negro
Lisa Woolfork, Embodying American Slavery in Contemporary Culture

ENG 685—Love and Loss (Seminar Course)

9247 TH 4:15-7:05 p.m. SS0255 J. Berman

In this course we will focus on how writers use language to convey love and loss and the ways in which they seek consolation and hope through religion, nature, art, deeds, memory—or through the act of writing itself. We will explore different kinds of love--love of God, family or friends, romantic partner, or self; we will also explore different kinds of loss--loss of religious faith, family or friends, romantic partner, health, or self-respect. We will read several books written on love and loss, including spousal loss and end-of-life memoirs. We will also discuss grief theory, the nature of bereavement, posttraumatic growth, resiliency, death education, and transformative learning. There will be two fifteen-page essays, the first one about the theme of love and loss in literature, the second one about your own experience with love and loss. There will also be a weekly diary and a class presentation. Please note that this will be an emotionally charged course and will require empathy from everyone in the class. How can a course on love and loss not be intense?
**ENG 710—Textual Studies I: Survey**

6076 M 7:15-10:05 p.m. BA0209 T. Cohen

Other Materialities: “Textuality” and the Eco-catastrophic Imaginary

The seminar will examine, through a select series of interpretive and critical threads, how the concept of “textual practices” arises in its 20th century critical genealogies and how it translates into 21st century concerns. Specifically, we will combine a select re-reading of critical treatments with a series of case studies in interpretation (literary, imagist texts) to trace how recent preoccupations with human otherness, social justice, and empire mutate before the rhetorics of eco-catastrophe, telecratic regimes, and eco-technics.

**ENG 720—Textual Studies II - Citizens, Sovereigns & Slaves**

6429 TH 7:15-10:05 p.m. HU0019 J. Greiman

In its most general terms, this course will examine the relationship of democracy and violence through a series of questions that motivated a large body of work in both political and literary theory in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In what ways is the singular, death-dealing power that is usually associated with sovereign right both inimical and essential to democracy? How fully does the figure of the citizen – both subject and object of political power – imbibe the structures of sovereignty? Finally, given the historical coincidence of the era of democratic revolutions with the rise of biological racism, to what extent does what Michel Foucault terms ‘race war’ become internal to the democracies that took shape around the turn of the nineteenth century? The first half of the course will involve an intensive study of key twentieth-century theorists on the problems of democracy, sovereignty, citizenship, and violence, with particular attention given to the work of Hannah Arendt. In the second half of the course, we will historicize these questions through a select archive of early and antebellum U.S. writing to examine the emergence and relationship of the citizens, sovereigns, and slaves of the title. The course will also be structured so that our readings and discussions dovetail with Etienne Balibar’s planned visit to UAlbany in October and the accompanying symposium and graduate seminar he is scheduled to hold. Authors in the first half of the course will likely include: Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt, Emanuel Levinas, Michel Foucault, and Etienne Balibar. Authors in the second half of the course will likely include: Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Charles Brockden Brown, Alexis de Tocqueville, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, and Herman Melville. Additionally, we will likely read recent critical and theoretical work by: Paul Downes, Ed White, Jonathan Elmer, Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, and others. To get our conversation started, for our first class meeting, I ask that everyone read Balibar’s 2009 essay in differences, “Violence and Civility: On the Limits of Political Anthropology.” (I will email this to everyone enrolled in the class over the summer.)

**ENG 771—Practicum in Teaching Writing and Literature**

7968 M 4:15-7:05 p.m. HU0113 L. Brown

Using a workshop approach, this course will address practical issues of teaching. Students will mine their simultaneous experience teaching an undergraduate course to identify problems, review options for solving such problems while also considering the implications of pragmatic choices in continuing to develop the statement of teaching philosophy begun in ENG 770. Students will be challenged to attempt new and unfamiliar techniques in their classrooms to increase confidence and effectiveness. The course will encourage a spirit of experimentation, open minded reflectiveness, and active engagement of undergraduate students. Professional issues such as evaluation of teaching, classroom observation, and creation of documentation for personnel reviews, student evaluation, grading, commenting on student work, classroom technology exemplify topics that may be discussed in the course.
ENG 815 - Poetry Workshop Offered by Writing Fellow Rebecca Wolff. (8 sessions - 10/5, 10/12, 10/19, 10/26, 11/2, 11/9, 11/16 & 11/30)

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New York State Writers Institute Writing Fellow Rebecca Wolff will conduct an intermediate to advanced poetry workshop during the Fall 2011 semester. The workshop will give students opportunities to develop and revise poems; emphasis will be on taking each poem on its own terms, and some work will be done to determine those terms. This work will include presentation to and discussion with the group of influences and interests vis à vis poetic lineage.

The workshop is scheduled for eight evenings from 6 to 8:30 p.m. The class will take place on the University at Albany’s uptown campus. **The workshop is limited to ten writers and is open to UAlbany English graduate students as well as members of the general community.** For UAlbany graduate students the course may be taken as AENG 815 for graduate credit (0-2 credits). Admission is based on the submission of writing samples. To be considered, please email Suzanne Lance at Slance@uamail.albany.edu for guidelines for submitting manuscripts to the Writers Institute.

Rebecca Wolff is the author of three books of poems: *Manderley* (U. of Illinois Press, 2001), which was selected by Robert Pinsky for the National Poetry Series; *Figment* (W. W. Norton, 2004), which received the 2003 Barnard Women Poets Prize; and *The King* (Norton, 2009). Eavan Boland described Wolff’s poetry as having “a vivacity and edge that give it immediate presence.” *Publishers Weekly* praised *Figment* for work that “projects a vivid wit,” and “scenes and fragments [that] are urban, knowing, always alert to irony . . .”

Wolff is the founding editor of *Fence*, a biannual journal of poetry, fiction, and “other,” which is published in partnership with the Writers Institute and the University at Albany. She also founded Fence Books, which publishes poetry, fiction, and critical texts and anthologies. Wolff received her MFA from the Iowa Writers Workshop, where she was assistant editor of the *Iowa Review*. She is the author as well of a novel, *The Beginners* (Riverhead Books, 2011). She lives in Athens, New York.
### Course Concentration Distribution

#### Literature, Modernity, and the Contemporary

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<td>ENG 581</td>
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#### Writing Practices

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#### Cultural, Transcultural, and Global Studies

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<td>ENG 680</td>
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<td>Benjamin</td>
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#### Theoretical Constructs

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### Projected Spring 2012

(Note: schedule of grad offerings is subject to change. We hope, however, that it will be of some help in planning a sequence of courses that accounts for likely offerings in future semesters)

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