

**Department of English
University at Albany**



Spring Session 2019

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.*

FACULTY TEACHING SPRING 2019

RICHARD BARNEY, Associate Professor – Ph.D., University of Virginia

THOMAS D. COHEN, Professor – Ph.D., Yale University

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

MIKE HILL, Professor – Ph.D., State University of N.Y. at Stony Brook

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

MICHAEL LEONG, Assistant Professor – MFA Sarah Lawrence, Ph.D. Rutgers University

JAMES LILLEY, Associate Professor – Ph.D., Princeton University

INEKE MURAKAMI, Associate Professor – Ph.D., University of Notre Dame

CHARLES SHEPHERDSON, Professor – Ph.D., Vanderbilt University

LYNN M. TILLMAN, Professor – B.A., Hunter College

ROBERT YAGELSKI, Professor – Ph.D., Ohio State University

SPRING 2019 COURSES

5660 AENG500 Textual Practices I: Gothic, Ghosts, and Genre
Wednesday 07:15-10:05PM Lilley, James

With the Gothic as our focus, this course will offer students an introduction to a variety of methodologies and theories of literary study. Some of the questions we'll ponder: What is a ghost? What constitutes a literary genre? How do texts register the anxieties of cultural, political, and psychological trauma? How do standards of taste emerge? And how have new media technologies transformed the genre of the Gothic into popular and lucrative contemporary aesthetic modes such as the detective story, the vampire flick, and the horror movie? Some of the theories/methodologies we will engage: formalism and genre studies, psychoanalytic and post-Freudian theory, ideology critique and Marxism, theories of the modern and postmodern, and a variety of approaches to gender, campiness, and kitsch. Authors/movies/TV shows to include: Poe, *Stranger Things*, Walpole, *Black Mirror*, Melville, *Blue Velvet*, Kafka, *The Matrix*, *Pan's Labyrinth*.

9712 AENG515 Workshop in Poetry
Thursday 04:15PM-07:05PM Leong, Michael

This course will, in many ways, function as a conventional workshop in which participants share new work or work-in-progress for group critique. We will focus on local matters of craft and technique as well as broader issues regarding aesthetics and cultural ambition; the goal is not only to gain feedback that can help with the next draft but to explore new directions that can lead to the next poem—indeed, to the next project. In addition, through the study of assigned readings, we will pay particular attention to a poet's first book. We will discuss a variety of successful first books by respected writers, examining both individual poems that are exemplary as well as the larger orchestration of the volumes. Other topics of discussion may include the current state of literary publishing and the possible trajectories of a poet's career. Requirements include active participation, in-class presentations, and a final creative portfolio accompanied by a statement of poetics.

1665 AENG516 Graduate Fiction Workshop
Wednesday 04:15PM-07:05PM Tillman, Lynne M.

For the Graduate Fiction workshop, each person is expected to have had experience in writing stories. Each will be a full participant in the discussion and commentary on colleagues' fictions -- stories/prose of all kinds -- and on the writing of fiction, in all its forms. We will focus on what narrative is; varieties of narrative; what its constituent elements are – questions of time, order, tone, mood, etc. Voice will be of particular importance: Who is telling the story, is a significant question. Each student will be expected to present three (perhaps four) stories to the group over the semester (depending on time and class size). Through the workshop, it is hoped that all of the participants will gain greater understanding of their practice; better their skills, their craft, and become better writers, especially in their own eyes.

4289 AENG581 "Cliff": Climate Change Science and Science Fiction
Tuesday 04:15PM-07:05PM Hill, Mike

Award winning fiction writer Amitav Gosh has lamented famously that the novel has failed to take into account the most pressing issue facing the human species today, which is its ecological condition. Given the increasingly persistent reality of climate change, Gosh asks us to consider various mainstays of the Enlightenment that were concurrent with the development of the "realist" novel as a genre, and to think about how they obscure our access to "the real" that is ecology as such. Whether it is the collaboration between empire and capital, the marginalization of Asia, techno-phobia in the humanities, or the divide between science and aesthetics, Gosh sees modernity as having failed to keep up with the times. This class will put Gosh' thesis to the test. We will ask *both* if the Enlightenment is over, *and* whether or not it ever actually arrived.

What is the relationship between "realism" and "the real"? How is this question relevant to how we think about fiction—perhaps as a specific kind of technology, and with a specific compatibility with science—both at the novel's origin, and in the face of the new subgenre called "cliff"?

To get at these questions, we will consider historical and contemporary writing, some film, literary and philosophical books, and one or two scientific articles. From the (long) eighteenth-century, writers might include: Bacon, Defoe, Newton, and Shelly (Mary), with the addition of V. I. Lenin on "empirio-criticism," and Darwin on "species differentiation." Contemporary works, in addition to Gosh, will draw from such figures as Asimov, Badiou, Ballard, Deutsch, Latour, Le Guin, Robinson, and Watt. A more detailed reading list can be discussed by email upon request. Note: *This course is open to both MA and Ph. D. students, and can be repeated if other 581s have already been taken.*

7955 AENG581 American Modernist Poetry, 1900-1950
Tuesday 04:15PM-07:05PM Keenaghan, Eric

This reading course offers an intensive introduction to, or deepening of students' already existing foundations in, American modernist poetry, circa 1900 to 1950. As many modernist studies scholars do today, we will approach the poetry by synthesizing close reading and poetics; author studies; critical theory and conceptual analysis; and historical materialism and discursive analysis of the writers' contexts. Our emphasis will be on select individual authors whose work is exemplary for studying avant-gardes and aesthetic and cultural movements (such as transnational Dadaism and Surrealism or the New Negro Renaissance), for considering the close relationship between some of the period's poetries and social justice movements (like first-wave feminism, anarchism, proletariat and labor movements, racial justice, antifascism, and wartime pacifism), and for tackling other issues examined by modernist scholars today (such as immigration and naturalization, globalization and the expansion of American empire, technological effects on bodies and the aesthetic origins of affect and new materialist theories). Because of this approach, we will not necessarily study all the American modernist canon's "heavy-hitters." (For exam list development or further study of "canonical" and "minor" authors, a supplementary reading list—in the form of the syllabus for my undergraduate modernist poetry survey—will be provided for interested students.)

Each week we will read deeply in a major work or selections by one author, supplemented with select manifestoes or poetics statements by the poet and 2-3 essays or chapters about the period's related context. Digital archives—such as Brown University and the University of Tulsa's Modernist Journals Project and Princeton University's Blue Mountain Project—will be used to

access and examine the little magazines where much of this poetry first appeared. Through a presentation on recent scholarship from academic journals featuring modernist studies and twentieth-century poetry studies about a studied author or related issue (c.2010-today) and a separate seminar paper (20-30 pages, with 10-20 secondary sources), each student will be expected to take the shared material or other American modernist poetry in an original direction, conversant with her own theoretic or period interests. Class attendance is mandatory (2 absences, max.), and regular active participation in discussions is expected.

Poets are subject to change, but ten are likely to be selected from the following: Ezra Pound; William Carlos Williams; Gertrude Stein; Louis Zukofsky; George Oppen; Langston Hughes; Alain Locke (ed.); Marianne Moore; Hart Crane; Lola Ridge; Eugene Jolas (poet and ed.); Mina Loy; H.D.; Kenneth Patchen; Kenneth Rexroth; José Garcia Villa; Muriel Rukeyser; Charles Olson; and Robert Duncan. Required criticism and theory about modernism (for purchase or borrowed through the Library's Reserve Desk): Alain Badiou, *The Century*; Sean Latham and Gayle Rogers, *Modernism: Evolution of an Idea*; Charles Altieri, *The Art of Twentieth-Century American Poetry: Modernism and After*; Tim Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History*; and Alex Davis and Lee Jenkins (editors), *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry*. Recommended texts for students new to the period: Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy*; Peter Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry*; and Steven Gould Axelrod, et al. (editors), *The New Anthology of American Poetry, Volume 2: Modernisms, 1900-1950*.

For the first class, students will be asked to read selections from Alain Badiou's *The Century* and Peter Sloterdijk's essay "What Happened in the 20th Century?" In early January, specifics for that assignment and a finalized booklist will be emailed to registered students.

9713 AENG581 Allegory, the Other Speaking of "Fantasy"
Monday 04:15PM-07:05PM Murakami, Ineke

In a recent article for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, a department chair worries that including courses on "fantasy" literature in the curriculum may encourage students "to retreat from the real at the very moment when it's under assault." "The real" is a loaded phrase, and has been since an age in which demons and angels were believed to walk the world of men, but also of note is the modern assumption that what we call "fantasy fiction" is mere escapism. Quite the opposite assumption reigned for centuries. When a premodern reader encountered a narrative full of magical objects, talking animals, and spiritual beings disguised as human, the assumption was that it was time to roll up one's sleeves and read more closely. Allegory, as a figural device and generic mode, was central to understanding the complex operations of early modern texts and political thought, but understanding allegory will also sensitize today's reader and teacher to texts that veil debates of the utmost seriousness in "fantasy" elements. This is a course that explores allegory's power to link a text to social discourse, to assert authorial agency, and to convey its culture's most inflammatory ideas about identity or governance past defenses of subjects in denial and censorious political regimes alike. Exploring a range of ancient to post-modern statements about the way allegory works, we will weigh how such theories facilitate our understanding of allegorical texts, from epic poetry to the novel. While our work will be anchored in the historical period of early modernity sometimes called "the Renaissance," we will move to more modern materials later in the semester to ponder how and to what extent the reader is always, as Maureen Quilligan insists, "a definite component of the form."

8620 AENG582 Emily Dickinson
Wednesday 04:15PM-07:05PM Elam, Helen Regueiro

Both as a major figure in the American literary tradition, and as a poet thoroughly anthologized, Emily Dickinson is altogether too familiar, and that familiarity occludes the strangeness that is the source of her power. She appears to come out of nowhere, without precursors, though lines have been drawn to Shakespeare, Keats, the Bible. Her rhythm, as Higginson, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* puts it, is ‘spasmodic.’ Her style, compressed to the point of fragmentation, is marked by the dash, a punctuation that functions not as shortcut but as trope for the unsayable, the silence that underwrites her poems. Accessible at different registers of complexity, thematizable to the point of being ‘shaven and fitted to a frame,’ she guides the particular into a zone of abstraction where concepts break under the pressure of her barely articulated interrogations. Like Whitman, that ‘awful man’ she claims not to have read, she is ‘untranslatable, but his ‘barbaric yawp’ is articulated in her poetry, and in her letters, sotto voce. Infinitely familiar, she remains untranslatable even, and especially, in her own language, as she focuses on word and concept at the limits of understanding, at the point at which they vanish. Hers is the drama of poetic language--of literary language--in extremis, confronted with its own muteness and evanescence and speaking out of its own impossibility.

While the course will focus on Dickinson, it will also bring in other figures, including two other writers—Anne Carson and Lydia Davis—whose styles exert similar pressures on the relation between trope and abstraction and the in-between spaces of the fragment.

Two short papers, term paper, class presentations, and for students in ‘possession’ of a foreign language the possibility, for term paper, of translating this most untranslatable poet.

8622 AENG642 Regarding Pity: Emotion and Ethics
Monday 04:15-07:05 Shepherdson, Charles

This course will trace some of the major debates in literary history and philosophical aesthetics about the relation between emotion and ethical judgment, focusing on the topic of pity. Pity is an emotion, a bodily feeling that at the same time carries a cognitive judgment about the suffering of the other, and therefore entails an ethical relationship. This course will explore the history of commentaries on this issue, focusing in particular on the way in which literary works engage this question, and running from ancient Greek tragedy, through Enlightenment debates, and on through contemporary work on trauma, with some consideration of photography, public art, and recent work on emotion in ethology and evolutionary biology. Readings will run from Aristotle’s Poetics, through Adam Smith’s Theory of Moral Sentiment and Rousseau’s Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, to more contemporary material, possibly including Freud, Nancy, Rancière and others. A central question will be whether aesthetic works distribute or configure emotion in a way – or according to a discursive and institutional formation – that is distinct from other adjacent domains of knowledge that deal with emotion, such as philosophical ethics, legal discourse, psychoanalysis, and biological conceptions.

9714 AENG681 Hitchcock and the (Post) Anthropocene
Thursday 07:15PM-10:05PM Cohen, Thomas

Contemporary auteurs seem to relentlessly cite and try to reconfigure scenes and logics from Hitchcock, as if he were a sort of “motherboard”--a sort of Hegel or Shakespeare of cinema itself. But this may be done less for his famous mastery of the craft than because of a limit thinking of cinema’s agency in prefiguring the aporia of the 21st century’s post-cinematic culture of totalized screens. The era of fossil fuels is, after all, the era of cinema (and photography). Our seminar will use five core Hitchcock works to place in dialog with what is called the “Anthropocene” impasses of today and consult a select number of critical theorists and clips from contemporary films that advance this dialog. Bernard Stiegler’s concept of *arche*-cinema will be of particular import, supplemented by Derrida on *spectrality*, Zizek on Hitchcock’s “thing,” Benjamin on “inscription” and photography, and current discourses on extinction logics (or species retirement--which Hollywood is increasingly marketing now that the “post-apocalyptic” genres seem depleted). The seminar primarily aims to develop the student’s the critical and cinematic reading skills, particularly in relation to today’s image culture, but it will not be a “film studies” course. Students will be invited to make short, rotating presentations on specific assignments and concepts, and will construct their own final essay project from this broader scope, in which cinematics appears the genealogical forebear of the specter of A.I., neuro-telemarketing, perceptual regimes, the capture of screen culture and digital totalization, and extinction accelerations--in short, the spells of “Anthropocene” imaginaries. All of which, today, may seem *vertiginous*.

7634 AENG720 Textual Studies II: Biopolitics, Early and Late
Monday 07:15PM-10:05PM Barney, Richard

(Please note: AENG720 can be repeated for credit and is available to MA as well as PhD students)

This course will study the field of biopolitics by focusing particularly on how the work by Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, Roberto Esposito, Hannah Arendt, Jacques Derrida, and others has been crucially based on particular interpretations of Enlightenment political and philosophical authors such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and Adam Smith. Since many recent analysts like Foucault consider the birth of biopolitics during the 17th and 18th centuries to have been a central part of the emergence of Western modernity, we will read several early works they rely on with a careful eye toward how those works support or complicate specific constructions of concepts such as the Enlightenment, the modern, subjectivity, and political sovereignty. Along the way, we will consider how during the 18th century, new scientific discoveries about human physiology, as well as innovative formulations of human perception or socialization, produced new understandings of “life” and its potential for political control, revolution, or reform.

Because the convergence of “life” and politics was by no means ready-made during this period, we will explore how medical, literary, and political texts played a role in representing or actively forging the bio-political liaison from the 18th to the 19th century in Britain. Examples of that process will include the poetry of Anne Finch, George Cheyne’s popular medical publications, Daniel Defoe’s *Journal of the Plague Year*, Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, and Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man*. In tracking a broad historical arc from those “early” examples to “late” ones, we will also consider 20th- and 21st-century literary and cinematic transformations of biopolitical themes, such as

in Colson Whitehead's hit zombie novel, *Zone One*, Steven Soderbergh's *Contagion*, and Edgar Wright's *Shaun of the Dead*.

This course is aimed to accommodate both Ph.D. students and M.A. students with strong analytic and writing skills.

1678 AENG770 Teaching Writing and Literature
Thursday 04:15PM-07:05PM Yagelski, Robert

This course addresses the broad question of the purposes of the teaching of English, broadly construed, at the postsecondary level with the goal of developing a workable answer to the more specific question, "What should I teach in my undergraduate English course?" We will consider the history of the academic discipline of English Studies as well as its relationship to English instruction at the secondary level as a way to understand the current state of the discipline in the context of broader social, political, and cultural developments that have shaped higher education today. We will also examine the relationship between the broader goals of an English course and specific student learning outcomes with respect to the sophisticated kinds of writing and reading expected at the postsecondary level. Assignments will likely include short papers on assigned readings, a collaborative project, and a complete syllabus and rationale for an undergraduate English course.

Course Concentration Distribution Spring 2019

Literature, Modernity, and the Contemporary

AENG581: Allegory, the Other Speaking of "Fantasy"

AENG581: American Modernist Poetry, 1900-1950

AENG582: Emily Dickinson

AENG681: Hitchcock and the (Post) Anthropocene

Writing Practices

AENG515: Poetry Workshop

AENG516: Graduate Fiction Workshop

AENG770: Teaching Writing and Literature

Cultural, Transcultural, and Global Studies

AENG581: "Clifi": Climate Change Science and Science Fiction

Theoretical Constructs

AENG500: Textual Practices I: Gothic, Ghosts, and Genre

AENG642: Regarding Pity: Emotion and Ethics

AENG720: Textual Studies II: Biopolitics, Early and Late