Course Information: Fall 2010

English 100-199, Literature

ENG 0109-01
Ovid and the Ovidian Tradition
Fyler, J
Ovid is the most powerfully influential Roman poet in European literature from the twelfth century on. His erotic poems—the Amores, Ars Amatoria, and Remedia Amoris—fully explore the pathos and comedy of love, and make Ovid the Freud of the Middle Ages: he provides the most elaborate and memorable terminology for describing the uncertain stability of the lover's mind. The Metamorphoses, an epic or anti-epic, serves as a bible of pagan mythology for later poets. We will look in detail at these works and at some of the most memorable examples of their later influence. We'll read two French works in translation, the Roman de la Rose and Les Liaisons Dangereuses, as well as a number of shorter works in English. Authors to be studied may include Chaucer, Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Spenser.

ENG 0127-01
19th Century British Novel
Litvak, J
We will read novels by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy, placing them in the context of recent criticism and theory. Discussions will be based on careful analysis of the novels, but we will also be considering such general literary and cultural issues as realism, the gothic, and the grotesque; comedy, sentimentality, and sensationalism; gender and the novel; subjectivity and middle-class ideology; “Englishness” and its racial others; sexuality and the marriage plot; childhood, illness and death; fiction, literacy, and the marketplace.

ENG 0134-01
James Joyce's Ulysses
Ullman, M
We shall spend the semester going through Joyce's masterwork Ulysses, elucidating many of the difficulties and trying to understand its structure as well as its details. I will lecture on his place in the history of the novel, his philosophical background, and say some things about Irish history, when it is necessary background. But most of our time will be spent on the actual novel. Two papers, one a shorter one at midterm and the second a longer one at the end of class, will be required, as will class attendance and participation.

No prerequisites, but it would be helpful if students had read Dubliners, Portrait, and perhaps The Odyssey before the semester begins.

ENG 0159-01
Contemporary Jewish Fiction
Freedman-Bellow, J
A look at novels and stories by authors whose work has reflected, challenged, shaped and altered contemporary Jewish consciousness. We'll read fiction by Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, Nathan Englander, Cynthia Ozick, Anne Michaels, Art Spiegelman, and others.

ENG 0191-01
Black Feminist Theories
Sharpe, C
Black Feminist Theories will trace black feminisms and proto feminisms from the mid nineteenth-century to the present—with the focus largely on the last 40 years. We will attend to the links between race, place, history, blackness, sexuality, and gender. Focusing on black women’s political struggles in the Americas (largely the US, but also perhaps the Caribbean and Canada), we will consider: The significance of (transatlantic) slavery to contemporary black experiences. The ways that black women have been subject to and resisted racism, sexism, homophobia, and economic oppression. The transnational and “intersectional” dimensions of black feminism. And the ways that black expressive cultures—visual art, literature, poetry, film, etc.—challenge dominant constructions of black femininity and black masculinity. Readings, viewings, and listenings may include: Anna Julia Cooper, Harriet Jacobs, Barbara Smith, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, Nina Simone, P. Gabrielle Foreman, Abdy Lincoln, Michelle Cliff, Chisholm ’72: Unbought & Unbossed, and Dionne Brand among other writers, artists, and theorists. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.
How does literature contribute to progressive social change? This course examines the important tradition of Boston and New England activist texts before the Civil War and asks: What role has writing played in the U.S. in the struggle for social justice? Reading, which brings together Native American, African American, white European American, Latino, and Asian American texts, includes: William Apess' An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man, David Walker's Appeal, Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, Harriet Wilson's Our Nig, Henry David Thoreau's Walden, Ralph Waldo Emerson's “Self-Reliance,” poems by Frances Ellen Harper, protest letters by Chinese American merchants, and María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's Who Would Have Thought It? In addition to literature, we will view and discuss several films and take two or three field trips. We will go to the only known standing slave quarter in New England and Walden Pond plus, if possible, a Lowell mill (factory). Class will be run on a discussion basis and writing will encourage students to focus on issues of concern to them. This course is open to nonmajors as well as majors and fulfills the pre 1860 requirement for the English major.