Course Information: Fall 2011

English 17-99, Literature

ENG 0017-01
The Poem
Peterson, K
This course is intended for students who have already taken a writing course at the beginning level. The goal will be for students with some writing experience to generate poems and to create sustaining writing practices, and to, therefore, increase an awareness of the opportunities and occasions for poetry in everyday life. To this end, the critical aspect of this workshop course will focus on modern and contemporary writers whose work is rich in sensibility and attuned to lively and diverse routines of thinking and feeling. Written work will consist of a portfolio of poems and a journal. These assignments will be supplemented with class presentations and the memorization of a few poems over the course of the semester. Our primary activity will be the workshop, in which participants will read and revise each other's work with increasing attention to detail and enlightened candor.

ENG 0021-01
General View of English Literature I
Genster, J
A survey of English literature from Beowulf to Gulliver's Travels. Readings will include selections of poetry from Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Sidney, Herbert, Donne, Marvell, Dryden, Pope and Swift; drama from Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Congreve; and prose from More, Behn, and Swift. The course provides a broad overview of earlier English literature, and introduces the basic techniques of literary analysis. Writing for the course includes three essays and a final exam.

ENG 0023-01
American Literature: First Contact to 1855
Ammons, E
This survey will foreground the fact that American literature has always been multicultural, artistically diverse, and obsessed with debates about human rights, religion, gender and racial equality, class, personal freedom, and how to live in relationship with the earth. Bringing together Native American, white European American, African American, Latino/a, and Asian American voices, this course will mix canonical and less well-known texts. Authors will include writers such as Anne Bradstreet, Jonathan Edwards, Phyllis Wheatley, Benjamin Franklin, Handsome Lake, David Walker, Lydia Maria Child, Frederick Douglass, Nathaniel Hawthorne, William Apess, and Chinese merchants in California. We will think about the construction of literary history and the politics of representation. Who gets to speak? Write? Read? Who does not? Why does this matter in 2011? The class will include two field trips, one to the only known slave quarter still standing in New England, the other to the woods. There will be two papers and a final exam.

ENG 0029-01
Literary Studies
Genster, J
This course is open only to freshmen with an English AP score of 5. An introduction to literary studies, focusing on methods of textual analysis. We will practice reading and writing about lyric poetry, drama, the novel, and short fiction, concentrating on the skills and techniques important in analyzing each of these forms. The course requires students to read only a small number of texts, but to read them very closely and to write intensively about them both formally and informally. We will examine concepts of form and theories of literature in their historical contexts.

ENG 0036-01
Asian American Writers
Takayoshi, I
Introductory course on twentieth-century Asian American literature and culture. Major themes and topics for discussion include immigration, diversity, the relation between ethnicity and literature, minority experience, alienation from the English language, intergenerational conflict. Examples are drawn from representative prose narratives, poetry, and plays.

ENG 0051-01
Shakespeare II
Haber, J
In this course, we will undertake a careful study of nine of Shakespeare's plays: Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Taming of the Shrew, Twelfth Night, Othello, Antony and Cleopatra, King Lear, Coriolanus, and The Winter's Tale. Although we will engage these plays in a variety of historical and theoretical contexts, our primary focus will be on close reading of the texts. Please note: Shakespeare II (this course) and Shakespeare I (English 50) are not a sequence; they are courses that present two different selections of plays, chosen from the entirety of Shakespeare's career. You are free to take both courses; you may not repeat either one of them. This course fulfills the pre-1860 requirement.

ENG 0063-01
American Fiction 1900-1950
Johnson, R
This course explores the emergence and character of American modernism, the self-conscious intellectual and aesthetic movement dating roughly from 1910 to 1945. We will study modernism in its experimental literary expressions; as a social period encompassing the First World War, women's suffrage, Prohibition and the Depression; as a period of diverse cultural expressions that include the Jazz Age, the Harlem Renaissance, European expatriation and urban bohemianism. We will focus on modernist writers' struggles to efface or subordinate plot or structure in narrative (an effort only more or less successful and oscillating in its visibility in texts under study); the condition of the modern subject, alienation; and representations of gender, racial designations, and sexuality, with emphasis on class across these categories and the difficulties attending ideas or efforts to achieve class mobility or economic self-sufficiency in this period. Texts will include: F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby; Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, Jean Toomer, Cane; W. E. B. DuBois, from The Souls of Black Folk; Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God; Nathaniel West, The Day of the Locust; selections from the writings of Gertrude Stein; William Faulkner, The Bear; Carson McCullers, The Member of the Wedding; James Baldwin, Giovanni's Room, and others. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.

ENG 0080-01
Hitchcock: Cinema, Gender, Ideology
Edelman, L
Alfred Hitchcock: the name is synonymous not only with cinematic suspense, but also with the appeal of film as, at once, a medium of popular entertainment and the distinctive art form of the twentieth century. Hitchcock's undiminished appeal reflects our continuing fascination with the visual satisfactions that cinema affords while speaking to our ongoing cultural investment in the narrative forms (thriller, suspense film, romantic melodrama) in which Hitchcock primarily worked. This course will explore the relation between Hitchcock's achievement of cinematic "mastery" and his constant, even obsessive, attention to questions of gender, sexuality, and socio-cultural authority—questions that always underlie his narrative suspense. We will examine how "seeing" in Hitchcock's films is the join between politics and erotics, inflecting cinematic spectatorship in the direction of such erotic (and political) "perversions" as voyeurism, fetishism, sadism, and masochism—"perversions" that find expression in the style of Hitchcock's films themselves. With this in mind we will consider the pleasures that Hitchcock's style affords: Whose pleasure is it? To what does it respond? How does its insistent perversity affect our reading of Hitchcock's appeal? We'll try to answer these questions by reading various essays on Hitchcock's cinema, including recent interventions from the perspectives of psychoanalysis, feminism, and queer theory. Our energies will be devoted primarily, however, to studying some of the most complex, compelling, and influential texts in cinematic history. These will include The 39 Steps, Rebecca, Shadow of a Doubt, Notorious, Rope, Strangers on a Train, Rear Window, The Man Who Knew Too Much, Vertigo, North by Northwest, Psycho, and The Birds. Students will be encouraged to attend showings of the films on the library's large screen in Tisch 304, but they will be permitted to watch the movies on their own (before the day of class discussion, of course) if they cannot make the weekly screenings.

ENG 0085-01
Horror Stories
Litvak, J
What makes horror fiction and horror films horrifying? In this course, we will consider certain recurrent anxieties and fantasies about gender, sexuality, race, and the body, thinking about how these anxieties and fantasies produce a repertoire of "horror effects." We will read literary works such as Bram Stoker's Dracula, Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, E.T.A. Hoffman's "The Sandman," Henry James's The Turn of the Screw, Hubert Selby Jr.'s Requiem for a Dream, and Stephen King's Carrie. Films to be studied may include Psycho, The Shining, Halloween, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Friday the 13th, Saw, and such examples of "foreign horror" as Nosferatu, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, The Devil's Backbone, Blood and Black Lace, and Benny's Video. Students should expect to read extensively in critical and theoretical texts.

ENG 0091-01
Literature of the Sixties
Johnson, R
The American Sixties and Its Legacies: This multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary course studies the American Sixties through film, literature, music, and nonfiction writing, including memoir, manifesto, letters and journalism. Although called the Sixties, this time of civil dissent, social unrest, domestic violence, international war and change properly encompasses a wider era, from 1954 and Brown v. Board of Education, to 1975 and the end of the Vietnam War, and this broader interval will form the period of our study.

Struggles for social, political, personal, and sexual freedom – all struggles for justice – waged in the Sixties by the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement, the women's movement, and the gay liberation movement provide historical parameters and context for our study. In literature written during and about the era of these movements, we examine how concerns for social and political justice, for individual liberation and spiritual emancipation, are given voice and aesthetic shape, and consider what is distinctive and enduring and why. We will examine images and self-expressions of Americans of diverse ethnicities and races in this era. Subjects include the mid-century civil rights movement and its influence over all subsequent movements for change; the war in Vietnam and its impact beyond the fighting ground; literary implications of New Journalism; the aesthetic expression of consciousness expansion; the direct and indirect influence on culture and arts, and literature, of politics of social change, political unrest, and state violence. We will come to some understandings of legacies of the Sixties, both at the end of the twentieth century and in our own time by reading and evaluating texts of this era that have been left to us in our historical, artistic, musical, literary, and cinematic record.

ENG 0091-02
Slavery's Optic Glass: The First Century of African American Literature
Clytus, R
This course considers the epistemological impact of slavery on nineteenth-century American literature. Surveying a broad range of texts, beginning with the poetry of Phillis Wheatley and concluding with D.W. Griffith's Birth of a Nation, we will examine how the "peculiar institution" not only helped to initiate and revitalize various American literary genres, but also how its aesthetic and cultural influence extended well beyond the Civil War. Of particular interest will be those stakes involved in continuing to define an African American (literary) consciousness through "black" racial identity.

ENG 0091-03
News, Novelty and the Novel
Genster, J
Eighteenth-century writing is energetic, wide-ranging, and deeply quirky as writers wrestle with personal and social crises, with questions of identity and representation. We will look at a number of prose narratives, some fictional, some not, some averse to such distinctions. Our readings will include memoirs, diaries, novels, satires, travel writings, and we will also study some visual narratives, including those of Hogarth. The writers to be studied may include Defoe, Swift, Boswell, Burney, Fielding, Richardson, Behn, and Austen.

ENG 0091-04
Topics Lit & Culture: Virginia Woolf: A Common Modernism
Lurz, J
This course looks at the way Virginia Woolf, whose name has come to function as shorthand for complex and nearly inaccessible literary stylistics, also spent much of her time as a printer for the Hogarth Press through which she tried to offer a reading public access to her own work and that of other experimental writers. We will thus be placing her best-known narrative works like Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse and The Waves into the larger context of her cultural output, which included short stories, essays, volumes of letters and diary entries as well as a whole catalog of published books written by her contemporaries. By considering Woolf's "two faces," that of writer and that of publisher, we will be thinking about the many ways that she used the book as a cultural object to bring a new kind of novel – and a new kind of reading – to a larger public. In doing so, we will be asking what it means that such a "difficult" novelist of interiority was simultaneously a public intellectual figure. If one of Woolf's collections of reviews and essays was titled The Common Reader, suggesting that everyone could read works of high literature, we will want to investigate how her stream-of-consciousness narrative style might itself be in the service of mapping out a common ground for her readership. At the same time, we will be tracing what the narrative strategies of her novels might have in common with the style of her essays. Along the way, we will also want to be sensitive to the way her more private writings have influenced and sometimes overshadowed readings of her work as we discuss issues of gender and sexuality, female authorship and the relationship between art and politics.

Texts may include Complete Shorter Fiction, Jacob's Room, Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, Orlando, The Waves, The Years, Between the Acts, The Common Reader, Volume I, Moments of Being, A Room of One's Own, Three
The early colonial encounter profoundly shaped sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature from Shakespeare's plays to John Donne's poems. It generated metaphors for the female body, altered the traditional romance plot, and even allowed writers to challenge traditional political and social authority. Many of these early modern fictions endured into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, ironically becoming materials with which the colonial and postcolonial subject could understand and represent his or her experience. This course will serve as an introduction to the major issues and questions of colonial and postcolonial studies by exploring the connections between the voices of imperial powers at the moment of expansion and those of imperial subjects as they contemplate both their past and their future. We will read contemporary works that re-imagine first encounters, revise early narratives, and revisit central themes of the colonial encounter, including especially the nexus of language, identity, and performance. Readings by postcolonial theorists such as Said, Gikandi, Spivak, and Bhabha will offer us critical vocabulary and models for approaching these texts. Early modern authors may include Shakespeare, Spenser, Montaigne and Las Casas. Contemporary authors may include Salih, Cesaire, Achebe, Hagedorn, and the poets James Thomas Stevens and Noursbe Phillips. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.