**Course Information: Fall 2011**

**English 200+, Graduate Seminars**

**ENG 0291-01**
Graduate Seminar: The Canterbury Tales  
Fyler, J  
This seminar will undertake a close reading of the *Canterbury Tales*, with a focus on Chaucer's use of his sources, his cultural and literary contexts, and his pervasive interest in gender issues.

**ENG 0291-02**
Graduate Seminar: American Literature During the Great Depression  
Takayoshi, I  
An interdisciplinary seminar on American culture during the depression years (1929-41). Our main focus will be on narratives, fictional or journalistic (Agee, Wright, Faulkner, Chandler, Hammett, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Mike Gold, Hurston, Henry Miller, and others). But we will also foray into other fields of expression, persuasion, and coercion, both inside and outside culture: popular mediums (motion picture, theatre, radio, magazines), social thought, political and economic theory, and key institutions (industries, organized labor, church, courts, government). Material conditions (economic, ecological, geopolitical, demographic) under which the depression culture arose will be discussed wherever appropriate. Our goal is to gain a clear sense of various ways in which the depression and the approach of war transfigured American culture.

Some of the guiding questions for this seminar include but are by no means limited to:  
--Proletarian literature. Who wrote it? Who read? What was it?  
--Radical isolation. What was the role, the value, the purpose of avant-garde, high art, aestheticism in a culture driven by larger "considerations"? (Djuna Barnes, Henry Miller, and other expats in Europe)  
--Nationalism. How important, for writers as well as for the public at large, were nationalist symbols, such as "the people," "tradition," "freedom," and the "community"?  
--What did key writers and artists say about the relation among literature, documentary, and realism?  
--The depression years saw the consolidation of what many intellectuals began to call (disparagingly) "mass culture" or "kitsch" (Clement Greenberg; Robert Warshow). How did writers, artists, and intellectuals respond to this trend? (we will need to understand how Hollywood worked)  
--What was going on in the South? (Faulkner, Hurston, *Gone with the Wind*, southern agrarians and emerging New Critics)  
--Shifting social attitudes toward race and ethnicity (Indians, Blacks, white sub-ethnics including Jews, Asians)  

This seminar also serves as an introduction to the craft of cultural analysis and history writing. Students are required to write three four-page papers over the course of the semester (in addition to a twelve-page final paper). The three mini assignments are designed to help students hone basic skills to construct lucid arguments about three things: 1) personalities; 2) schools of thought and style; 3) macro forces. The final paper will provide the opportunity to interweave together these different modes of writing and literary analysis.

**ENG 0291-03**
The Summer of 1816  
Hofkosh, S  
1816 is often called the year without a summer because a massive ash cloud from the eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia the year before gathered over the Northern hemisphere, causing record cold and other unusual weather conditions that led to widespread crop failure, famine, and epidemic disease. "It proved a wet, ungenial summer" in Switzerland for a small group of English writers "confined" indoors at the Villa Diodati, where they read German ghost stories, discussed philosophy, and proposed to write their own stories of "thrilling horror" to pass the time. Thus the young Mary Godwin began writing *Frankenstein*, while Percy Shelley turned his attention to "Mont Blanc" and Lord Byron continued work on a new canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Focusing on these texts and others produced or published during the summer of 1816, this course will also take a broader account of British literature after Waterloo. The small group of writers dispersed at the end of that summer, as did the ash cloud, but the after effects of both gatherings persisted into the years that followed.

We will consider a range of material in addition to the writing of Byron and the Shelleys, among which will likely be Coleridge's 1816 volume *Christabel, Kubla Khan, and the Pains of Sleep*; Austen's *Emma*; Keats' earliest sonnets (and some later ones); Hemans' fame-making "The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy"; Hazlitt's newspaper essays on various topics; and Maturin's gothic drama *Bertram*. Reading closely in a specific period of literary history,
we will also address more general questions about close and other forms of reading (contextual, formalist, historical, theoretical) in contemporary critical discussion of romanticism.

ENG 0291-04
Graduate Seminar: Printing Modernism
Lurz, J
W. B. Yeats observed that "English literature, alone of great literatures because the newest of them all, has all but completely shaped itself in the printing press." This course seeks to unpack this statement by exploring – and expanding – what critics have recently called the "material turn" in modernist studies. To do so, we will be looking at the relationship between publishing practices and modernist literary production and exploring the ways this kind of "material awareness" helps us contribute to current reconceptualizations of the period.

One effect of this perspective will be a broadening of the temporal boundaries by which we usually understand modernism, since no account of printing in the twentieth-century can ignore its pre-history in the explosion of print material that characterizes the Victorian era. (We might also want to ask if this "broadening" is not more like a "shifting" of the period's boundaries and wonder why a focus on printing has such an effect. Why are there fewer examples of printing's effect on texts post-1922?) The course thus begins not with the "renaissance" in printing at the turn of the century but in 1876 with George Eliot's Daniel Deronda and its concerns with issues of historical and cultural transmission. By looking at the way the narrative and themes of the novel dovetail with Eliot's own practices of serial publication, we will be opening up questions about the interrelationship between and among narrative content and historical context, literary form and format that we will be pursuing throughout the rest of the course. In this discussion, we will be attentive to the tension between "materialist history" and "material experience," the way investigating the influence of presses, journals and publicity might also open up a consideration of the kind of concrete "thing" (a category we will want to discuss more specifically) that embodies the texts we are reading. What are the multiple ways that our understanding of a specific text changes when we take its material format into account – when, for example, we read an episode of Ulysses in The Little Review rather than as part of the complete volume? And how might this relate (if at all) to recent discussions of modernist cosmopolitanism and so-called "bad modernisms"?

This course thus positions itself as both a historical examination of modernism's material basis and an expansion of that examination to the reading experience of modernist printing. In addition to a consideration of major critical contributions to the history of modernism and print, we will be looking at literary texts and primary historical documents culled from a variety of sources, including the online Modernist Journals Project and various microfilm troves.

Indeed, by examining original editions – or reproductions thereof – we will be thinking about the many ways in which the categories of "literary text" and "historical document" ultimately break down and expose the myriad intersections of modernist literature and its historical coordinates.

We will read works by G. Eliot, Morris, Wilde, Yeats, Stein, Pound, Lewis, Woolf, T. S. Eliot, Joyce and Lawrence and criticism by George Bornstein, Douglas Mao, Jerome McGann, Bill Brown, Mark Morrison, Lawrence Rainey, Martin Puchner and Friedrich Kittler.

ENG 0291-05
Graduate Seminar: Pro-Seminar
Haber, J
This course is required of all second-year students who entered without an M.A.; other English graduate students may audit individual classes, but they may not register for the course. Students will meet with a different member of the faculty every other week for an hour to discuss important topics in the areas of professionalization, pedagogy, and intellectual currents in our discipline.