Course Information: Spring 2011

English 17-99, Literature

ENG 0020-01
Black World Literature
Sharpe, C

This course is an introduction to African and African Diasporic literatures (from principally, though not exclusively, Angophone African countries, the English-speaking Caribbean, and Britain). We will explore a variety of forms—fiction, memoir, film—and trace their transformation and transmission. The selection of films and texts is not meant to be exhaustive but aims to allow us to begin examining the possible political and cultural meanings of the “black” world. Texts may include: Things Fall Apart, Nervous Conditions, In the Castle of My Skin, The Lonely Londoners, Our Sister Killjoy, No Telephone to Heaven, Sugar Cane Alley, Life and Debt, and others.

ENG 0022-01
General View of English Literature II
Genster, J

A survey of British literature—poetry, fiction and non-fiction prose and drama—from the late 18th century to the middle of the 20th century. The course combines close reading of individual works with attention to the historical contexts that those works register, respond to, and sometimes shape.

ENG 0037-01
20th Century African American Literature
Clytus, R

This course is designed to familiarize students with those major authors, aesthetic debates, and key social and historical concerns that have defined African American literature since the mid-twentieth century. Topics will consider Cold War race relations, the Black Arts Movement, critical race theory and the idea of post-blackness. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.

ENG 0051-01
Shakespeare II
Genster, J

The course examines nine of Shakespeare's plays: Romeo and Juliet, The Taming of the Shrew, Twelfth Night, Othello, Antony and Cleopatra, Troilus and Cressida, King Lear, Coriolanus, and The Winter's Tale. Our work will include some attention to the cultural and historical contexts in which Shakespeare’s plays are situated, but our focus will be on careful readings of the texts.

ENG 0064-01
American Fiction 1950-present
Johnson, R

American Fiction from 1950 to the Present: This study of diverse novels written after 1950 will focus on the emergence of the postmodern in U.S. arts and culture, with emphasis on formal developments, aesthetic consequences, and social implications. We will read a wide range of texts from a variety of American perspectives to explore the decline of canonical exclusivity and the rise of multicultural pluralism in American fiction. Our study will note the hybridization of forms and the appropriation of non-literary discourses to fashion fictive texts. It will consider as well the decentering of the traditional subject and the configuration of numerous and diverse subjectivities newly empowered in literary discourse and through social change in this period—the period which has directly engendered our present moment. Reading the texts juxtaposed with and across each other, and in their moment of composition and publication, we will piece together an understanding of what it means to be “American” in the postmodern era. The course will ask you to think about whether, as it is already being said, we are in the post-postmodern moment, and, if so, what that could mean in terms of trends and preferences in forms and styles of contemporary American literature; and in values of and ways of life in the American twenty-first century.
Our readings will include authors such as Jack Kerouac, John Okada, Grace Metalious, Joan Didion, Hunter S. Thompson, Chuang Hua, Norman Mailer, Cynthia Ozick, Louise Erdrich, Andrew Holleran, Ishmael Reed, Edwidge Danticat, Jonathan Franzen, Tom Wolfe, Tim O'Brien. Please have read *I Am Charlotte Simmons* by Tom Wolfe before the start of the semester. It will be our last book in the course, and is quite long and I want to be sure everyone has adequate time to prepare it for class.

**ENG 0083-01**  
*Un-American Activities*  
Litvak, J

Critics of mainstream American movies, television, and journalism often accuse them of conducting a liberal or even subversive conspiracy against the rest of the country. Yet the left—a remarkably elastic category, in which “liberalism” isn’t always distinguishable from, say “communism”—hasn’t exactly triumphed in American mass entertainment. In fact, the story of popular culture in this country is in some sense the story of how left-liberal politics keep getting stigmatized, and thus discredited, as “un-American”—which is why leftist content often has to disguise itself, and why its enemies must work to unmask it. This course will focus on the most notorious episode in the history of the left in U.S. popular culture: the period of the blacklist and the red scare, from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, when, as a result of investigations of the entertainment industry by the House Un-American Activities Committee, left-liberal ideas and people were subjected to an explicit and systematic campaign of destruction. But while we will take into account the ravages of this campaign, we will also want to look at the ways in which the “un-American” left resisted it, to survive and transform itself in the seventies, eighties, and nineties, as the Civil Rights movement, the antiwar movement, feminism, the sexual revolution, and gay and lesbian liberation came to reshape popular culture, and the culture as a whole. We will be examining films, plays, novels, television shows, memoirs, as well as some historical and critical texts. Objects of study may include films such as Polonsky’s *Body and Soul*, Kramer’s *Home of the Brave*, Dmytryk’s *Crossfire*, Kazan’s *On the Waterfront*, Zinneman’s *High Noon*, Frankenheimer’s *The Manchurian Candidate*, Ritt’s *The Front*, and Redford’s *Quiz Show*; plays such as Hellman’s *Watch on the Rhine* and *The Children’s Hour*, Miller’s *The Crucible*, and Kushner’s *Angels in America*; novels such as Doctorow’s *The Book of Daniel* and Roth’s *I Married a Communist*; memoirs such as Hellman’s *Scoundrel Time* and Kazan’s *Elia Kazan: A Life*. We will also look at the careers of such exemplary artists and performers as Paul Robeson, Lee Grant, John Garfield, Edward G. Robinson, and Ronald Reagan. Students will be expected to see films outside of regular class sessions.