Course Information: Fall 2013

English 200+, Graduate Seminars

ENG 0290-01
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.

ENG 0291-01
Graduate Seminar: American Moderns
Takayoshi, I

The first three decades of the twentieth century saw the modernization of American literary culture. This process responded to ongoing transformations in society including urbanization, changes in sexual mores, gender relation, and race relation, America's deepening integration into the world system, and the mechanization and industrialization of American life in general. It was, however, also necessitated by more diffused changes in the ideological order, changes in the sense of time, space, and the self. Combined, all these changes made it imperative for American moderns to craft new techniques to render the lived experience of the American people as a modernizing nation. This seminar seeks to capture this development at its center, that is, at its linguistic level. How, across all major genres, was a new language invented and propagated—a complex of new tones, voices, textures, perspectives, and other compositional devices equal to the task of keeping literature relevant, meaningful, and useful in modern times?

The seminar focuses on a generation of writers who were most directly responsible for bringing the literary language up to date, a variety of key players in American literary culture who were born, roughly, in the 1890s. The seminar begins with a brief examination of the preceding generation who promoted and inspired the generation of the 1890s and against whom this younger generation often rebelled. These direct forebears include Sherwood Anderson, Gertrude Stein, Ring Lardner, Theodore Dreiser, Carl Sandburg, and Henry L. Mencken. The class then moves on to appraise the generation of the 1890s, a large and variegated group of poets, novelists, playwrights, critics, journalists, editors, and publishers who set the tastes and drove the trends of American literary culture from the late 1910s through the early 1940s. The authors whose works and careers to be explored include but are not limited to: Maxwell Anderson, Djuja Barnes, Stephen Vincent Benet, Van Wyck Brooks, Kenneth Burke, Raymond Chandler, Malcolm Cowley, Hart Crane, T. S. Eliot, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Waldo Frank, Michael Gold, Dashiell Hammett, Ben Hecht, Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Matthew Josephson, Sinclair Lewis, Archibald MacLeish, Claude Mckay, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Eugene O'Neill, Dorothy Parker, Elmer Rice, Robert Sherwood, Agnes Smedley, Wallace Stevens, Allen Tate, Jean Toomer, William Carlos Williams, Thomas Wolfe, and Carl Van Vechten. These writers' texts will be woven back, wherever appropriate, into the larger context of the contemporary publishing industry. Special attention will be paid to a gaggle of modernist "little magazines" that proliferated from the mid-teens to the late twenties, the new magazines catering to "sophisticated" urban readerships such as *New Yorker, Vanity Fair,* and *Smart Set,* the magazines for the rising generation of militant black intelligentsia such as *Opportunity, Crisis,* and *Messenger,* and a group of young and adventuresome publishers like Alfred and Blanche Knopf, Horace Liveright, Bennett Cerf, B.W. Heubsch, and Alfred Harcourt.

Since one of the main goals of this seminar is to canvass as wide a cast of writers as possible (as distinguished from critically inquiring into the unique styles and sensibilities of a small coterie of canonized authors), the seminar utilizes short forms of writing wherever possible in order to keep the weekly reading load manageable. In other words, the assigned texts largely consist of essays, poems, plays, short stories, and letters, which will be made available on TRUNK. However, the novel's importance was second to none in terms of literature's understanding of its value, status, and function during the first half of the twentieth century, and hence the students will read and discuss at least one full-length novel over the course of the semester.

ENG 0291-02
Graduate Seminar: Other Londons/London's Others
Roy, M
When the SS *Empire Windrush* with 492 passengers from the West Indies landed at the Tilbury docks in 1948, it brought the first wave of post-war immigrants into labour scarce Britain. In the decades that followed, students, professionals, political refugees, and above all thousands of workers from India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ghana, Bangladesh, South Africa and the Caribbean Islands settled in London in what the Jamaican poet Louise Bennett called, "colonizin' in reverse." London today is one of the most diverse cities in the world. The presence of immigrant communities from the so-called "New Commonwealth" has changed the sights, sounds and flavours of this famous city making it a place of immense cultural complexity.

The course will focus on this "other" London—the London of bhangra, calypso, and curry, and of differently accented English—to chart the disparate ways in which the "others" in London have expressed their presence and thereby fundamentally redefined "Englishness" and "Britishness." We will focus on texts such as Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*, Andrea Levy's *Small Island*, Caryl Phillips' *The Final Passage*, and Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, among others. Films may include *Dirty, Pretty Things*, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Bend It like Beckham*. We will also read/listen to the dub poetry of Linton Kwesi Johnson, Benjamin Zephaniah and others.

**ENG 0291-03**
*Graduate Seminar: Psycho-Sexual Racism and Pan-African Revolt: Fanon & Chester Himes*
Thomas, G

Frantz Fanon and Chester Himes are both enormous intellectual figures in the Black radical tradition. A psychiatrist-cum-revolutionary, Fanon writes his way from Martinique to Paris and then Algeria while articulating a praxis of Pan-African liberation—that is, total decolonization and *bona fide* independence. A novelist and revolutionist—not to mention a "sensualist," Himes writes his way from U.S. incarceration to European exile or expatriation while articulating his insurgent ideas in the form of fiction, autobiography and a world-famous Harlem detective series featuring "Coffin Ed Johnson" and "Grave Digger Jones." Today, Fanon is typically read in academia as the author of *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), not his other works: *A Dying Colonialism* (1959), *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and *Toward the African Revolution* (1964). The prolific Himes is rarely discussed at all in North America. This is true of his first published novel, *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945); his last novel, *Plan B* (1983); and everything he would publish in between.

Yet and still, there is a striking, even uncanny similarity to be noted in the stunning *oeuvres* of Fanon and Himes, especially when it comes to the violence of oppression and the counter-violence of resistance. They highlight the structure of a "psycho-sexual" racism which is endemic to the "political economic" structure of white racist domination by the West. They expand the parameters of Pan-African revolt— to quote a paraphrased C.L.R. James. Indeed, they expand and recast in advance what might count as studies of gender and sexuality as well. This course will examine the writings of Fanon and Himes against the grain of critical neglect and distortion; it will focus on the sexual politics of race and empire which they meticulously expose, both at the level of institutions and identity or subjectivity; and it will consider how these literary-political writings should lead us to rethink many of the basic intellectual concepts afloat both within and outside their Black radical tradition.

**ENG 0291-04**
*The Rapes of Lucrece*
Dunn, K

This course takes as its central axis Shakespeare's long poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*. The poem will serve as a point of departure for a latitudinal study of the literary world of England in 1594. Primary texts will include Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis, Sonnets* and *Titus Andronicus*; Edmund Spenser's *The Ruines of Time*; Samuel Daniel's *The Complaint of Rosamond*; and work by Churchyard, Middleton, Ovid and Livy. We will need to consider issues of consent, affect, republican representation, the visual studies and style. Among the theoretical texts we will engage are Jacques Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*, Julia Lupton's *Citizen Saints*, Joel Fineman's *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye*, W.J.T. Mitchell's *What Do Pictures Want?* and Eric Santner's *The People's Two Bodies*. 