Course Information: Spring 2013

English 200+, Graduate Seminars

ENG 0292-01
Graduate Seminar: Literature, Modernity, Globalization
Lowe, L

In the mid-20th century, the disciplines of English and Comparative Literature tended to conceive national aesthetic cultures as originating in metropolitan Europe, extending out towards the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Beginning with a critical analysis of this modern comparative and national literary model, we examine a range of approaches that reverse, displace, or simply conceive differently, this particular itinerary of literary, aesthetic, and cultural origin and progress. We will consider British cultural materialism (Williams, Hall); studies of colonialisms, postcolonial theory, and subaltern studies (Fanon, Said, Chakrabarty, Stoler); critical race and borderlands (Hartman, Singh, Fregoso); diaspora (Gopinath); aboriginality, indigeneity, and mixture (Woolf, Deloria, Kauanui); transnationalism and hemispherism (Curthoys, Yoneyama) – to explore alternative models for understanding literature and culture within global conditions their emergence.

ENG 0292-02
Graduate Seminar: Resisting Empire
Roy, M

This course will begin with the assertion that before post-colonialism emerged as an important new field in literary, cultural and historical studies, there was anti-colonialism—in theory and in practice. One of the aims of this seminar is to develop historical and intellectual genealogies of the terms anti- and post-colonialism and to acquire a sense of the central debates and ideas forming/informing post-colonial theory. In order to explore this enormous and heterogeneous field of critical interest, we will examine the “origins” of the theories of colonialism and imperialism, resistance movements and cultural expressions that were inspired by them. We will focus particularly on aesthetics and its relationship to politics as a fundamental concern throughout the semester. How, we may ask for example, have writers in the post-colonial world (from the mission-schooled generation of the colonial period, to the nationalists of the period of decolonization, to contemporary, post-colonial transnationals) negotiated and experimented with “western” genres as acts of opposition and challenge? How have hegemonic narrative practices of the west been confronted, countered and subverted?

We will engage with the anti-colonial writings of Marx, Lenin, C.L.R. James, and Frantz Fanon, more contemporary expositions by Aijaz Ahmad, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, among others. Literary texts may include novels by Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Tayeb Salih, Jean Rhys, Ousmane Sembene, Michelle Cliff, Ama Ata Aidoo, Rabindranath Tagore, Alejo Carpentier among others.

ENG 0292-03
Graduate Seminar: Climate Change
Ammons, E

What is the role of the humanities in the struggle for environmental justice and ecological sanity? Where will the world be in 20 years—or 30 or 40—and what is our responsibility in creating that world? This seminar will foreground ecocritical and environmental justice perspectives on American literature, placing major emphasis on foundational environmental humanities topics such as environmental racism, toxic colonialism, ecofeminism, animal rights, environmental ethics, and ecosocialism. Our reading will be multicultural, bringing together work by Native American, African American, white European American, Latino/a, and Asian American writers. We’ll read *Almanac of the Dead* by Leslie Marmon Silko, *Watershed* by Percival Everett, *Under the Feet of Jesus* by Helena Maria Viramontes, *My Year of Meats* by Ruth Ozeki, *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood, *Tracks* by Louise Erdrich, and *Mama Day* by Gloria Naylor, as well as poetry by Simon Ortiz, Martín Espada, Adrienne Rich, Janice Mirikitani, and Jayne Cortez. Theorists will include Robert Bullard, Jr., Joel Kovel, Vandana Shiva, George Tinker, Aldo Leopold, Jace Weaver, and Linda Hogan. We will also view several films. Explicit attention will be given to the connection between our work as humanities scholars and teachers and the question of activist social change.
Scandal, especially of the sexual variety, was a staple of the so-called amatory fictions that were bestsellers at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The antiquated and highly euphemistic style of these works is often associated with romance—a pre-novelistic form—rather than the novel. Even though the language of amatory fiction began to disappear from writers’ vocabularies after 1730 or so, one of its preoccupations persisted throughout the century and beyond. This is, in the words of Eliza Haywood, “unwilling willingness”: a state that appears to combine refusal with consent. These two categories, refusal and consent, remain important to eighteenth-century novelists like Richardson, who champion virtue and fetishize virginity, as well as to pornographers, who emphasize pleasure of all stripes. In this course we will read a series of eighteenth-century novels and works of pornography that address unwilling willingness, as well as a selection of materials from the period that supply legal and social context, and a sampling of relevant work by literary critics, historians, and philosophers. This will allow us to see how the categories of refusal and consent operate in works of fiction that celebrate virtue, those that decry it, and those that defend it halfheartedly. In the process, we will be asking how pornography influences novels, how novels influence pornography, and whether it is possible to distinguish novels' treatment of refusal and consent from pornography's.

Texts may include novels by Eliza Haywood, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, John Cleland, Charlotte Lennox, and the Marquis de Sade as well as critical works by Frances Ferguson, Rae Langton, Lynn Hunt and others.