Course Information: Fall 2016

English 200+, Graduate Seminars

ENG 0290-01
Graduate Seminar: Pro-Seminar
Ammons, E.

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: In the Wake: Readings on Race and the Body
Sharpe, C.

In this graduate seminar we will read, listen to, and view a range of cultural, visual, theoretical and literary texts toward understanding the meaning and applications of race and, in particular blackness, and “the body." At the center of the course is the understanding that the Middle Passage, transatlantic racial slavery, the plantation system, and the gendered racial terror erected on them are not one time events but events with afterlives that continue into the present. The course examines the multiple ways that we live in the wake of those events. Readings, listenings, viewings will include: Simone Brown (Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness), Saidiya Hartman (Venus in Two Acts), Carrie Mae Weems, Dionne Brand, M. NourbeSe Philip, Timbuktu, Katherine McKittrick, Rinaldo Walcott, and Hortense Spillers among others.
ENG 0291-02
Graduate Seminar: Introduction to Literary Theory
Lurz, J.

This course will present an overview of theoretical trends in literary studies and critical methodologies. It will range from the kind of formalism and practical criticism on which the discipline of literary studies in English was founded in the early twentieth century through the theoretical revolutions of structuralism and poststructuralism, cultural materialism, feminism, and postcolonialism to the most recent critical developments in network theory, cognitive studies, and the return to aesthetics. This sweeping survey is meant to give a birds-eye view of the discipline while also providing some basic knowledge on which to build more complex and sophisticated theoretical positions and critical frameworks.

As we barrel our way through the last century of theoretical developments, we will be constantly attentive to what Jonathan Culler has called “the literary in theory” and ask how different speculative commitments frame and reframe the very idea of “literature.” At the same time, we will want to think about how the varied understandings of “literature” are in dialogue with similarly mobile conceptions of language, history, and form as well as with more pointed questions of gender, race, class, and ethnicity. Students will be responsible for one critical summary of a week’s reading, a 5-7 page theoretical analysis, and a 10-12 page final paper on a literary text of their choosing informed by one or more of the methodologies we discuss over the semester.


ENG 0291-03
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.
In the wake of the extraordinary transatlantic success of Walter Scott’s historical novels, a range of American authors across the long nineteenth century—including Cooper, Child, Hawthorne, Twain, Chesnutt, Jackson, and Hopkins—adapted the genre to address major issues and events in the nation’s history, including the Revolutionary, Mexican-American, and Civil wars; slavery and its aftermath; Reconstruction; the “Indian Problem,” etc. In studying these works, this course will undertake several goals. First, to provide an overview of 19th c. (antebellum and postbellum) US historical fiction. Second, through in-class readings and individual student research, to gain a fuller understanding of these texts’ multiple “histories,” including their historiographic interventions into the topics/periods mentioned above, the present tense of their original publication, and the ongoing critical debates in which they’ve figured. Finally, we will develop a range of conceptual vocabularies or paradigms in which to ask questions about these novels’ aesthetic and political work. Clusters of keywords here might include genre, novel, romance; memory, narrative and trauma; time, temporality, chronology, history; the event and the everyday; affect and structures of feeling; nationalism and minor literatures; utopia and nostalgia.