Course Information: Spring 2016

English 200+, Graduate Seminars

ENG 0292-01
Graduate Seminar: The Victorian Novel
Litvak, J.

We will read novels by Dickens, Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, Collins, Braddon, Eliot, Trollope, Hardy, and Stoker, placing them in the context of recent criticism and theory. Discussions will be based on careful analysis of the novels, but we will also be considering such general literary and cultural issues as realism and worldliness; the gothic and the grotesque; comedy, sentimentality, and sensationalism; gender and the family romance; subjectivity and middle-class ideology; "Englishness" and its racial others; sexuality and the marriage plot; mass culture, literacy, and the marketplace.

ENG 0292-02
Graduate Seminar: Marlowe, Jonson, and Friends
Haber, J.

We will consider carefully the major works of two of the most important dramatists of the early modern period, Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson. We will also make comparisons to relevant works of Shakespeare, but these will not be our main focus. Texts to be studied will probably include the following: Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine, Parts I and II, The Jew of Malta, Edward II, Dr. Faustus, Hero and Leander; Ben Jonson, selected poems and masques, Volpone, Epicoene, The Alchemist, Bartholomew Fair. We will also look at two of the most important revenge tragedies of the period, The Spanish Tragedy (Kyd), and The Revenger's Tragedy (Middleton?). We will consider how these various texts drew upon and influenced both one another and other major plays and poems of the Renaissance.
ENG 0292-03
Graduate Seminar: Queering Theory
Edelman, L.

This seminar will focus as much on the “queerness” of the theories that swept literary studies in the past 50 years as it will on the emergence of queer theory as such. Starting with the antihumanist extensions of the New Criticism’s formalist tendencies, we will see how the perversity of structuralist, deconstructive, feminist, psychoanalytic, and race theories helped shape the baggy, contested, and contestatory field we now refer to as queer theory. This will lead us to focus largely on queer theory’s internal tension between communitarian politics and what has been called its "anti-social" turn, between the reformist aspirations of a liberal humanism and the radical resistance to this notion of the good. We’ll find ourselves returning, time and again, to the relations among sexuality, politics, and reading as we think about the tensions among identitarian claims, utopian aspirations, liberal assimilationism, and forms of negativity. The authors whose works we will study may include: Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, Barbara Johnson, Jacques Lacan, Guy Hocquenghem, Michel Foucault, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, D.A. Miller, Gayle Rubin, David Halperin, Ronald Judy, Susan Stryker, Frank Wilderson, Joseph Massad, Chandan Reddy, Jonathan Goldberg, Madhavi Menon, Teresa de Lauretis, Leo Bersani, Lauren Berlant, Tavia Nyong’o, Michael Warner, Darieck Scott, Jack Halberstam, José Muñoz, and Heather Love. Participation in this course is restricted to graduate students.

ENG 0292-04
Graduate Seminar: Climate Change
Ammons, E.

This seminar focuses on American literature and the environment, concentrating on 20th and 21st century texts and a number of issues—environmental racism, eco-imperialism, animal rights, the relationship between gender and the social construction of nature—and, above all, global warming. We will think about climate change as a biospheric reality and as a metaphor that speaks to an ethical imperative. Reading in the course is multicultural, bringing together Native American, African American, white European American, Latino/a, and Asian American perspectives, with these as probable primary texts: Henry David Thoreau, Walden; Percival Everett, Wounded; Rita Wong, forage; Leslie Marmon Silko, Almanac of the Dead; Margaret Atwood, Oryx and Crake; Octavia Butler, The Parable of the Sower; Simon Ortiz, from Sand Creek; Helena María Viramontes, Under the Feet of Jesus; Gloria Naylor, Mama Day; and Louise Erdrich, The Round House. Theory will come from diverse vantage points, both within and outside the U.S.: Aldo Leopold, Vandana Shiva, Rob Nixon, George “Tink” Tinker, bell hooks, Bill McKibben, Robert Bullard, Jacques Derrida, Linda Hogan, Wangari Maathai. In addition to fiction, poetry, and theory, we will consider the political and aesthetic work of several documentary films. Pedagogy—how to teach in an age of accelerating climate crisis—will be a conscious concern.