Course Information: Fall 2016

English 100-199, Literature

ENG 0110-01
The Renaissance in England
Haber, J.

"All the world's a stage," says Jaques in As You Like It, "and all the men and women merely players." The theatrical attitude toward life evident in these lines was characteristic of the Renaissance. Not only was this the greatest age of the English theater, it was an age that was intensely theatrical: in both the "literary" and the "non-literary" texts of the period, the possibility repeatedly surfaces that everyone is continually playing a part - that each of our identities consists merely of a set of inconsistent roles. This possibility could be extremely liberating, permitting one to escape the confines of fixed social and gendered positions, and enabling the creation of "other worlds" - alternative societies or utopias. It could also, of course, be deeply frightening: taken to an extreme, it threatens the foundations of traditional beliefs about religion and society. We will examine how these conflicting attitudes manifested themselves in the non-dramatic poetry and prose of the period: we will begin with early humanist writings, look closely at the development of the lyric, and read prose and poetic romances, national epics and erotic epyllia (small epics). We will consider carefully the self-consciousness about representation that is evident in most of these texts, and we will explore their authors’ ever-present delight in - and distrust of - the powers of language and art. Readings will probably include works by Thomas More, Erasmus, Castiglione, Thomas Wyatt, Louise Labé, Queen Elizabeth, Philip and Mary Sidney, Mary Wroth, Fulke Greville, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare. This course fulfills the pre-1860 requirement.

ENG 0114-01
Milton
Keiser, J.

This course focuses on the work of poet, politician, and revolutionary, John Milton. Completely blind by the age of 46, and forced into hiding for his role in the overthrow and execution of England’s king, Milton still managed to compose one of the most important works in the English language, the epic poem Paradise Lost. The story of Satan’s rebellion against God, and of Adam and Eve’s fall from paradise, Paradise Lost attempts nothing less than to “justify the ways of God to men.” We’ll also attend to Milton’s other major works, Paradise Regained, which finds a darkly witty Satan seducing unsuspecting souls, and Samson Agonistes, a searching meditation on cultural difference and religious violence. Milton’s work forces us to reckon with some large questions: the nature of good and evil, the conflict between freedom and fate, the necessity of rebellion and political transformation, the seductions of figurative language, the battle between religious and scientific worldviews, and Christianity’s vexed encounter with other cultures and beliefs. This course fulfills the pre-1860 requirement.
ENG 0131-01  
British Modernism  
Lurz, J.

This course is an undergraduate seminar devoted to a survey of British literature published between the years 1895, the year of Gerard Manley Hopkins’ "God's Grandeur" whose "sprung rhythm" announces an experiment with form that will characterize many of the writers in this course, and 1951, the year of Samuel Beckett's *Molloy*, whose drastically pared down style becomes as much a reaction to the experimental excesses of the modernist period as it is itself an extreme investigation of form. By bookending the course with these two works, we will be expanding the temporal boundaries of what is normally considered as "modernism," a move which raises one of the main questions around which we will organize our inquiry: to what extent does modernist literature exceed the analytical categories by which we usually parse literary history? How -- and, more importantly, why -- do these categories fail when applied to this literature? To that end, we will be reading widely in the literature of the early twentieth century and looking at the ways these texts cut across the boundaries of period, nation, and genre. We will even wonder how these works might question the category of the literary itself as they respond to the revolutions in media technology that occurred in the late nineteenth century. Possible Texts: Poetry by Hopkins, Hardy, Brooke, Sassoon, Owen, Rosenberg, Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Auden; Conrad, *The Secret Agent*; Ford, *The Good Soldier*; Forster, *A Passage to India*; Lewis, *BLAST*; Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*; Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; Isherwood, *Berlin Stories*; Beckett, *Molloy*. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.

ENG 0154-01  
American Indian Writers  
Ammons, E.

Many people can name only one or two Native American writers --if that. What does this erasure mean? How do Indigenous writers in the United States refuse and resist this erasure? We will begin with three late nineteenth-/early twentieth-century authors, Sarah Winnemucca, Luther Standing Bear, and Zitkala Sâ, and then concentrate on contemporary writers: N. Scott Momaday, Louise Erdrich, Leslie Marmon Silko, Simon Ortiz, Leonard Peltier, Sherman Alexie, and Wendy Rose. We will view and discuss films that focus on important issues and contextualize our study in historical and political questions still current in Native America. Major topics include: the politics of representation/self-representation; Indian resistance to white colonialism, exploitation, and theft; Indigenous people's self-definitions and demand for sovereignty; the relationship between art and political struggle; and our own subject positions and responsibilities in relation to the material in the course. We will have a guest speaker, and the issue of activism will be an important part of our work together, as will active student participation. This course fulfills the World Civilization distribution requirement and counts toward the Women's Studies major, the Environmental Studies major, and the post-1860 requirement for the English major. It is open to majors and non-majors. All are welcome.
ENG 0158-01  
Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner  
Takayoshi, I.  

A seminar on the works and lives of three influential story-tellers: William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The works to be discussed include *Absalom, Absalom!, Light in August, Go Down, Moses*, and representative short stories by Faulkner, *This Side of Paradise, The Beautiful and Damned, The Great Gatsby, Tender Is the Night*, and representative short stories by Fitzgerald, and *The Sun Also Rises, A Farewell to Arms*, and major short stories by Hemingway. We will also read standard biographies of these authors. Our basic concern is threefold: aesthetic, biographical, and ethical. Aesthetic: what new techniques did these authors invent for effective story-telling? Biographical: how did these authors' lives and arts interrelate? Ethical: what questions of values did they seek to answer through their stories? Requirements: three presentations, a research paper that goes through two drafting stages in consultation with the instructor. CAP course—Open to first year students only. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.

ENG 0159-01  
Contemporary Jewish Fiction  
Freedman-Bellow, J.  

A look at novels and stories by authors whose work has reflected, challenged, shaped and altered contemporary Jewish consciousness. We'll read fiction by Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, Nathan Englander, Cynthia Ozick, Anne Michaels, Art Spiegelman, and others. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.

ENG 0165-01  
Perspectives on American Poetry  
Bamber, L.  

Many of the exciting innovations we associate with modernist or post-modernist thought and art, including the questioning of identity itself, have been brilliantly explored in the ancient, ongoing, living tradition of Buddhism. The Buddhist concept of the self as something that is continually arising, not fixed, allows us to drop our defenses and live more authentic lives. Dozens of contemporary American poets have affiliations to the Buddhist ideas of the non-Self, as well as to such other to the Buddhist emphases on non-dualism and "the end of mind," as Wallace Stevens put it. Major poets from the American literary tradition, in particular Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, take on a new interest when read in the light of Buddhist thought. In this class we will learn about Buddhist practice from Zen Master Shunryu Suzuki and then see how and where it applies to the poetry of such quintessentially American poets as Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Wallace Stevens and many others. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.
ENG 0167-01
What the Novel Knows
Litvak, J.

There’s a kind of smartness that belongs to the novel as a literary genre; this course will explore some especially compelling examples of that smartness. We will be concerned less with the individual novelist’s consciousness than with the critical and imaginative possibilities afforded by the novelistic genre itself. Attending to what novels know that we don’t already know—to the ways in which they challenge our assumptions about, for instance, gender, race, and power—we will try to develop techniques of novel-reading that take into account how novels read us. Texts will include Jamaica Kincaid’s Mr. Potter, David Mitchell’s The Thousand Autumns of Jacob De Zoet, Mohsin Hamid’s The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Leslie Daniels’s Cleaning Nabokov’s House, Roberto Bolaño’s The Savage Detectives, Marie NDiaye’s Three Strong Women, and Michel Houellebecq’s The Map and the Territory. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.

ENG 0176-01
Earth Matters
Ammons, E.

Many argue that environmental questions are the most pressing questions of the twenty-first century. Where are we now? How did we get here? What future will we choose? American literature offers crucial answers. It also offers much-needed vision and hope. In this course we will think about human beings’ relation to the earth, the welfare of all life on the planet, and—above all—climate change. Reading is multicultural, bringing together Native American, African American, white European American, Latino/a, and Asian American perspectives, and texts include novels, poetry, prose, and film. Authors range from Bill McKibben to Octavia Butler, Rita Wong to Simon Ortiz and Louise Erdrich. Our study will include a field trip and class-discussion forms the basis of the course. The class counts toward the Environmental Studies major and the English major, where it fulfills the post-1860 requirement. It is also open to all students.
ENG 0181-01
The Politics of Reading
Edelman, L.

What does it mean to learn how to read a literary text? What does it mean, for that matter, to know that a text is “literary” in the first place? The more one advances in literary studies, the less obvious the answers to these questions become. Reading, we discover, has a politics that is always informed by ideology. As Americans at the end of the twentieth century saw, ways of reading (as shaped, for instance, by deconstruction, feminism, queer theory, or critical race studies) can become the targets of high-stakes battles played out in the context of “culture wars.” This seminar—intended to be immersive, student-led and rigorously student-focused—will examine reading and interpretation as inseparable from philosophical and political assumptions. Together we will think about the philosophy of literature, the politics of interpretative practices, and the force of ideology in our understanding of how reading is institutionalized in the academy and conceptualized in contemporary culture. We will read theoretical works by authors including Marx, Agamben, Butler, Zizek, Barthes, Ranciere, and Hall in relation to literary texts in a variety of genres, including novellas by Melville, parables by Kafka, short stories by Lydia Davis, poetry by Percy Shelley, and a slave narrative by Harriet Jacobs. Alongside these readings we may look at a number of cultural artifacts that are likely to include, among other things, advertisements, television commercials, and materials generated by the 2016 political campaigns.

ENG 0191-01
Seminar in English: Harlem Renaissance
Takayoshi, I.

A seminar on a wide range of African-American writers who were associated with the "Harlem Renaissance." The class will discuss poems, stories, novels, essays, and plays by W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Jonson, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, George Schuyler, Jean Toomer, Jessie Fauset, Zora Neale Hurston, Alain Locke, Countee Cullen, Wallace Thurman, Nella Larsen, Carl Van Vechten, and more. Discussions will center around two questions: how these writers modernized American language and how these writers used literature to battle racism. Incoming freshmen are welcome. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.
ENG 0191-03
Seminar in English: Jane Austen Now
Hofkosh, S.

The “now” in the title of this course refers at once to Jane Austen’s present, the contemporary culture within which she wrote, transforming the romance plot into a new mode of realist fiction, and to our own present, the 21st C culture in which we read and reread (and also rewrite) Jane Austen’s novels. Thinking about Austen in terms of the “now” opens questions about the continuing relevance of her work over time and in our time: to what current interests or concerns do Austen’s novels speak? how does writing so focused on the circumscribed experience of a young woman in an English country village appeal to readers all over the world? what can tracing the reception of her novels by writers, critics, and devoted fans tell us about the function of literature in the formation of the personal, the social, and the political? We will read the six published novels, some of the unpublished writing, and various responses to Austen’s work from the early 19th C to recent critical approaches (including feminist and queer), and consider modern adaptations and remediations in order to explore these and other questions about Austen’s originality and her persistent allure. This course fulfills the pre-1860 requirement for the English major.

ENG 0191-04
Seminar in English: Black Feminist Theories
Sharpe, C.

Black Feminist Theories will trace black feminisms and proto feminisms from the mid nineteenth-century to the present—with the focus largely on the last 40 years. We will attend to the links between race, place, history, blackness, sexuality, and gender. Focusing on black women’s political struggles in the Americas (largely the US, but also, the Caribbean and Canada), we will consider: The significance of (transatlantic) slavery to contemporary black experiences. The ways that black women have been subject to and resisted racism, sexism, homophobia, and economic oppression. The transnational and "intersectional" dimensions of black feminism. And the ways that black expressive cultures—visual art, literature, poetry, film, etc.—challenge dominant constructions of black femininity and black masculinity. Readings, viewings, and listenings may include: Anna Julia Cooper, Harriet Jacobs, Barbara Smith, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, Nina Simone, Abbey Lincoln, Gayl Jones, Chisholm ’72: Unbought & Unbossed, Dionne Brand, M. NourbeSe Philip, and Joy James among other writers, artists, and theorists. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.