Course Information: Fall 2016

English 17-99, Literature

ENG 0017-01
The Poem
Shapero, N.

This course will focus on the fundamentals of how to read and write poetry, looking at how poets transform kernels of observations and analyses into fully-realized works of literature, with an emphasis on sound structures, visual organization, and argument. Each week, we will investigate a different facet of how a poem is made – that is, how do poets negotiate sonic architecture, visual composition, intellectual through line, and imaginative locus at the level of the line? At the level of the stanza? The poem? The sequence? We’ll engage in explication of the assigned reading, collective in-class exercises, and workshop days. Assignments include writing poetry, memorizing poems, and writing analytical book reviews. No previous experience with poetry needed.

ENG 0021-01
General View of English Literature I
Keiser, J.

This course, a survey of early English literature from the beginning through the early part of the eighteenth century, makes an excellent introduction to the English major. It should also be of interest to any students who wish to increase their knowledge of earlier English literature and hone their skill in literary analysis. Readings will probably include Beowulf, selections from Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales and Milton’s Paradise Lost, lyrics by Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne, Queen Elizabeth, Amelia Lanyer, Ben Jonson, Andrew Marvell, Alexander Pope, and Jonathan Swift, and plays by Shakespeare and Behn.

ENG 0023-01
American Literature: First Contact to 1855
Wolff, N.

From the beginning, American literature has been multicultural, artistically diverse, and filled with debates about human rights, religion, gender equality, economics, race, personal freedom, and how to live in relationship with the earth. Bringing together Native American, white European American, African American, Latino/a, and Asian American voices, this survey mixes canonical and less well-known texts. We’ll read work by familiar writers such as Anne Bradstreet and Nathaniel Hawthorne as well as work by equally important but often less-familiar writers such as Handsome Lake, David Walker, William Apess, and Chinese merchants in California. We will think about the construction of literary history and the politics of representation. Who gets to speak? Write? Read? Who does not? Why does this matter in 2016? The class will include active class discussion and two field trips, one to the only known slave quarters still standing in New England, the other to the woods. There will be two papers and a final exam.
ENG 0045-01
Non-Western Women Writers
Roy, M.

This course is designed to introduce you to the diversity of women's writing from countries often referred to as "third world." Through an eclectic selection of texts, the course will explore some of the key concerns of women in places such as South Asia, the West Indies, Africa, and Latin America. We shall be concerned also with issues of literary technique, genre, and representation. We shall focus on the connections between literary texts and the social and political contexts within which the writing was produced. Authors will include Ama Ata Aidoo, Bessie Head, Joan Riley, Michelle Cliff, Merle Hodge, Meera Syal, among others. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.

NOTE: This course counts towards World Civilization, Africana Studies, Peace and Justice, and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies.

ENG 0050-01
Shakespeare - F
Genster, J.

A study of eight Shakespeare plays: Richard II, Henry IV, As You Like It, Much Ado About Nothing, Measure for Measure, Hamlet, Macbeth and The Tempest. We will engage the plays in a variety of critical, historical and literary historical contexts. This course fulfills the pre-1860 requirement.

ENG 0057-01
Contemporary Fiction
Genster, J.

With such prodigious quantities of good work, a survey is impossible. We will drill down into works from a number of contemporary British and American authors and aim to emerge with something like a core sample of contemporary fictions, including novels, short stories, and graphic works. We will cast a wide net, but writers to be studied will include at least some of the following: Edwidge Danticat, Don DeLillo, Tessa Hadley, Marilynne Robinson, Martin Amis, Neil Gaiman, Julian Barnes, Alice Munro, Jhumpa Lahiri, Toni Morrison, Gary Shteyngart, Roz Chast, Lydia Davis, Paul Beatty, W.G. Sebald, and Anthony Doerr. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.
ENG 0058-01
Short Fiction
Bamber, L.

Some of the stories we will read in this course will be regular narratives, but we will read many quirky, unconventional and idiosyncratic ones as well. The emphasis will be on language and form as we interrogate the genre by exploring its margins. Many of the stories we will read have the linguistic density of poetry; many dispense with what we take to be the necessities of fiction -- plot, character and action -- in favor of formal experimentation. The stories vary in all sorts of ways: from the meticulous, self-effacing prose of Gustave Flaubert to the post-modernist self-indulgence of David Foster Wallace; from the extreme reliance on voice of Juno Diaz to the cool omniscience of Flannery O'Connor; from a novel-length story by Leo Tolstoy to a one-sentence story by Lydia Davis. (Actually a sentence fragment!) This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.

ENG 0064-01
American Fiction 1950-present
Johnson, R.

American Fiction from 1950 to the Present: This study of diverse novels written after 1950 will focus on the emergence of the postmodern in U.S. arts and culture, with emphasis on formal developments, aesthetic consequences, and social implications. We will read a wide range of texts from a variety of American perspectives to explore the decline of canonical exclusivity and the rise of multicultural pluralism in American fiction. Our study will note the hybridization of forms and the appropriation of non-literary discourses to fashion fictive texts. It will consider as well the decentering of the traditional subject and the configuration of numerous and diverse subjectivities newly empowered in literary discourse and through social change in this period—the period which has directly engendered our present moment. Reading the texts juxtaposed with and across each other, and in their moment of composition and publication, we will piece together an understanding of what it means to be “American” in the postmodern era. The course will ask you to think about whether, as it is already being said, we are in the post-postmodern moment, and, if so, what that could mean in terms of trends and preferences in forms and styles of contemporary American literature; and in values of and ways of life in the American twenty-first century.

Our readings will include authors such as Jack Kerouac, John Okada, Joan Didion, Hunter S. Thompson, Renata Adler, Norman Mailer, Cynthia Ozick, Ishmael Reed, Gayl Jones, David Foster Wallace, Tom Wolfe, Thomas Pynchon. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.
**ENG 0081-01**  
Postmodernism and Film  
Edelman, L.

We encounter, perhaps even use, the word “postmodern” with some regularity. But do we really know what it means? This course will introduce students to major aspects of postmodern thought (as articulated by critics and philosophers including Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Slavoj Žižek, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Frederic Jameson, Donna Haraway, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Roland Barthes, and Jean Baudrillard) by studying a variety of films that engage or mobilize postmodern concepts. We will explore the tensions between modernist and postmodernist views of the world in the context of a number of other relations as well, including those between film and philosophy, between techonology and interpretation, between meaning and image, and between what Barthes calls “the work and the text.” Although we will carefully attend to a wide variety of films that raise issues central to postmodernism, that doesn’t mean that the films we will be studying are themselves postmodern films. Instead, we will suggest that postmodernism in cinema is inescapable and impossible at once. This course will make clear just what that means and why it might be so. The following are likely to be among the cinematic texts we examine in class: the Wachowski’s The Matrix, Scott's Blade Runner, Lassiter’s Toy Story, Polanski's Chinatown, Zemeckis’s Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, Fincher’s Fight Club, Shyamalan’s The Sixth Sense, Gilliam's 12 Monkeys, Amenabar's Abre los Ojos, Nolan’s Memento, Lynch's Mulholland Drive, Luhrman's Moulin Rouge, and Haneke’s Funny Games.

This course does not presuppose any prior experience of literary theory or cinematic analysis and all serious students, whatever their background or major, are welcome to enroll. But the class will be off-putting for those resistant to dealing with complex ideas or unwilling to think about film as more than a medium of popular entertainment. This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.

**ENG 0091-01**  
Topics Lit & Culture: Between the Acts: Memoirs, Poetry and Novels between the World Wars  
Ullman, M.

In this course we will read three World War I memoirs by soldiers, and some poetry, and then consider modernist texts, poetry and novels, in the light of those experiences. We will be asking the question if books such as Mrs. Dalloway, with its shell-shocked anti-hero, and poems such as The Waste Land, should be seen as part of the war experience. We will read fictions including D.H. Lawrence’s The Fox, Forster’s Passage to India, Evelyn Waugh’s Vile Bodies, and the science fiction classic by Aldous Huxley, Brave New World.

This course fulfills the post-1860 requirement.