

## Spring 2014 Graduate Seminar Course Descriptions

as of 10/10/13

### **English 272 – Blackness and Sovereignty.**

This course will consider the (antagonistic) relation between blackness, conceived as a mode of aesthetic and erotic sociality in which normative conceptions of individuality, group identity and ethical-juridical institutionality are destabilized, and sovereignty, conceived as a quality of the individual, or of a minority group of individuals in the nation-state, or of the nation state. We will be particularly concerned with the possibility of detaching ongoing the project of decolonization from the imperatives of self-determination which is, it has been argued, sovereignty's essential quality. Ultimately, this concern will lead us to a consideration of literary and cinematic instantiations of the insovereign. Readings/Viewings may include work by Shakespeare, Kant, du Bois, Schmitt, Kantorowicz, Arendt, Fanon, Mambety, Glissant, Brown, Santner, da Silva and Reyes.

Moten. SEM W 10:10am-1:00pm.

### **English 273 – Reading the English Witch-hunts.**

A course on the cultural poetics of witchcraft and witch-hunting in sixteenth and early seventeenth century England, with special attention to the role of gender and class in the hunts. We will explore constructions of witches and witch-hunting in pamphlet literature, legal documents, religious tracts, and plays by Shakespeare, Marlowe, and other authors, as well as examine a broad range of beliefs about magic and witchcraft. While about two-thirds of the course will have a period focus, we will also consider uses of the early modern witch in contemporary popular culture -- providing an opportunity to reflect on differences as well as similarities between methodologies associated with "new historicism" and "cultural studies." Students will have the option of focusing their research projects on early modern or contemporary materials.

Willis. SEM R 5:10pm-8:00pm.

### **English 277 – Queer Theory and Early Modern Literature.**

In this seminar we will discuss the uses (and abuses) of using Queer Theory to discuss Early Modern Literature of the 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and (early) 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Since my own bent at the moment is friendship, that may be the lens we use for some of our inquiries, but I welcome interest of members to the class as well. If Queer Theory is your interest, but you are primarily interested in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century topics, I think this seminar could be useful to you nonetheless. If you have any questions about the course, feel free to come by my office to discuss it.

Theorists we are likely to include: Jonathan Goldberg, Carla Freccero, Valerie Traub, Judith Butler, David Halperin, Lee Edelman, Ann Chevtkovich, Beth Freeman, José Muñoz.

Haggerty. SEM R 1:10pm-4:00pm.

### **English 278 – Latina/o Memory Studies.**

This seminar focuses on the cultural work of memory (individual, social, reenacted, amnesic, and post-) in Latina/o literary studies as a site of inquiry. Shifting our understanding of Latina/o literature toward other texts where visual, artifactual, and performance actions intersect, we will evaluate how Latina/o pasts are re-membered and re-encountered in the present. Moving tenaciously across groupings of literary, visual, and exhibition works, we will examine how Latina/o cultural producers enlist different memory narrative forms and practices to reimagine collective experience, revision history, materialize omission, and disclose autobiographical narrative. Literary and visual texts in the seminar will include (but not limited to): Carlos Almaraz, Eric Avila, Norma Cantú, Ann Cvetkovich, Karen Mary Davalos, Rafael Ferrer, Jennifer Gonzalez, Ken Gonzalez-Day, Marianne Hirsch, Amelia Jones, Robert “Cyclona” Legorreta, Amalia Mesa-Baines, Franco Mondini-Ruiz, Manuel Muñoz, Pepon Osorio, Emma Perez, Gillian Rose, Piri Thomas, Jose Antonio Villarreal, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano. Hernandez. SEM M 5:10pm-8:00pm.

### **English 289 – Ultimate or Penultimate Things: Late or Last Novels of selected 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century authors.**

This seminar will be conducted from both the readerly and the writerly perspective by two faculty: Professor Winer from Creative Writing and Professor Childers from English. It will focus on the penultimate or last complete works of a number of major novelists of the 19th and 20th centuries. While a certain amount of biographical criticism will of course be necessary, the course will mainly examine theoretical issues around notions of finality, endings, author-function, canon formation, and the importance of these works as exempla in particular theoretical paradigms (such as feminist theory; queer theory; post colonialism; Marxism; etc.). Because both “the sense of an author” and the “sense of an ending” will be primary in our discussions, seminar participants will be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the arc of these authors’ literary careers, as well as with the discourses at work in the shaping of these novels (e.g., politics, religion, nationalism, domesticity, imperialism, etc.). Novels read will include *Persuasion*, *Villette*, *Our Mutual Friend*, *Daniel Deronda*, *Jude the Obscure*, *The Ambassadors*, and *The Blue Flower* (by Penelope Fitzgerald). Theoretical and literary criticism will include, but not be limited to, Foucault, Said, Spivak, (Peter) Brooks, and Kermode as well as articles and essays specific to the novels themselves. Childers and Winer (team taught). SEM W 2:10pm-5:00pm.