

## **Winter 2014 Graduate Course Descriptions**

### **English 247 – Science, Literature, and Media**

This course provides a foundation for students pursuing the Designated Emphasis in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies (SFTS). The purpose of this program is to examine the productive interchanges between science and technology as intellectual and material forces shaping human experience and literature, films and other media as cultural modes of responding to such changes. It combines perspectives from the cultural study of technology and the social study of science with an analysis of the cultural texts. It will include substantial theoretical reading as well as novels and film screenings.

Vint. SEM W 9:10AM-12PM.

### **English 262 –Dumbstruck: Vocal Silence in Renaissance Literature & Culture**

This seminar will explore the “dumb Renaissance,” focusing on moments in poetic, theatrical, legal, and religious texts defined by muteness and silence. While “silence, chastity, and obedience” were held up as a triune feminine ideal in domestic manuals, silence was also aligned with political resistance throughout the period, from Sir Thomas More’s famous refusal to take an oath of supremacy to the muteness of Milton’s fallen angels.

We will explore silence, voice, and noise in a range of texts – broadside ballads, legal treatises, poetic theory, plays, and a range of poetic forms – as we consider ventriloquism in sonnet sequences, dumb shows on the public stage, and typographic representations of silence. Several questions will guide us: What does silence accomplish? What other signifying acts take the place of voice? How might we understand the commonplace of poetry as a “speaking picture” and painting as a “mute poem”? In an age of eloquence, why the fascination with inarticulacy, dumbness, and silence?

This seminar will engage with current developments in historical phenomenology, disability studies, sensory studies, and acoustic theory. Open to graduate students across CHASS, the course will satisfy one of the course requirements for the DE in BAM (Book, Archive, and Manuscript Studies).

Brayman Hackel. SEM T 10:10AM-1:00PM.

## **English 270 –The Age of Plath**

This seminar will playfully consider what it would mean to conceptualize post-WWII American poetry and fiction as “The Age of Sylvia Plath.” Her representationally autobiographical texts will be the lens through which we study literary and cultural work done from the mid-twentieth century to the present day. Plath has played a remarkable role in literary history and in popular culture, a role that shows no sign of diminishing with the years. She continues to be featured in conversations about gender, sexuality, gifted youth, transnationality, alienation, subjectivity, and postmodernity. Beyond being an enduring textual presence, she is a cultural icon—a recurrent reference point in songs, films, novels, the internet, and social media. The figure she makes continues to inform our ways of seeing and being.

In this seminar we will closely read Plath’s major works of poetry, fiction, and life writing: *The Collected Poems*; *The Bell Jar*; *The Unabridged Journals*; and *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams*. We will look at such precursors and coevals as poets Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, and Marilyn Monroe (yes, that Marilyn Monroe) and fiction writers Virginia Woolf (*Mrs. Dalloway*), Olive Higgins Prouty (*Now, Voyager*) and J. D. Salinger (*The Catcher in the Rye*). We will also look at the legacies and oppositional currents that her life and work generated in the work of such successors as poets Rita Dove, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Frank Bidart, Lyn Hejinian, and Marilyn Chin and prose writers Kathy Acker (*Empire of the Senseless*), Sara Kane (*4.48 Psychosis*), and Susanna Kaysen (*Girl, Interrupted*). We will infuse the proceedings with larger considerations suggested by cultural/psychoanalytical theorists Jacqueline Rose, Julia Kristeva, and Slavoj Žižek. We will try to think creatively about a writer who is a knot through which many threads pass. This will be an opportunity to write about Sylvia Plath directly or about the writers or issues associated with her.

Axelrod. SEM W 5:10-8:00PM.

## **English 272 – Critical Theory: Thinking with Things**

Why are things good to think with? This seminar will approach this question through readings drawn from anthropology, literary theory, history of science, museum studies, and history of the book. We will consider recent interest in thing theory, in new forms of materialism, and in the lives of objects. Theorists we will read include Bruno Latour, Simon Schaffer, Jonathan Lamb, Arjun Appadurai, Nicholas Thomas, Bill Brown, Svetlana Alpers, Lorraine Daston, Leah Price, and Susan Stewart. This seminar is open to graduate students from all humanities disciplines and satisfies one course requirement for UCR’s Designated Emphasis in Book, Archive and Manuscript Studies. Further details will be available on <http://craciun.ucr.edu/teaching>.

Craciun. SEM T 2:10PM-5:00PM.

## **English 273 – The Rise of English and the Idea of the University**

Why “do” English? Why are English Departments usually the largest humanities departments in any college or university? How does the civic rationale for education in English literature relate to the concept of the university and the formation of its larger social and cultural role? What is the relation of the “rise of English” as a discipline to colonialism and class struggle? What transformations has the practice of criticism undergone since the nineteenth century? What future does the discipline have in face of the current transformations that higher education is undergoing, whether that be towards an increasingly corporate model, privatization, online courses, vocational emphases, or, hopefully, towards increasing democratization? What role can and could English play in any framing of a more democratic mode of education?

This course will approach these and similar questions historically, beginning with reading foundational texts on the rise of English as a discipline, including Friedrich Schiller, Matthew Arnold, J.S. Mill and John Henry Newman, studies of the influence of Indian colonial education on the formation of the discipline and of the relation of English to State formation. We will then examine some of the “moral” or acculturating claims of major critical schools, like English “practical criticism” and US “new criticism” and “theory”, and their contestation by models of English that emphasize cultural studies, critical race theory, feminism and sexuality, or cultural materialism. The last third or so of the course will examine the foundations and transformation of the idea of the university and the historical and future relation of English to that transformation.

Students in this class (and the instructor) will be expected not only to engage actively in what is an ongoing and unfinished inquiry into our practice and its historical and current conditions, but also to develop conference length presentations and to organize a small public event at which the findings of the seminar will be presented.

Lloyd. SEM W 2:10PM-5:00PM.

## **English 278 – Global Indigenous Media**

This seminar focuses on the kinds of media intervention created by transnational Indigenous artists, political activists, film directors, academics, and politicians to enact social change in their local territories and in the larger global world since the turn of the 20th century. Although they have been represented by various dominant settler colonial regimes as adverse to media technology, Indigenous peoples have embraced all forms of media in innovative, sophisticated, culturally relevant ways to represent, preserve, and revitalize Indigenous cultures. In this seminar, we will engage with film, electronic media, art, television broadcast corporations, public service announcements, music videos, and advertisements in a number of different exciting and vibrant Indigenous contexts.

Representations of Indigenous communities worldwide have been hypervisible with the advent of cheaper photographic technology and motion pictures, which grew out of performative contexts such as the Wild West shows and international expositions. The very first moving images, Thomas Edison’s nickelodeon actualities at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for example, prominently feature Indigenous people engaging in putatively quotidian practices. Later the

popular Western film genre in the U.S. centered on images of defeated, abject Indian warriors, images that were meant to teach immigrant communities important lessons about power, race, and citizenship.

In this seminar we will explore classical ethnographic and Western filmic representations of Indigenous peoples, but will focus primarily on contemporary work by Indigenous media artists in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Sápmi (the European Arctic), Aotearoa (New Zealand), and Australia. The course will be arranged by genre (music videos; narrative, documentary, and experimental film; and new media) so that we can give attention to how formal, stylistic and aesthetic considerations inform representations of Indigenous subjects. We will consider a range of media and theoretical secondary works as we give our attention to the following issues: the performance of identity and identifications; agency; sexuality and gender; self-representation; sovereignty; settler colonialism; public pedagogy; and oral narrative.

here that tracing the experience of the medieval chivalric subject of romance in the face of a threatening political order (Ottoman in the East and Absolutist in the West) is also worth emphasizing, and that the romance epic—the early modern revision of medieval romance—is the result of that realization. In the romance epics and other narratives which develop over the next centuries, Malory's shell-shocked knights will be moving not only into the holy landscape of a crusading past, but into a disorienting setting of an absolutist future which will demand the surrender of their sovereignty.

Raheja. SEM R 2:10PM-5:00PM.

### **English 289 – Autobiography and Memoir: Writing the Self and the Ethics of Engagement**

This seminar will survey a range of autobiographical modes and autobiography theory, functioning as both an introduction to the field of autobiography and an exploration into questions of subjectivity and the ethics of identity. Along the way, we will interrogate issues of truth, truth-telling, the dynamics of self and other, and self-fashioning, as well as asking why writing the self has been particularly important for women and people of color. We will look in particular at questions of self-representation, trauma, the role of memory, the relationship between the writing and written selves, and the creation of community through writing the self. Additionally, we will be asking questions about audience: what is the difference between voyeurism and witnessing? Between identification and appropriation? What are the roles of commodification and consumption? Why have autobiography and memoir become particularly privileged in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries? My purpose is to use autobiography as a way of thinking through issues of subjectivity, agency, the role of language, the workings of memory and its gaps, the disciplining of subjects, and the construction of gender, race, sexuality and class through tropes of becoming.

Students should have knowledge of or have read: *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*; slave narrative, especially *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs; Ben Yagoda's *Memoir* (this is required and should be read before seminar begins). Ideally, I would also like students to be familiar with *The Book of Margery Kempe*, St. Augustine's *Confessions*, *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, and *Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*.

Yamamoto. SEM T 2:10PM-5:00PM.