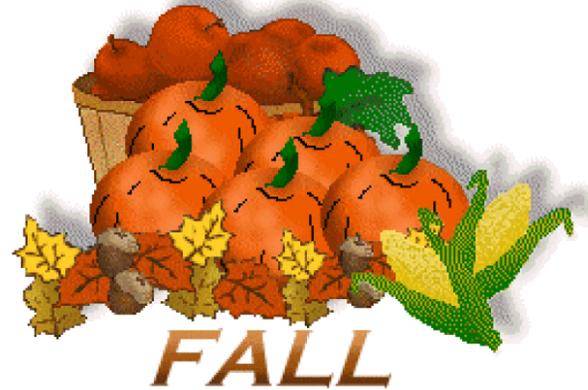


Fall 2018 English Graduate Seminars



CRN	Course	Title	Faculty	Location	Times	Day
25782	ENGL 262	Seminar in Renaissance Literature	Professor Heidi Brayman-Hackel	HMNSS 2212	2:10pm-5:00pm	Tuesday
25787	ENGL 272	Seminar in Critical Theory	Professor David Lloyd	HMNSS 2212	3:10pm-6:00pm	Wednesday
25757	ENGL 273	Seminar in Cultural Studies	Professor Susan Zieger	HMNSS 2212	10:10am-1:10pm	Tuesday
25759 and 25760	ENGL 275	Seminar in Film and Visual Culture	Professor James Tobias	HMNSS 2212	3:10pm – 6:00 pm	Thursday

English 275: The Avatar and the Essay: Histories and Futures, Theories and Practices

Professor James Tobias

Seminar Description:

This seminar examines the histories and theories of an important modality of contemporary argument: audiovisual works composed as essay or composed to have demonstrative effects. Paying special attention to short- and long-form works in which audiovisual mediation or digital computation significantly underlie or in fact comprise the expository register of an essay, we will survey a range of essay films, videos, and digital works whose demonstrative character or practices indicate larger transitions and transpositions in media networks as well as in understandings of the self as mediated through networks - that is, of the “avatar.” In this latter regard, we will be concerned not simply with authorial and aesthetic concerns presented in audiovisual essays, ranging from important works of third cinema and activist video to contemporary digital communications, but also, we will explore the ways in which acts of self-demonstration in digital contexts raises key questions about subjectivity, embodiment, history, and ethics - with regards to the digital technological apparatus, but also with regards to the histories and futures of media theory and practice. Because of the often narrative or speculative character of important works of the audiovisual essay, seminar discussions will map the contours of the audiovisual essay and the contemporary digital avatar in terms of both “fiction” and “non-fiction” works.

English 272: SEMINAR IN CRITICAL THEORY: Law and Literature

Professor David Lloyd

Description:

This seminar will explore the relation of law and literature, reading some crucial literary and theoretical texts together with critical legal theory and critical race studies. While several decades of work in law and literature and “law and humanities” have tended to focus on the humanization of the law by way of more inclusive story-telling, our focus will be more on the ways in which literature may problematize the grounds of the law. Likewise, where the focus of law and literature studies has tended to be on narrative forms, we will turn also to the question of poetry and justice: to what extent does poetic language and form challenge the idea of the law as narrative with a notion of “poetic justice”? Again, where law and literature studies have largely ignored the constitutive role of race and colonialism in the formation of legal orders, we will focus especially on the grounds of the law in violence and dispossession, in racial capitalism and regimes of property.

Although our readings have yet to be finalized, they will probably include some or all of the following:

Legal theorists/philosophers: Giorgio Agamben, Walter Benjamin, Brenna Bhandar, Robert Cover, Peter Fitzpatrick, Cheryl Harris, Nasser Hussein, Richard Posner, Carl Schmitt, Patricia Williams

Narrative and Poetry: Samuel Beckett, Franz Kafka, Layli Long Soldier, Herman Melville, Marlene NourbeSe Philip, W.B. Yeats

Criticism/Theory: Jacques Derrida, Saidiya Hartman, Barbara Johnson, Fred Moten, Tsvetan Todorov

Writing requirements for this course will be aligned with participants’ ongoing research projects and interests and could range from annotated bibliographies to conference or research papers.

English 273: Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, and the Frankfurt School

Professor Susan Zieger



Paul Klee, *Angelus Novus* (1920), inspiration for Benjamin's "angel of history."

Since the 1970s, Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) has emerged as one of the seminal thinkers of the twentieth century and a principal theorist of western modernity. His writings have become central to understanding the origins of cultural studies, media studies, and historiography; they have influenced a great range of interdisciplinary and theoretical work. *The Arcades Project* was Benjamin's unfinished analysis of nineteenth-century European urban life, commodity culture, technology, media and fashion. A completed manuscript is rumored to have been lost during his failed flight from Nazi-occupied Europe in 1940. The titular arcades were glass-roofed commercial enclosures similar to shopping malls, where flâneurs could idle and people-watch. *The Arcades Project*, along with Benjamin's other important late essays (such as "Surrealism," "Franz Kafka," "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility," "Some Motifs in Baudelaire," and "On the Concept of History"), extended and transformed Marx's concept of commodity fetishism from a description of bourgeois self-deception, to an indicator of modern signifying practices with potential for collective consciousness. By critiquing the "auratic" quality of high art, Benjamin challenged traditional aesthetics, reorienting analysis to the perceptual and experiential potential of social groups. He also tried to invent a mode of critical writing capable of intervening in its own historical moment. The Frankfurt School, with which Benjamin was associated, shared his effort to forge such a political criticism by refashioning Marxist dialectics. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) attempted to explain the apparent failure of the Enlightenment; Ernst Bloch's *Principle of Hope* (1954-1959) by contrast theorizes the

aesthetics of utopianism, and was later taken up by José Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia* (2009). This seminar introduces students to Benjamin's and the Frankfurt School's writings, with a special focus on *The Arcades Project*; topics will include (but are not limited to) urban life, commodity fetishism, media and mediation, the human interface with technology, and theories of history. Although familiarity with this material is helpful to all who work in literary studies in English, the course will be especially productive for students interested in the theoretical bases of cultural studies, media studies, historiography, and nineteenth- and early twentieth-century studies. Course requirements include one facilitation of class discussion, an abstract and annotated bibliography, and a 20-page research paper, which may relate the course material to students' other interests. Students will be asked to prepare readings for the first class session; over the summer, they may also wish to acquaint themselves more generally with Benjamin, for example by reading the recommended course texts, Jennings' and Eiland's *Walter Benjamin: A Critical Life*. (2014) and Susan Buck-Morss' *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (MIT, 1978). Required texts include: Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford) trans. Edmund Jephcott; Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Harvard, Belknap) trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin; Benjamin, *Illuminations* (Shocken) trans. Harry Zohn; and Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility and other Writings on Media* ed. Jennings, Doherty, and Levin (Harvard, Belknap); a selection from Bloch's *Principle of Hope* and other required texts will be posted on iLearn.

English 410 “Pedagogy”

Professor Susan Zieger

Seminar Description:

This course is designed as a student-centered discussion and laboratory to meet students’ needs for instruction in pedagogy not covered by other teacher training. There is no pre-determined syllabus or required reading. For the discussion component: please bring topics you’d like to cover to the first class meeting, and/or email me over the summer to let me know what you want out of the course. Further refinement of those identified needs will be part of our practice of pedagogical self-awareness, so the course will take shape as the quarter proceeds. For the laboratory component: students are invited to design and test a pedagogical exercise, and receive feedback, before implementing it in their own courses and reporting on its success. Please spend a little time thinking about pedagogical innovations you’d like to try in your class; however, these may also arise in response to the needs identified in the discussion component. Although there is no required reading, students may wish to consult James M. Lang’s *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning* and Kathleen Gabriel’s *Teaching Unprepared Students*.