

Winter 2018 Seminar Offerings

Seminar	Professor	Day/Time	Location	Seminar Title
ENGL246	James Tobias	Monday, 3:10-6:00pm	Humanities 1407	Seminar in Digital Media and Technocultural Studies
ENGL250	Mark Minch	Thursday, 3:10-6:00pm	Humanities 1407	Seminar in Native American Literary and Cultural Studies
ENGL253	Traise Yamamoto	Wednesday, 3:10-6:00pm	Humanities 1407	Seminar in Asian/American Literary and Cultural Studies
ENGL262	Heidi Brayman-Hackel	Friday, 11:10-2:00pm	Humanities 2212	Seminar in Renaissance Literature
ENGL275	Katherine Kinney	Tuesday, 3:10-6:00pm	Humanities 1407	Seminar in Film and Visual Cultures

ENGL 246: Digital Media Theories, Praxes, Histories

Dr. James Tobias

Seminar Description

This seminar examines theories, practices, and histories of post-cybernetic media. Digital communications, networks, and cultural forms mediate globally extensive processes of cultural production; contemporary digital networks thus call our attention to the changing dynamics of historical networks of peoples, technologies, cultures, or sovereignties. The formal specificities of contemporary digital cultural forms (say, the graphical interface, interactive narrative, user-generated content, mash-ups, behavioral targeting in social media and social marketing, networked authorship and organizing) demonstrate significant shifts in the temporal-spatial dynamics of cultural production and reception, as well as shifts in the imaginary and affective modalities in which we experience displacement or belonging in the larger stream of historical time. Placed in this context, digital media works have prompted, in the academy and beyond, large-scale re-evaluations of accounts of subjectivity, corporeality, situatedness, authorship, agency, materialities of communication, and reception. Finally, beyond the specific mutations of digital cultural forms and the refiguring of time, space, and memory typical of hyperindustrialism, popular discourses of “the digital network” appearing in print, audiovisual, or interactive media also provide important objects of study for contemporary critique relevant to understandings of everyday life. This seminar explores the specificities of networked digital media, the larger historical transitions of which they are a part, and the way we situate these theoretical interventions and material practices within larger cultural fields undergoing changing local and global relationships.

ENGL 250: Seminar in Native American Literary and Cultural Studies

Dr. Mark Minch

Indian Time: On Refusing the Future

In a time of “postindian survivance” (Vizenor), “heritage” or conscious culture (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Clifford), ongoing decolonization and inherent sovereignty (Coulthard, Tuck, Rickard), and political and cultural resurgence (Simpson, Womack, Gunn Allen), the status of Native Americans in relation to the settler state has seemingly become more and more complex and troubling. Surrounded by signs of Indigenous-specific modes of modernization, globalization, and World [fill in the discipline], Indigenous peoples and their ways of life are paradoxically understood to be continuous and discontinuous, in the past and future-oriented, invented and authentically real. Through the trope of the vanishing Indian, Indigenous peoples have long been figured as the peoples without future, even as a major impediment to the future itself, with their extermination and/or overcoming being the conditions for progressive futurism. And yet, a long tradition of projecting a future through prescribed creolization with Indigenous peoples and their ways of life can be traced back to the early years of so-called conquest.

As Jodi Byrd writes, “...ideas of Indians and Indianness have served as the ontological ground through which US settler colonialism enacts itself as settler imperialism at this crucial moment in history when everything appears to be headed towards collapse.” The transit of Indianness, as the perpetuated model of otherness and contagion of/by US empire, has created the conditions—through the intertwining of settler colonialism and neoliberal forms of financialization, privatization, resource extraction, precaritization, and disaster capitalism—for an increased interest in Indigenous modes of being for the sake of alternative futures (for a future for us all), seemingly beyond the nation state. But through such notions as the anthropocene, the imagination of a future has become increasingly universalized (and professionalized). In this context, Native Americans are cast as both savior of and transcendent to the settler nation state, paradoxically through their own notion of inherent sovereignty.

In this seminar we will trace the figure of the Indian as described by a number of theorists (Vizenor, Byrd, Saldaña-Portillo, de Castro, Rifkin, et al) in order to explore its temporal dimensions and disruptions, particularly in relation to globalization, planetarity, and the World. Ultimately, this will be to ask: what would it look like to employ Audra Simpson’s notion of refusal in the face of disaster settler colonialism and its investments in the future? And how can we delink from the above colonial oppositions and options (and the lack thereof)?

ENGL 253: Seminar in Asian/American Literary & Cultural Studies

Dr. Traise Yamamoto

Seminar Description

Knots and Conflicts in Asian/American Literary Studies: Corporeal Memory, Wounding, and Gendered Inscription

We will begin with two of the foundational texts in Asian/American literary studies: *No-No Boy* and *Obasan*, which will provide a framework for many, though not all, of the issues we will be focusing on in this seminar: nation and the gendered, sexualized body; self-extinction and wounding; inscription, memory and corporeality; and war and immigration. Many of the texts we will be reading have evoked conflicts or controversies. Thus, we will not only be examining the texts; we will also be thinking about the constitution of the field *as* a field. We will interrogate the formation of the field, as well as some of the theoretical frameworks that have informed it, such as autobiography studies, trauma studies, queer studies and kinship studies, among others.

Seminar members will give two formal presentations (one pedagogical, one theoretical), act as respondent for two presentations, and lead one seminar discussion. There will be weekly postings, which all seminar participants should read, and a final seminar paper of 20-25 pages. This course is designed for those focusing on the field of Asian/American literary and cultural studies, as well as for those unfamiliar with the field.

Likely primary texts (a final list will be sent before the start of the winter term. There will also be pdfs posted to the Blackboard site): John Okada, *No-No Boy*, Joy Kogawa, *Obasan*, Susan Choi, *American Woman*, Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*, Lois-Ann Yamanaka, *Blu's Hanging*, Chang-rae Lee, *On Such a Full Sea*, Jade Snow Wong, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, Yiyun Li, *Dear Friend, from My Life I write to You in Your Life*, Noel Alunit, *Letters to Montgomery Clift*. Likely secondary texts: Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise*, Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*. Chapters from Rachel C. Lee, *The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America*, David Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship*, Mark Chiang, *The Cultural Capital of Asian American Studies*.

ENGL 262 Seminar in Renaissance Literature: Early Modern Women Writers

Dr. Heidi Brayman

Seminar Description

Nearly ninety years ago, Virginia Woolf delivered the series of lectures that would become *A Room of One's Own* (1929), in which she considers the material circumstances and social attitudes underpinning the seeming absence of books by Renaissance women:

any woman born with a great [literary] gift in the sixteenth century would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at. . . . To have lived a free life in London in the sixteenth century would have meant for a woman who was poet and playwright a nervous stress and dilemma which might well have killed her.

Built on the recovery efforts of feminist scholars and women's historians of the past 35 years, this course will explore the 16th- and 17th-century poets and playwrights largely unknown to Woolf: Isabella Whitney, Mary Wroth, Elizabeth Cary, Amelia Lanyer, Hester Poulter, and Margaret Cavendish (whom Woolf deemed "the crazy Duchess [who] became a bogey to frighten clever girls with").

Guiding our readings will be questions about gender, genre, form, and tradition. We will consider evidence about women as readers and examine more ephemeral writings by early modern women in diaries, letters, samplers, and even graffiti.

The seminar will count towards the DE in BAM. Its focus on women writers makes it a relevant course for students working on gender, women writers, and feminist theory in later periods, and it may appeal to students in History and Comparative Literature as well.

Requirements: weekly posts, seminar presentation, 15-20 page seminar paper, and the option of leading 20-30 minutes of a paired upper-division undergraduate English course.

Note: The HEH-EMSI Renaissance Literature Seminar will meet Saturday mornings January 20 (Wendy Wall) and February 10 (Bradin Cormack). Please block those dates in your calendar and make every effort to attend. The seminar meets at the Huntington Library and runs 10:00-Noon with an optional lunch after.

English 275: Making Movies New in the 1960s

Dr. Katherine Kinney

Seminar Description

Feature filmmaking and moviegoing changed dramatically during the 1960s, as Hollywood's monopoly over production weakened, cameras became cheaper and more mobile, and American audiences and filmmakers joined what Time Magazine called the "furious springtime of world cinema." Independently produced movies of the 1960s offer a rich place to consider the aesthetic, technical, and social aspects of film production, reception and criticism. We will begin with *Psycho*, Alfred Hitchcock's self-professed attempt to make "the first film of the 1960s" and Drew Associates' exemplary Direct Cinema documentary, "Primary," which were bell-weather of changes to come. We will look briefly at both classic Hollywood and 1950s Art House filmmaking, and then explore independently-produced fictional narrative films grounded in a range of aesthetics: including realism, surrealism, improvisation, and exploitation. These films playfully challenge narrative and diegetic closure and the classical cinema codes that managed sexuality, political dissent and racial difference. These include: *Pull My Daisy* (d. Robert Frank and Albert Leslie, 1959); *Shadows* (d. John Cassavetes, 1959); *The Connection* (d. Shirley Clarke, 1961); *Guns of the Trees* (d. Jonas Mekas, 1963); *Nothing But a Man* (d. Michel Roemer, 1964); *Night of the Living Dead* (d. George Romero, 1968); *Medium Cool* (d. Haskell Wexler, 1969); *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* (d. William Greaves, 1968); and *Midnight Cowboy* (d. John Schlesinger, 1969).

NOTE: THERE IS NO SCREENING FOR THIS CLASS. The films will available to stream via ilearn and in as DVDs in the library.