

Winter 2015 GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Note:

In Fall 2013, graduate students in the Department of English asked the department to make sure that all course descriptions included answers to the following three questions: 1.) Is your seminar broad-ranging or more specialized? 2.) Is your seminar open to students with little background or is it meant for more advanced students? 3.) If non-English students want to take your seminar, should they get prior authorization from you before enrolling? You will find the answers at the end of each course description.

English 265 (Adriana Craciun): Global Voyages and Visions in the Long 19th Century

This interdisciplinary seminar explores "the global nineteenth century" as imagined through British and European writings, artworks, museums, collections, and exhibitions, in relation to encounters with indigenous people and their cultural productions. We will consider how key institutions and cultural forms produced distinct forms of "the global" in the long nineteenth century: long-distance scientific voyages of exploration, public museums, world exhibitions, travel literature and the novel, planetary sciences, and the slave trade. We will work on a metropolitan scale-- considering the British Museum and Great Exhibition as contested global spaces and contact zones within London as world city (cosmopolis)-- and on oceanic scales, looking at long-distance scientific voyages and long distance indigenous Oceanic voyagers and how their entanglements shaped the 19th century's visions of the global.

Alongside texts by well-known writers like Mary Shelley, Jules Verne, Alexander von Humboldt, and Robert Louis Stevenson, we will consider the writings, visual art, and other cultural forms created by indigenous voyagers from Africa, India, Ra'iatea and Tahiti (Oceania), and the Arctic. We will consider this archive of diverse impressions, from the highly individualistic to the rigorously institutional, the indigenous and the European, in relationship to current debates about the multiple origins and spaces of globalization. Two weeks will focus on case studies, of the British Museum and the Great Exhibition of 1851, as unique spaces making possible a wide range of contested global visions. This seminar is robustly interdisciplinary and will include key works in anthropology, geography, museum and collection studies, literary history and theory, history of science, history of empire and of race, and postcolonial and indigenous studies. We will read scholarship by authors including Nicholas Thomas, Paul Gilroy, James Clifford, Philip Steinberg, Gayatri Spivak, Antoinette Burton, Tony Bennett, Epeli Hau'ofa, Greg Denning, Annie Coombes, Neil MacGregor, Mary Louise Pratt, Bronwen Douglas and Vanessa Smith. British cultural forms will be read transculturally and alongside European and indigenous works, and drawn from the disciplinary range described above. Details will be available online: <http://craciun.ucr.edu/teaching/>

1. This is a broad-ranging seminar. It is also a robustly interdisciplinary seminar that requires reading challenging critical material and working with primary materials drawn from outside British literary studies.
2. Graduate students of all levels are welcome; specialization in the nineteenth century is not required.
3. Graduate students from all humanities and humanistic social sciences are warmly invited and do not require special permission to join.

English 273 (Susan Zieger) : Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, and the Frankfurt School



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; Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), that of the Marxist revolution. 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, among other things, 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 winter break, 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; Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility and other Writings on Media* ed. Jennings, Doherty, and Levin (Harvard, Belknap); and Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Beacon Press; intro Douglass Kellner). Other required texts will be posted on iLearn.

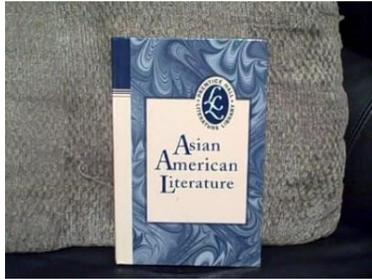
1. This is a broad-ranging seminar.
2. It is open to students with little background in the topic.
3. Non-English students need not obtain prior authorization before enrolling.

English 289 (Fred Moten): Conceptual Poetry; Commune Editions; the Black Took Collective

In this seminar we will study three advanced, experimental moments and movements (Conceptual Poetry; Commune Editions; the Black Took Collective) in contemporary American poetry. We'll be concerned, precisely, or as precisely as we can, with the relation between moment and movement and it's uneasy fit with the relation between position and velocity. It might seem, sometimes, like this could turn into a "Physics for Poets" class but it's more likely, by the end, to have become a "Poetry for Physicists" class. What might that mean? Perhaps in the not too distant future we'll look back and wonder how we got over into field in which we become physicists for poetry. At any rate, contemporary concern with and problematization and mobilization of *the concept* in poetry and in the (human) sciences will be a particular interest all throughout the course. Optics, phonics and the sociology of literary production and reception will also be things we continually consider as we engage in a regular practice of reading, writing and grounding together.

This is a specialized seminar, open to students with little or no background in the subject matter and to non-English students, who need no prior authorization from the instructor.

English 253 (Stephen Sohn): There's No Place Like Home: Trauma Theory, Psychoanalysis, and Asian American Fiction



Perhaps it is no surprise that so many Asian American texts operate from a narrative organized around the search for a home, however that location might be constituted. Asian Americans have been historically defined in the pre-1965 period as the alien other, at one point unable to own property and therefore literally excluded from the possibilities of owning the very structures they inhabited. Strangely enough, even in the post-1965 period, supposedly the age of unparalleled rights for the raced subject, narratives of displacement, disorientation and disintegration remain dominant. As such we will investigate the ways in which Asian American characters and personages within various cultural productions navigate labyrinthine worlds often violently reconstructed and reformulated. We will consider the possibility that there really is “no place like home” for various Asian American subjects. However damaging this potentiality might sound, the writers themselves find a productive capacity to represent these various tales, suggesting a more nuanced framework from which to situate loss, trauma, and melancholia. We will be thinking about how to extend psychoanalytic and trauma theories brought forth by Sigmund Freud, Anne Anlin Cheng, David Eng, Cathy Caruth, Judith Lewis Herman, Dominick LaCapra among others to think about questions of “home” in Asian American literature. To that end, we will also consistently constellate around the query: is there an Asian American literary home? Primary text selections may include one or more of the following: Lan Samantha Chang’s *Hunger*, Fae Myenne Ng’s *Bone*, Brian Ascalon Roley’s *American Son*, Alexander Chee’s *Edinburgh*, Amit Majmudar’s *Partitions*, Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Mariko Nagai’s *Dust of Eden*, Vaddey Ratner’s *In the Shadow of the Banyan*, le thi diem thuy’s *The Gangster We are All Looking For*.

Course Objectives: a.) To understand some foundational terms, concepts, or theories of trauma theory and psychoanalysis (victim vs. perpetrator vs. witness/ mourning vs. melancholia; racial melancholia; structural vs. historical trauma); b.) To consider the relationship of reading practice (e.g. psychoanalytic critique) in relation to primary text material (first person Asian American fictions); c.) To engage and to deploy basic definitions and concepts of race/ethnic studies (in discussion and in papers) such as race/racial formation/ Asian American/ immigrant vs. refugee/ exile/ transnationalism); d.) To embed knowledge accrued in this course within a larger continuum of literature and literary studies: How does this course relate to the others that you have already taken? How will it influence your trajectory as a graduate student? What will you

take from this course into future courses? e.) To produce a rigorously researched and written seminar paper, one that is in some way inspired by course materials (however loosely defined).

1. This seminar is targeted at students interested in issues related to race and ethnicity, especially as it emerges as a central thematic in contemporary American literature. The seminar is further germane to students who hope to employ psychoanalytic (or variants thereof) theory and critique in their dissertation and associated scholarship. Though the seminar is certainly specialized based upon both content and reading practice, any students with a general interest in contemporary American literature should find much of relevance in this course.
2. The seminar is open to students with little background in these topics or reading practices. More important for this course is the student's willingness to engage different archives and textual bodies.
3. Non-English students should get prior authorization from the professor in order to enroll.

English 268 (Kim Devlin): JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*

Ulysses is a text that every student of advanced literary studies should technically read: at the end of the 20th century it was ranked by various groups as the most important/best/#1 book written in English during the past hundred years. But unfortunately, few readers are able to get through it on their own: it is eccentric, experimental, densely allusive, difficult, and long; but it is also fascinating, comical, wildly imaginative, lewd, engaging, and (even) moving. It is most easily approached in a reading group or (in our case) a graduate seminar. What is *Ulysses* about? Everything, including literally (in its penultimate chapter) the kitchen sink. Students may choose to address a wide range of topics and issues: Dublin, Ireland, history, politics, nationalism, colonialism, xenophobia, cultural "otherness," religions, anti-Semitism, ethics, love, hate, war, peace, violence, machismo, women in a patriarchal regime, desire, sexualities, adultery, families, human relationships, intersubjective selfhood, language, textuality, photography, advertising, commodities, trash, pollution, the body and its functions, animality, horse racing, drinking, rumor, fashion, music, singing, birth, death, the unconscious, the taboo, literary theory, heroism and anti-heroism, poverty, classism, earlier literary styles, and much much more. In *Ulysses*, there is something for everybody.

Required Texts: the 1986 Random House edition of *Ulysses*; Don Gifford's "*Ulysses*" *Annotated*; and "*Ulysses*": *En-Gendered Perspectives* (ed. Devlin and Reizbaum). Optional: Blamires' *The Bloomsday Book*.

There will also be an on-line coursepack, (through Rivera library) with important critical essays on some of the chapters.

- 1) This is a specialized course, with intensive close reading expected and practiced outside and in class; but students can expand the seminar to meet their own particular interests and/or fields.
- 2) Students with no knowledge of the text are welcome. Everyone should (re)read in advance Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.
- 3) Students from other departments are also welcome, but they should know that they will be reading a text that is challenging for grad students in the English Department.

The only temperamental requirement is an Odyssean spirit of perdurance, curiosity, and wild adventure.

English 279 (Vorris Nunley): Rogue Tongues: Privileging Rhetoric, Re-Accenting Critical Theory, and Re-thinking a Metaphysics of Meaningful Presence

“Just as there is fraud in buying and selling, so there is fraud in spoken (and written) words.”
 –The Babylonian Talmud

Plato uncritically constructed rhetoric as dangerous. As rogue. Why? Rhetoric requires philosophers—as Gramsci noted, we are all philosophers—to recognize their own rhetorical practices. Their own inescapable frauds.

This seminar will make audible the rhetoric muffled by, but inherently embedded in, the noisy matrices Zygmunt Bauman refers to as “vogue words” or vogue knowledges of philosophy, critical theory, and, ironically, rhetorical studies. Through a strategic privileging of rhetoric over philosophy, resonance over reason, listening over hearing, weak ontologies over strong ontology, consciousness over agency, and rhetorical presence over the trope of the human, seminar will encourage a decolonial /rhetorical methodology that presupposes a shift in one’s theoretical and experiential references. Class will racialize, queer, and unsettle the biopolitical and well as the world’s most pervasive religion: neoliberalism.

Through theoretical texts, film, art, and music, seminar participants will explore concepts/experiences related to Being, becoming, (b)lackness, presence, performativity, and radical alterities. Informed by the usual and unusual suspects of scholars and rhetoricians such as Saidiya Hartman, Michel Foucault, Athena Athanasiou, Cicero, Maria, W. Stewart, Alexander G. Weheliye, Friedrich Nietzsche, Kenneth Burke, Sylvia Wynter, Protagoras, Frantz Fanon, and Karl Jung, seminar will attempt to supply theoretical insight and *phronesis* (practical wisdom) to enable students to deploy rogue tongues, bandit writing, and vagabond resistances to normalized “making live, making die, and letting die” oppressive governmentalities and strategies of the containment and poisoning of dignity and belonging.

1. Seminar is broad-ranging.
2. No background in rhetorical theory required. While I will explain basic concepts, some background in critical theory or philosophy or cultural studies would be useful.

- Can recommend readings that will benefit concerned seminarians.
3. Permission from instructor required for non-English major students.

English 248 (Sherryl Vint): The Politics of Life and Death in Biomedicine

In her influential “Cyborg Manifesto” Donna Haraway contends, “the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion.” This seminar will focus on this possible collapse of science fiction with social reality, examining the genre less as a specific popular literature and more, as Istvan Csicsery-Ronay has recently suggested, as “a mode of response that frames and tests experiences as if they were aspects of a work of science fiction.” We will focus in particular in the rethinking of the governance of life under neoliberalism in the work of biopolitical theorists such as Foucault, Mbembe, Hardt & Negri, Agamben and Žižek. The course will provide a general introduction to the perspectives and problematics explored by biopolitical theory, and use this to inform our discussions of sf texts. A key question informing this seminar is whether—how—science fiction gives us a language and iconography for exploring aspects of experience in globalized capitalist, technologically saturated society. In particular we will be interested in ways that biotechnology is changing what it means to be human materially as well as in discourse. Our approach to sf will notice how it is able to literalize certain metaphors for thinking about contemporary existence, such as the corporation as “person” or the posthuman subject, and consider whether we might think of the genre as a kind of vernacular theory for working through the implications of our technologically medicated society. The readings will be equally split between theory and fiction, and the course will include film and television as well as print.

1. This is a specialized seminar that will focus on a particular thematic motif within a narrow range of recent sf texts. It is not a survey or overview of the genre and is organized around theoretical questions and perspectives, not around science fiction authors.
2. The class does not assume familiarity with the genre of science fiction, although some background in reading/viewing the genre and in critical approaches associated with the study of science fiction would be helpful. Our main focus, however, is on whether (and how) the tools and techniques of sf overlap with and illuminate central theoretical questions now moving to the center of the humanities such as posthumanism or the anthropocene.
3. The course fulfills requirements for the Designated Emphasis in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies, so students from other disciplines who are pursuing this degree certificate are welcome to enroll.

English 275 (Jim Tobias): Music, Sound, and the Audiovisual Work as Essay

This seminar will explore audiovisual works in which music and musicality, sound and audition, or listening practices or technologies contribute substantive or determining roles in prompting critical audience interpretation. We will consider a range of such films, videos, or interactive works across audiovisual media which point to transformations in media production, distribution, and reception, paying close attention all along to the practices of listening as well as those of seeing, and to the ways in which sound and image are synchronized or held apart. Each of the works we discuss uses music, sound, or listening to mobilize particular meanings, affects, values, or potentials of multimedia form, mass media operations, and popular cultural formations. Our examples, including the film musical, visual music animation, the soundtrack, the music clip, or the musical documentary or essay film, will demonstrate the ways in which questions of corporeality, memory and history, or anticipation, hope, and the future play out in the musical image. Thus we will be considered not simply with authorial or formal concerns presented in these works, but also, the ways in which they arise in critical contexts which the works address, and in which we will situate and analyze them. To this end, we will consider the ways in which sound, music, and viewing and listening practices present an implicitly or explicitly essayistic dimension in these works, and seminar discussions and essays will map the contours of the audiovisual essays we explore.

This seminar provides specialized training in interpreting audiovisual work. We will concentrate on works whose meanings are substantively constructed through the use of music, sound, or musicality in the visual image. And while many of the works screened are generally understood as narrative or non-narrative artwork, a key goal of our seminar work will be to discern the essayistic components, textures, or layers of these works. The seminar is open to participants who have prior experience with analyzing audiovisual works, and to more advanced students. Non-English students should request prior authorization from the instructor.

English 269 (Emma Stapely): Seminar in Early American Literature: Inventing Early America: The Canon and its Discontents

In the last decade, early American literary scholars have proposed a dazzling number of conceptual “turns” within the field in an effort to counter its historic collusion with U.S. nationalist and imperialist ideologies. With the canon wars of the 1980s-90s now (apparently) behind us, the question seems to be not what to read but *how* to read it within wider networks of relations (transatlantic, hemispheric, oceanic, global, etc.). Another way of saying this, perhaps, is that early American literary study today evinces an acute preoccupation with its own contexts. Our course will approach this development by attempting to historicize it. We will conduct a parallel investigation of canonical early American literary texts and the historical conditions—primarily in the 20th century, and particularly during the Cold War—that catalyzed the invention

of early American literature as such. This course is designed to provide critical foundations in early American literature that will serve students with a broad range of field and disciplinary interests, especially in American Lit/American Studies. Indeed, while American Studies tends to historicize itself in the 19th century, scholars like Perry Miller, Edmund Morgan, and Leslie Fiedler, whose interventions helped to establish “American Literature” in university curriculums, were in fact grounded in what are now considered “early” materials from the 17th and 18th centuries. Our work together will be animated by the hope that a deeper understanding of how and why this happened will sharpen our sense of ourselves as politically embedded, politically responsible readers, and enable us more effectively to counter the deployment of literature toward ideological ends.

This is a broad-ranging course that neither requires nor presumes previous knowledge of early American literature and scholarship; all are welcome. Non-English students do not require prior authorization from me before enrolling.

For English graduate students only:

English 410 (Weihsin Gui): Professionalization: Skills and Workshops

This course is designed for graduate students in English who have completed coursework and are preparing for or have already taken their Qualifying Exam II. This winter quarter professionalization seminar focuses more on helping graduate students develop the “tools of the trade” of a scholar and teacher in an academic context. It is different from the spring quarter seminar that will focus more on the preparation of materials for job applications. This winter quarter seminar helps students build their professional skills, practices, and profiles through a series of workshops that are driven by the enrolled students’ declared needs. These workshops may cover such topics as: applying to conferences, crafting conference presentations, public speaking, identifying publication venues, revising a seminar paper into a publishable article, applying for grants, networking, professional etiquette, creating an online academic profile, balancing teaching and research. Again, the specific topics covered will be determined by the needs and interests of the graduate students who are taking this seminar. Participation in this course will count towards the quarterly professionalization requirement for those graduate students enrolled in ENGL299.

Note: Professor Gui will hold an information session in mid-November for graduate students interested in taking the winter quarter 410 to discuss possible topics that will be covered. Attendance at this information session will count as the professionalization requirement for

graduate students enrolled in ENGL299 for Fall 2014. Please contact him by email for more details.

1. This is a broad-ranging seminar as it will cover a range of professionalization topics.
2. Generally speaking, this seminar is designed for graduate students who have completed their coursework and completed Qualifying Exam II. Graduate students who are preparing for Qualifying Exam II or preparing their areas petition can enroll, but they should be aware that this seminar will not cover topics related to exam preparation or the areas petition.
3. Non-English graduate students should contact the instructor before enrolling in this seminar.