

Spring 2016 Graduate Seminar Course Descriptions as of 2/11/16

Note:

In Fall 2013, graduate students from 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.

Days, Times, and Rooms TBA:

English 262 – Sem. in Renaissance Lit. (H. Brayman Hackel)

English 272 – Sem. in Critical Theory (J. Childers)

English 289 – Sem. in Genres (F. Moten)

English 246 – Sem. in Digital Media & Technoculture (J. Tobias)

English 410 – Professionalization (W. Gui)

English 262: Seminar in Renaissance Literature (Critical Conversations) – H. Brayman Hackel

This seminar will immerse students in a range of critical and theoretical conversations in early modern studies: disability studies, material text studies, performance studies, queer philology, various historicisms, ecocriticism, and new formalisms. We will read major critical works alongside paired primary texts from a range of genres (likely including devotional lyric, prose fiction, epyllion, miscellanies, and a play or two, certainly one of Shakespeare's late plays, perhaps *Two Noble Kinsmen*, and Ford's *Tis Pity She's a Whore*).

The course will include a day-long symposium on Saturday, April 16, at the Huntington Library honoring the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. We will use the occasion of this colloquium to engage with six senior Renaissance scholars who bring a range of critical and theoretical approaches to the study of Shakespeare and early modern drama.

1. This course will be broad-ranging.
2. English PhD students with little experience with medieval or early modern texts but with a strong interest in critical theory will be well matched with the course.
3. Students from other departments are welcome but should email the professor to discuss their preparedness for the seminar.

English 272: Seminar in Critical Theory (Edward Said) – J. Childers

Perhaps no contemporary critic has had a greater impact on literary and cultural studies than Edward Said. His *Orientalism* is acknowledged as the formative text of post-colonial studies in the academy. Earlier in his career he was considered a thoroughgoing poststructuralist, a theorist of “oppositional” criticism. Yet as a more mature critic he regularly identified himself as a humanist. His work was informed by thinkers as disparate as Auerbach, Adorno, Foucault, Derrida, Fanon, Althusser, Williams, and Gramsci.

In this seminar we will examine some of the central works of Said’s career, focusing on their intellectual context as well as their effect on literary and cultural studies (both in the academy and in the broader media). Major Said texts will include: *Orientalism*, *Culture and Imperialism*, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, *Reflections on Exile and other Essays*, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*. We will also be reading some of the work that was important to his own thinking, including essays by many of the critics and theorists listed above.

Students will be encouraged to engage critically with Said’s work and to consider how the literary, political, and theoretical implications of his positions and methods have contributed to the shaping of their own analytical agendas.

This seminar will be fairly specialized inasmuch as it will be dealing with the work of Edward Said. However, it also will have broad theoretical and methodological implications beyond Said's work.

This seminar is open to students who have not read Said, but some familiarity with theoretical works is expected.

Students in graduate programs other than English are welcome; however, they should get prior approval from the instructor.

English 289: Seminar in Genres - Paraliterature: Samuel R. Delany’s *Return to Nevèrÿon* – Fred Fred Moten

Where does writing come from (both historically, as a particular linguistic and semiotic phenomenon, and individually, as the result of impulse and desire)? How might we begin to speak of the sexuality and/or procreativity of writing? What is the relationship between social/economic/political formations and the origins and ends of writing? What happens when we think of money as a kind of writing, writing as a kind of value? How do writing and money produce space and time? These are questions that a sustained engagement with Delany’s work, particularly his *Return to Nevèrÿon* tetralogy, will allow us to address. In so doing, we’ll pay close attention to the bridges Delany builds between the historical universe he imagines and the contemporary one we inhabit. Above all, this requires close investigation of Delany’s encounter with contemporary critical theory. We’ll think about the encounter between

Fiction and Theory, between these fictions and the particular theory that we'll read; we'll think about how, and whether, they *reflect* one another.

English 246: Seminar in Digital Medical and Technoculture – Play and the Audiovisual Essay – James Tobias

In this seminar, we will explore critical approaches to modern and contemporary media and the technologies underlying their use. Our lens for the survey will be "the ludic" in relation to modern media and technology, and to that end, we will place critical theories of play in media or technology in relation to audiovisual fiction or non-fiction whose narratives or forms make explicit or implicit arguments about play in and as media or historical mediation. Critical texts will include works by Benjamin, Huizinga, Turing, McLuhan, Deleuze, Deleuze/Guattari, Haraway, and others; weekly screenings will feature primary audiovisual texts.

This essay will introduce seminal texts in critical media and technology studies, and thus provide a broad introduction to the intersections of these two areas. It will emphasize theories of play, and will thus provide a specialized survey of this latter topic. The seminar is open to graduate students at all levels. Students from other departments may take the seminar with the consent of the instructor.

English 410: Professionalization: Preparing Job Application Materials – Weihsin Gui

This course is designed for graduate students in English who have completed coursework and have advanced to candidacy (i.e. completed Qualifying Exam II). This seminar is designed to help graduate students who are planning to apply for tenure-track academic positions at four-year schools draft, workshop, and revise their job application materials. These materials usually include the following documents: cover letter, CV, research statement, teaching philosophy statement, and possibly a teaching portfolio. This seminar will also touch on applying for postdoctoral fellowships, faculty positions at two-year/community colleges, and resources for post-academic and alternative-to-academia career options. However, our main focus will be on applying for tenure-track faculty positions at four-year schools. This is because advertisements for these faculty positions start appearing in August of every year but our fall quarter begins only in October; therefore it would be advantageous for potential job seekers to have their application materials ready by the end of the spring quarter before the job cycle begins. 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-February for graduate students interested in taking the spring quarter 410. Attendance at this information session can count as the professionalization requirement for graduate students enrolled in ENGL299 for Winter 2015 (if they are not already enrolled in the winter quarter ENGL410). Please contact him by email for more details.

1. This is a focused seminar/workshop specifically about job application materials.
2. This seminar is designed for graduate students who have completed their coursework and advanced to candidacy.
3. Non-English graduate students should contact the instructor before enrolling in this seminar.