

Fall 2016 Graduate Seminar Course Descriptions as of 4/20/16

Monday:

English 278: Seminar in Minority Discourse (R. Hernandez) 5:10 - 8:00 pm

Tuesday:

English 200: Introduction to Graduate Study (S. Zieger) 10:10 am – 1:00 pm

Wednesday:

English 253: Seminar in Asian/American Literary Studies (S. Sohn) 2:10 – 5:00 pm

Thursday:

English 262: Seminar in Renaissance Literature (D. Willis) 2:10 – 5:00 pm

Friday:

English 269: Seminar in American Literature to 1900 (E. Stapely) 1:10 – 4:00 pm

Note:

In Fall 2013, graduate students from the Department of English asked the department to make sure that all course descriptions [except English 200, each fall quarter] 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 [with the exception of English 200 – a required course for new English Ph.D. students, entering with the BA where the questions on non-applicable].

English 278: Seminar in Minority Discourse: Ethnic Camera: Visual Archives of Race
(Professor Robb Hernandez)
Mondays 5:10 – 8:00 pm

The visual translation of race has never been more pressing in our contemporary moment. From recent efforts to legalize racial profiling in public policy and anti-immigrant legislation to the surveillance of people of color under the ruse of national security protection-- citizenship and cultural belonging are being tested like never before. But how do we see evidence of race? How is racial difference made legible, codified, and managed as visual

information? How has technology's intrusive and expansive lens instilled visions of ethnic difference? More importantly, how do we design and practice visual research methodologies against ocular regimes of power and knowledge?

This seminar is interested in the racialization of evidence as well as the way in which race is given visual definition through looking relations. By examining a cadre of recent scholarship by long-standing and emergent thinkers at the cutting edge of visual, race and technology studies, we will interrogate four conceptual dimensions of visual archives: ethnic myopia, ethnographic encounter, counterarchivality, and surveillance. Working through these evidentiary paradigms, seminar participants will be challenged to not only compare theoretical and methodological frameworks but also to fashion their own original visual research design models. While most of our work will take place in seminar, students can expect to engage special collections, fieldwork assignments, and practice-based exercises. Although a familiarity with U.S. ethnic literatures, visual culture studies, library/information studies and American art history is helpful, it is not required for this course. This seminar is ideal for graduate students principally interested in interdisciplinary research design models or in preparation of dissertation projects where visual methodologies are paramount. Graduate students outside English are welcome to join the course with prior permission from the instructor. Some of the course materials may include works by: Roland Barthes, Martin A. Berger, Simone Browne, Michelle Caswell, Ann Cvetkovich, Jacqueline Francis, Jennifer A. Gonzalez, Eric Ketelaar, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Cheryl Knott, Curtis Marez, Nicholas Mirzoeff, Shawn Michelle Smith, Roberto Tejada, Kirsten Weld, and Deborah Gray White. This seminar fulfills course requirements for the Designated Emphasis in Book, Archive and Manuscript Studies.

English 200: Introduction to Graduate Study

(Professor Susan Zieger)

Tuesdays 10:10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

This intensive seminar is required of all entering graduate students who do not already have the M.A. degree, and is strongly advised for those entering the program who do. Its principal objective is to familiarize students with current approaches to literary, cultural, and media studies; visits from English department faculty to discuss their own methods will facilitate this aim. Its secondary objective is to introduce and develop the skills and strategies needed to succeed in the profession. Participants practice the skills in a series of short assignments, including a 10-15 page research paper. Over the summer, each student will be asked to select a short text (such as a poem, short story, or film) from their field on which to focus their work throughout the quarter, and to read or view each other's texts, before the first seminar meeting on Tuesday, September 27. This will be a very small, intensive, discussion-based seminar with a workshop component for the assignments; participants should prepare to engage each other, participate at a high level at each meeting, and produce and share each assignment on schedule. This rigor will yield rewards: a command of material central to our profession, proven ability to produce complex pieces of writing quickly, thorough knowledge of a key text in your field, and – not least – the camaraderie that comes with

sharing new challenges. Aside from texts determined by the participants and faculty visitors, and those posted on the course website, the required text is Gregory Colon Semenza, *Graduate Study for the 21st Century* (2nd edition. Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010). A recommended text is *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, eds. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris (Wiley-Blackwell, 2005).

English 253: There's No Place Like Home: Trauma Theory, Psychoanalysis, and Asian American Literature

(Professor Stephen Sohn)

Wednesdays 2:10 – 5:00 pm

Perhaps it is no surprise that so many Asian American texts are organized around the search for a home, however that location might be constituted or defined. 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, lyric figures, 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? Due to a possible major reorganization in this course, I am considering the possibility of including a variety of genres and forms, including the memoir, graphic novel, poetry, and fiction. Some possible selections may include:

Young Adult/ Children's Literature:

Cynthia Kadohata's *Weedflower*

Erin Entrada Kelly's *Land of Forgotten Girls*

Poetry:

Kimiko Hahn's *Unbearable Heart*

Don Mee Choi's *Hardly War*

Rajiv Mohabir's *The Taxidermist's Cut*

Memoir/ Autobiography/ Creative Nonfiction:

Jane Jeong Trenka's *Fugitive Visions*

Jon Pineda's *Sleep in Me*

Multigenre (music/ text/ image):

Dao Strom's *We Were Meant to be a Gentle People*

Drama/ Plays/ Performance:

Chay Yew's *Porcelain/ A Language of Their Own*

Realist Fiction:

Vaddey Ratner's *In the Shadow of the Banyan*

Nayomi Munawera's *Island of a Thousand Mirrors*

Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* (excerpted due to length)

Detective Fiction:

Vu Tran's *Dragonfish*

Speculative Fiction:

Selections from Ken Liu's *Paper Menagerie and Other Stories*.

Graphic Novel/ Comic:

Miné Okubo's *Citizen 13660*

G.B. Tran's *Vietnamerica*

Selection of primary and secondary textual materials are fluid until about August 2016; if you have a particular interest in a book or methodological approach related to psychoanalysis and trauma theory and are also considering enrolling in this course, please e-mail me at ssohnucr@gmail.com, so we can work toward including something related to your research concentrations.

1.) Is your seminar broad-ranging or more specialized?

This seminar will be specialized insofar as it selects for students interested in theories of psychoanalysis and trauma as well as those with research concentrations in contemporary American literatures involving thematics of race and ethnicity.

2.) Is your seminar open to students with little background or is it meant for more advanced students?

Students do not need to have an extensive background in Asian American literature or theories of psychoanalysis and trauma theory, but should be willing to read beyond the syllabus in case supplementary knowledge is occasionally required/ needed/ useful.

3.) If non-English students want to take your seminar, should they get prior authorization from you before enrolling? Yes, non-English students should get prior authorization just so that I am aware that I may need to pitch the course in a direction that takes into account different disciplinary training (e.g. for graduate students coming from Ethnic Studies, Dance, or MCS, etc).

English 262 - Shakespeare, Theatricality, and the Language of the Supernatural

(Professor Deborah Willis)

Thursdays 2:10 – 5:00 pm

Is Shakespeare's theatre a vehicle for disenchantment and secularization, "emptying out" religious rituals and magical beliefs, as some recent critics have argued? In what ways does

Shakespeare's work engage with pressing debates about religion and the supernatural in the early modern period (such as debates over witch-hunting, demonic possession and exorcism, the nature of ghosts, the meaning of monstrosity, and theatre as "the motion of the devil")? What do supernatural beings and the terminology of the supernatural help him (and us) to think about through the power of metaphor? These will be some of the guiding questions for this seminar. But we will also consider theatricality more broadly: attacks on the theatre as a "demonic" institution will lead us to a consideration of early modern performance practices and more general theoretical questions about the nature of theatre and its role in culture. Readings will include plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*, and possibly one or two by Shakespeare's contemporaries (such as Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Jonson's *The Alchemist*); documents about supernatural beliefs, such as witchcraft pamphlets and demonologies (drawn primarily from Shakespeare's probable sources, such as Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* and Samuel Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*); and theoretical readings about theatricality and performativity. Much of the classroom discussion will focus on close readings of the plays and will, I hope, involve a dialogue between historical and "presentist" approaches. Ideally, we will be able to attend some performances of the plays and/or screen one or two contemporary film adaptations, depending on the interests of students in the class. Assignments will include informal blackboard postings, one or two in-class presentations, an annotated bibliography, and a seminar paper of about fifteen pages.

This course will be reasonably specialized and I will be assuming at least some background in Shakespeare. But students focusing on other periods are welcome. The course topic has potential to intersect with a variety of interests and periods, such as animal studies (e.g. demons and/as animals), history of the emotions, Shakespeare and gothic or horror genres, Shakespeare and medievalism, Victorian Shakespeare, Shakespeare and film. I would appreciate it if non-English graduate students get prior authorization from me before enrolling in the class.

English 269: Reading Matters in Early American Studies

(Professor Emma Stapely
Fridays 1:10 – 4:00 pm)

According to the critical orthodoxies responsible for its canonization, "early" American literature tells the story of an exceptional subject, "the American people," in search of freedom. This course focuses instead on non-human objects, lives, and ornaments that appear in U.S. American literatures to 1900—from clothing to creatures, plants, ghosts, and tattoos—in order to ponder the legacies and implications of materialist reading practices, especially for American Studies. Our seminar responds with particular intensity to the proliferating scholarly interest in materialist critical methodologies such as "thing theory," object-oriented ontology, surface reading, the "new materialism," and theories of ecological personhood, all of which push back against notions of individualist autonomy, and indeed anthropocentric paradigms of humanist inquiry writ large. We will be considering the relationship of these approaches to longstanding, minoritized critiques of American settler

colonialism and chattel slavery that arise from Marxist-inflected Afro-diasporic, Indigenous, and feminist studies. But our meditations will be guided most urgently by the primary texts that we examine together. How might the texts we engage read matter and enact material reading practices? And what is politically and ethically at stake in such matters, both within the texts we study and for us as readers?

1. This is a broad-ranging seminar, designed primarily to introduce students to major works and critical questions in “early” & 19th-century American literary studies.
2. No background in American literature is required. All are welcome.
3. Non-English students do not require prior authorization from me.