

**VCU DEPARTMENT
OF ENGLISH**

**GRADUATE
COURSE
DESCRIPTIONS**

Spring 2010

ENGL 500-003

Practicum: Teaching College English

A course for graduate teaching assistants only. The course provides training, instructional support and professional development for graduate teaching assistants. It includes practical teaching strategies, curricula development, and managerial skills for the classroom, the Writing Center, and the Computer Center. Does not count toward graduate degrees.

Prichard

MWF 1:00-1:50pm

Call #: 12265

ENGL/TEDU 528-901

Children's Literature II

Please contact instructor for course details.

Connell

W 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: 12266

ENGL 531-901

Literary Criticism

Seniors and graduate students only. A comparative study of current critical approaches to literature (reader oriented, formalist, psychoanalytic, archetypal, feminist, structuralist, poststructuralist, new historicist, and postcolonial). These approaches will be evaluated in terms of their capacity to address major components of the literary process (author, literary text, reader, history, culture); they will also be tested on designated literary texts. The goal of this course is twofold: (1) to expand our repertory of critical approaches, grounding our interpretative practice in a more coherent theory of literary signification; (2) to encourage us to examine the rhetorical strategies that literary texts employ to generate responses, and our own interpretive moves.

Cornis-Pope

M 4:00-6:40pm

Call #: 12267

ENGL/ENED 532-901

Applied English Linguistics

Please contact instructor for course details.

Christenbury

T 4:00-6:40pm

Call #: 23658

ENGL/TEDU 552-901

Teaching English as a Second Language

Please contact instructor for course details.

Cho

W 4:00-6:40pm

Call #: 23053

ENGL 614-902

Black Britain

This course surveys immigrant fiction, poetry, music, and film of Africans, West Indians, East Indians, and Others living in the metropolis that once ruled their homelands. Unlike immigrant fiction in the United States, Black British writing explores a much more ambivalent transition. As the Antiguan writer Jamaica Kincaid observes, back home colonized subjects were made to understand "that England was to be our source of myth and the source from which we got our

sense of reality, our sense of what was meaningful, our sense of what was meaningless—and much about our own lives and much about the very idea of us headed that last list." Upon arrival, however, England is not all it's cracked up to be, as (written, visual, and aural) texts by Wole Soyinka, Olaudah Equiano, Hanif Kureishi, Zadie Smith, Salman Rushdie, Buchi Emecheta, Mary Prince, Gautam Malkani, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Paul Gilroy, and Stuart Hall (among others) will illustrate. Requirements include a public reading journal, sparkling intellectual conversation, an academic book review, and a seminar paper ready for submission to a professional conference or journal.

Chan

R 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: 23635

ENGL 614-903 Slavery in the African American Literary Imagination

"[T]he very choice of history as subject is determined by authors' experiences of the recent past and the present. But the connection is primarily indirect and metaphoric." Keith Byerman, *Remembering The Past*

This course will attempt to grapple with the problem of representing slavery in literary texts by exploring the genres of the slave narrative and the historical novel. Our study of the slave narrative will include emphasis on its generic structure as well as issues of authentication and archival research. We will visit both print (*The Classic Slave Narratives*) and electronic texts (North American slave narratives' collection at Documenting the American South) and discuss the impact of this material on literary study. For students interested in archival research, we will explore the excellent resources at the Library of Virginia which houses the state archives. There is much rich material here for theses or book projects.

The majority of the course will focus on twentieth-and twenty-first century revisions of the slave narrative form as post-modern writers reinterpret the meaning of slavery in contemporary times. Questions we will consider: Why has slavery been such an enduring subject for African American fiction writers? How might these writers be writing "in the gaps" of nineteenth-century narratives? How are they using slavery as a cultural discourse to comment on contemporary times? Novels and short fiction will include Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987) and *A Mercy* (2008); Sherley Anne Williams, *Dessa Rose* (1987); Charles Johnson, *Soulcatcher and Other Stories* (1998); Edward P. Jones, *The Known World* (2003); and James McBride, *Song Yet Sung* (2008).

Bassard

TR 4:00-5:15pm

Call #: 23878

ENGL 624-901

Texts and Contexts: American Writers in Paris

We will examine the experiences of the many writers who expatriated to France in the early decades of the twentieth century, paying particular attention to those writers of the "Lost Generation" in the 1920s. We will focus on a couple of broad concerns, including an exploration of the aesthetic termed Modernism, and the gender politics of this literary movement, and the fusion of visual and literary arts that interested so many of these artists and writers. Among the questions we will raise are: Why did so many talented writers leave America? What attracted them to Paris and what influenced them most while there? What impact did Paris have on the form and content of their fiction and poetry? Why did so many of them return to America at the end of the decade? We will address these questions as we chronicle the experiences of these writers within the contexts of the social and cultural climates of both America and Europe during the 1920s, and assess how their lives in Paris shaped some of the most interesting literature of the twentieth century. We will also devote considerable attention to developments in the other arts—in painting, sculpture, music, dance and the like—as we come to grips with the Modernist aesthetic. Readings will include Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* and *The Sun Also Rises*, Malcolm Cowley's *Exiles Return*, Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*, Geoffrey Wolff's biography of mad poet Harry Crosby, *Black Sun*, as well as selections from E.E. Cummings's *The Enormous Room*, Gertrude Stein's *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Kay Boyle's *Plagued by the Nightingales*, and some other works. Requirements will include several short critical notes, and a longer (15-20 page) paper examining the experiences in Paris and/or influence of a single figure, or an analysis of one particular work.

Fine

R 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: 23617

ENGL 624-902

Texts and Contexts: 18th Century Gothic

The narrator of Henry Fielding's 1749 novel *Tom Jones* censures "the savage authority too often exercised by husbands and fathers, over the young and lovely of the other sex," explaining how he has "often suspected that those very enchanters with which romance everywhere abounds were in reality no other than the husbands of those days; and matrimony itself was, perhaps, the enchanted castle in which the nymphs were said to be confined." Despite Fielding's allusion to the literature of "those days"—those olden days in which the victimized heroines of seventeenth-century romance waited to be saved by noble knights—the latter half of the British eighteenth century was soon to explode with a new "Gothic" genre in which those earlier themes were revisited and reinflected through an aesthetics of privation, vacuity, darkness, solitude, silence, and infinity that Gothic characters and Gothic readers negotiated together. As we shall see, Gothic literature's labyrinths, ruined abbeys,

dungeons, darksome forests, secret passages, sublime mountain byways and rather more prosaic domestic spaces resonate with the pressures attached to anxious discourse about gender, race, nationality, religion, class. The novels, plays, verse, and philosophical writings we will read in this course provide a kind of emotive index to the political and historical contexts of their copious production and their enthusiastic reception: the American and French Revolutions, slavery and the Middle Passage, and the attendant debates about human rights that surrounded these processes of dislocation and rupture.

We will discuss a range of texts: poems (e.g., William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey"); philosophy (e.g., selections from Edmund Burke's *A Philosophic Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*; selections from Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*); visual images (e.g., J. M. W. Turner's *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On*); and novels and plays that will include combination of the following:

Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*

George Colman, *Bluebeard*

Charlotte Dacre, *Zofloya: Or, the Moor*

Mathew Lewis, *The Castle Spectre; The Monk*

Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest; The Italian*

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto; The Mysterious Mother*

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria: Or, the Wrongs of Women*

We will also read secondary texts (criticism) that will enable you to imagine your own position within the critical conversation.

Requirements: thoughtful weekly postings on the discussion board, a surfeit of verbal engagement, two presentations, and a substantial final paper.

Swenson

TR 5:30-6:45pm

Call #: 23864

ENGL 630-901

Form and Theory of Fiction

This course is a hybrid of literary scholarship and creative writing. We will read milestones in fiction along with some theory, and students will write both short scholarly papers and creative responses to texts under discussion (approx. 2 pages for each assignment, 4-5 assignments per semester). The distribution of papers vs. creative works may vary somewhat according to the student, but everyone will attempt at least one piece in each category (and will keep in mind that creative writing is a discipline, just as scholarship is). We'll workshop the creative pieces. The final project (approximately 10 pages) may be either a scholarly paper or a complete piece of fiction with a brief scholarly introduction.

Movements and modes considered will likely include realism, modernism/postmodernism, magic realism, minimalism, absurdism, and experimentalism.

Cokal

M 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: 17533

ENGL 637-901

Theories of Rhetoric and Composition

This course transforms rhetorical theory into a creative resource for writers. Though it is often aligned with manipulation—Barack Obama, during the campaign, was criticized for “merely” making great speeches—the art of persuasion is more properly aligned with the formation—or disruption—of public opinion. It challenges writers seeking audiences with critical questions about who writes and toward what (social, public) end. To answer those questions, students will study the canons of rhetoric dedicated to invention and to style. Students will also keep a commonplace notebook of quotes and passages in a variety of genres. The goals are to establish a line of inquiry on a range of subjects and styles worth pursuing in at least six short pieces, including (but by no means limited to) a feature magazine piece, character profile, op-ed piece or blog, dramatic monologue, essay, video essay, satire, manifesto, music review, public speech, walking tour, historical investigation, poem, criticism, and so on. The final paper is a piece of rhetorical criticism that analyzes a selection of these pieces, including those written by other students.

Coogan

MW 5:30-6:45pm

Call #: 23636

ENGL 652-901

Studies: An Ethnography of Communication

An Ethnography of Communication is a course in sociolinguistic analysis of language in action. The course will engage us in theories, practices, and methods for examining language use in context. The phrase, “An Ethnography of Speaking,” was coined by Dell Hymes in a 1962 talk in which he argued that language cannot “be separated from how and why it is used.” In 1964, he published an article in *American Anthropologist*, “Introduction: Toward Ethnographies of Communication,” refining his 1962 title to include communication that is non-verbal (e.g. body language) and non-semantic (e.g. “eh?” or “hmm”).

We will engage in discourse analysis, which cannot be separated from cultural analysis, reading existing ethnographic studies and undertaking ethnographic observations of language use in student-selected sites of interaction (for example, a selected classroom, a tutorial site, a coffee spot, locker room, or office, neighborhood hangout, a store, religious meeting, and so on). Classes will be spent in discussion of readings, examination of the data students gather, and discussions of the research applications for discourse analysis.

Hodges

W 4:00-6:40pm

Call #: 23632

ENGL 666-901

Creative Writing: Fiction

Study of the craft of fiction writing, with the goal of producing professionally acceptable and publishable fiction. Workshop members shall produce a substantial volume of writing--short stories or a portion of a novel--and in addition will be able to evaluate and articulate the strength of their own work. Open only to graduate students.

De Haven

W 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: 21108

ENGL 667-901

Creative Writing: Poetry

Prerequisites: Graduate standing in the MFA program, or permission of the instructor. This course is not only a workshop designed to help improve the quality of participants' poems, with the goal of producing publishable work, but it is also a wide-ranging, organic inquiry into the craft of poetry writing. Students will be asked to provide written comments to their peers and to read the work of established poets. They are required to come to class prepared for active discussion.

Graber

M 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: 17544

ENGL 671-901

Film and Television Scripts

Prerequisites: Graduate standing in the MFA program, or permission of the instructor. In this workshop-style course the student will create an original screenplay, starting with the pitch, outline, and treatment, then progressing through the traditional three-act structure of a feature-length screenplay.

McCown

T 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: 22183

ENGL 672-901

Writing Nonfiction

This class will be a writing course conducted primarily in workshop format. We will explore several kinds of creative nonfiction, and examine the genre's relationship to journalism, documentary and other literary forms.

Browder

T 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: 20496

MATX 603-901

History of Multimedia and Interdisciplinarity

Doctoral Students only. Computer assisted course. In order to analyze a series of select multimedia projects, this required first-year PhD course surveys the history of a number of media (including manuscript and print, analog and digital sound, painting and sculpture). And in order to analyze a series of select interdisciplinary projects, it surveys the history of discipline formation, with emphasis on the humanities and the arts. Students will write a research paper,

preceded by an abstract and a presentation, that models interdisciplinarity or engages a multimedia subject.

Eckhardt

M 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: 17501

MATX 604-901

Production and Application Workshop

Please contact instructor for course details.

Keller

R 4:00-6:40pm

Call #: 17499

MATX 661

Themes: Methods of Analyzing Media, Art and Text

This course requires graduate students both to master and to adapt the methods of description and argumentation in the disciplines that inform the study of media, art, and text. It first surveys object descriptions from the fields that have set the highest standards for them, in order to employ and modify them for media that have not received such careful scholarly attention. Students first learn the methods that bibliographers have developed to describe books as material objects, and that art historians have developed to describe drawings, prints, paintings, and sculptures. They then try their own hands at these methods, first on traditional objects such as books and paintings, and then on media that have not received such attention, like artists' books, sound recordings, video games, websites, and anything else that might figure in their work in the program. Students will thus not merely learn how to describe new media; they will decide how to raise the standard for doing so to respond to the highest available.

The course then proceeds to arguments, in manifestations of increasing size. Students view select conference presentations and short lectures, and then each presents her own conference paper in class. They study a few annotated bibliographies and key articles, and each produces her own annotated bibliography entries, as well as an abstract of her own conference presentation. They then read historically significant books reviews, and a couple books, and each writes her own book review. Finally, they read a few especially successful dissertations, and conclude the course by writing their own thesis or dissertation proposals. The course thus provides not only a study of, but also a simultaneously practical and experimental training in, the methods of description and argumentation in the disciplines that most closely bear on their own work. Throughout, the course applies the highest scholarly standards to media that have thus far been denied such scrutiny.

Eckhardt

T 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: NEW

MATX 690-901

Seminar: History of Avante Garde and Coterie Magazine

This course will examine the interventions of writer/artist coterie through the vehicle of the magazine. To begin we will look briefly at a moment of origin in

the coffeehouse culture of early 18th-century London with the *Spectator* papers. The bulk of the course will be taken up with examining specific cases, a number of which link artists in several media. Among those we may take up:

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, (1817-1822)

The Germ, the short-lived magazine of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

The Dial and the *Yellowbook*, 1890s decadence

Blast, Wyndham Lewis and other artists, writers, and musicians

Wiper's Times, soldiers' satire from the front in WWI

Dada and post-Dada periodicals such as *Jedermann sein eigener Fussball* and *De Stijl*

Broom, 1920s American avant-garde literary magazine

Evergreen Review, the voice of the Beats, etc

Stand, a classic British little magazine centered outside the metropole

Each student will be expected to write a researched seminar paper, and participate in the construction of a prospectus for a 21st-century magazine in the spirit of the above—that is, *not* an institutionally situated bulwark of the literary-artistic status quo.

Latané

W 7:00-9:40pm

Call #: 21030

MATX 690-902

Seminar: Art and Language

What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*,

This course, foundational to other venues, will examine the common nature of critiquing art via 'Art Speak.' That language, commonly used, does not address art, but simply provides a vague notion of visual construction.

Perhaps there are subtle differences within a given study, yet the case remains that a particular 'language game' (coined by Wittgenstein) governs the field and that that language may, indeed, become a crucial problem, as it is naturally exclusive. It is unknowingly guarded by the habitual use of its practitioners and is thus, ultimately secured in place, preventing penetration from the outside.

A wealth of irreverent thought, through observation, is available; that is, thought outside of, below and beyond conventional remarks, which are held in place by the language game. I have no doubt that by careful scrutiny, we can assess language at a deeper, purer level, and in the end, be only wiser and more adept

at examining conditions in whatever field we are in, offering personal, genuine insights.

Authors included, but not exclusively: Garth Hallett, John Brockman, Tobias Dantzig, Joseph Kosuth, Marshall McLuhan, and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Adair

T 4:00-6:40pm

Call #: 23880