

# Department of English

# Graduate Course

# Descriptions

## *Fall 2015*

**600:01**                      **Introduction to Graduate Study**  
**TBA**                              **W 6:00-8:30**

English 600 is required of all graduate students in English. This course introduces theoretical frameworks for writing and teaching in English as a discipline while also engaging practical challenges graduate students will encounter in their intellectual and professional development. Readings will address the history of the profession, its theoretical and institutional contours, and the various past and present methodologies and critical approaches to literary studies. We will also concern ourselves with the pragmatic matters of course selection, research techniques, conference going, publication, grant- and fellowship-winning, professional service and eventual employment. Independent research and writing will aim (first) to foster a broader sense of “English” as a professional field and a discipline, and (second) to encourage students to articulate a sense of their own evolving relationship to these ideas.

**680:01**                              **Graduate Fiction Seminar 1**  
**K. Laymon**                              **T 6:00-8:30**  
**Ext: 6510**

Intensive fiction seminar. Content varies and may be repeated three times for credit.

**682:01**  
**B.A. Fennelly**  
**Ext: 7914**

**Graduate Poetry Seminar**  
**M 6:00-8:30**  
**bafennel@olemiss.edu**

This class will further students' understanding of how to read, write and revise poetry. By the end of the semester, students will have produced a body of publishable poetry prefaced by an introduction. Students will develop critical skills through the close reading of work by others, and they will increase their knowledge of contemporary poetry, especially its techniques, terms, and forms. Class is limited to M.F. A. students or others who have received instructor permission.

**683:01**                              **Form, Craft, and Influence: Fiction**  
**T. Franklin**                              **T 3:00-5:30**  
**Ext: 2782**                              **tfrankli@olemiss.edu**

This course will examine the published works of writers such as Tobias Wolff, ZZ Packer and Rick Bass, and will give students opportunity to lead discussions on writers/books of their choice. This is a writing- and reading-intensive course.

**707:01**                              **Studies in Middle English Literature (pre-1800)**  
**M. Hayes**                              **T 6:00-8:30**  
**Ext: 7049**                              **hayes@olemiss.edu**

Given that “natural philosophy” was one of the main subjects taught at medieval universities, the recent academic interest in ecocriticism suggests a return to medieval customs. For example, the undergraduate curriculum at Oxford in the fourteenth century drew upon Aristotle’s *libri naturales* and its medieval textual tradition. Though influenced by classical models, the medieval Christian worldview, however, had to accommodate Genesis’s creation narrative, which advanced God’s sovereignty over the natural world. In addition to classical philosophy and Christian doctrine, medieval writers often incorporated Judaic and Islamic philosophy into their explanations of the natural world.

These various approaches to defining “nature” wrought a complex textual tradition that inspires this course’s subject and organizes its units: the *De naturis rerum* tradition, hexameral works, allegorical works, scientific works, and cosmographic works. From reading key texts of medieval natural philosophy and its affiliated disciplines, students will learn how medieval writers described, circumscribed, and even prescribed “the natural world.” The course presumes no prior study of the Middle Ages. We will

read most texts in translation. Middle English texts will be read in the original language (aided by dictionaries, glosses, and notes). Students will participate in class discussions, lead class discussion once (with a partner), complete a series of short response papers, and write a modest research paper (ca. 15 papers). This course satisfies the pre-1800 requirement for English graduate students.

**741:01**            **18<sup>th</sup> Century Studies: A Diseased Little Island (pre-1800)**  
**J. Solinger**        **TH 6:00-8:30**  
**Ext: N/A**            **solinger@olemiss.edu**

This seminar examines English literature's fixation with Britain's island status. Primarily a course in literature of the eighteenth century, the seminar also considers a few earlier texts (i.e. Shakespeare's *Richard II*, Donne's *Meditation XVII*, Henry Neville's *Isle of Pines*) and some later texts (i.e. Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*, Danny Boyle's 2002 zombie film *28 Days Later*). The problems we will address are historical and theoretical: How did the imaginative effort to survey or tour the "whole island" of Great Britain contribute to the rise of the novel as well as the emerging fields of political economy and ethnography? Why did new conceptions of Englishness and English identity become linked to the notion of an island character? In what ways are other islands used to think about the British isle? How has the representation of British islanders enabled both nationalist and cosmopolitan authors to imagine Britain's relation to the rest of the world? Why do critics continue to refer to England as an island? These and related questions will shape our study of such authors as Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Johnson, Tobias Smollett, Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, and Gertrude Stein.

**754:01**            **Special Topics in Film Study: Southern Film and Literature in Cultural Context (For graduate students in the School of Education Only)**  
**D. Barker**        **W 3:00-5:30**  
**Ext: 7758**            **dbarker@olemiss.edu**

To Bridge the gap between teaching literature and film we will examine a selection of well-known filmic adaptations of southern literature. We will learn both literary and filmic terms in order to do close readings of the film and its literary source material, treating each as a separate work of art with its own formal features that help to shape its content. In addition to close readings we will examine the critical, historical, and cultural context of the

novel/film in terms of both its setting and its publication/release. Films/novels to be examined may include: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Streetcar Named Desire*, *Secret Lives of Bees*, *The Color Purple*, and *Daughters of the Dust*. Course requirements include: short response papers, article summaries, and a final 15-page research paper.

**758:01**            **Studies in Modern British Literature**  
**I. Whittington**    **T 6:00-8:30**  
**Ext: 6642**            **iwhittin@olemiss.edu**

This course approaches British modern and contemporary fiction through the lens of urban studies. It traces the ways in which fictional treatments of London have grappled with the changing geographic, economic, and cultural landscapes of the city between 1900 and the present day. The past century witnessed the consolidation of London as a mass-mediated metropolis, the struggles of two world wars, the birth (and death) of the welfare state, the emergence of multicultural Britain, and the apotheosis of London as a major center of global capital and culture. While the novels we will read document these cultural shifts in spatial terms, they also engage with the complex history of the British novel in the twentieth century, bringing new literary forms to bear on the old city. The aim of this course is therefore to read these novels as both works of fiction that build on a literary tradition and as texts that forge connections between the physical environment of the urban landscape (roads, waterways, buildings), discourses of urban British life, and the social practices that react to and shape this environment.

Our reading list will include approximately 13 novels by authors including Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, Henry Green, Elizabeth Bowen, Sam Selvon, Muriel Spark, J.G. Ballard, Martin Amis, and Zadie Smith. We will complement our novels with historical documents and readings in critical spatial theory and cultural studies.

**759:01**            **Studies in Contemporary Literature: Queer Pulp**  
**J. Harker**        **M 3:00-5:30**  
**Ext: 3172**            **jlharker@olemiss.edu**

Pulp first referred to the format of magazines and books—cheap paper, disposable, meant to be consumed and discarded. Distributed through drugstores and magazines stands, pulp paperbacks were widely available and notoriously trashy in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with covers of buxom women flaunting sex and risking violence. Queer sexuality always had a special place in pulp paperbacks. Outside of

traditional morality and cultural hierarchies, queer pulp disseminated images of queer life through rural communities and connected queer readers in an imagined urban community. This class explores key texts in queer pulp from the 1940s through the 1990s. Possible authors include Patricia Highsmith, Ann Bannon, Christopher Isherwood, Gore Vidal, Victor Banis, Richard Amory, Rita Mae Brown, Ann Allen Shockley, Sarah Schulman, and Mabel Maney. Course requirements: weekly response journals, a 20-page seminar paper, and a class conference on queer pulp.

**763:01                    Studies in Major American Writers: Eudora  
Welty: Mississippi and Beyond**  
**A. Trefzer                TH 3:00-5:30**  
**Ext. 7675                 atrefzer@olemiss.edu**

Eudora Welty's famous essay "Place in Fiction" seemed to have confirmed her as a Southern writer who cares in the first place about her region. This entrenched understanding of Welty's regionalism and her place in literary histories of the U.S. South is gradually giving way to more comprehensive readings of her work within national and transnational frameworks of study. This course proposes to bring Welty's work into conversation with questions of national culture and politics and with new scholarship that might help us understand her fiction as part of global geographies and historical deep structures. We will address questions of region and nation, gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, as well as modernism and materialism as we study three of her short story collections including *A Curtain of Green* (1941), *The Wide Net* (1943), and *The Golden Apples* (1949), as well as her novels: *The Robber Bridegroom* (1942), *The Ponder Heart* (1954), *Losing Battles* (1970), and *The Optimist's Daughter* (1972). Readings will also include a fair amount of theoretical and critical articles, in addition to several of Welty's own essays.

**770:01                    Studies in Modern American Lit**  
**A. Fisher-Wirth        W 3:00-5:30**  
**Ext: 5929                afwirth@olemiss.edu**

A seminar focusing on American women poets and poetic theory from Emily Dickinson to the present. I have not yet finalized a reading list and welcome suggestions from interested students. The possibilities are vast: Dickinson, Moore, H.D., Stein, Rukeyser, Bishop, Rich, Clifton, Plath, and/or any of the hundreds of more contemporary poets. For sure we'll be reading Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* and she will be attending class as well as

reading under the auspices of the Grisham Visiting Writers Series.

**776:01                    Studies in Southern Literature**  
**K. McKee                T 3:00-5:30**  
**Ext: 5993                kmckee@olemiss.edu**

This class investigates recent paradigm shifts within the study of the U.S. South. Thus it concentrates, in part, on the metadiscourse of academic inquiry and poses questions about the relationship of "new southern studies" to "old southern studies" (is there a meaningful distinction?), the relationship of interdisciplinary "southern studies" to "southern literary studies" (have they become, practically speaking, folded into one another?), the relationship of "southern studies" to "American studies" (how is a space long thought of as exceptional connected to a nation long thought of as exceptional?), the relationship of "southern studies" to "hemispheric studies" (how can we observe the boundaries of the nation-state at the same time that we productively talk past them?), and the relationship of "southern studies" to "global south studies" (how can we usefully discuss a "first world" space in the context of "third world" concerns?). In order to facilitate our understanding of contemporary debates, we will first familiarize ourselves with some of the standard texts that once informed southern literary study (selections from the Agrarians, W. J. Cash, C. Vann Woodward, and Cleanth Brooks), as well as a handful of studies from the early 1990s, before turning the bulk of our attention to critical work published within the last fifteen years by scholars including Michael Kreyling, Patricia Yaeger, Tara McPherson, Jon Smith, Deborah Cohn, Houston Baker, Jennifer Greeson, and Scott Romine, among others. Students will also have the opportunity to review additional studies and talk with scholars about recent changes within the field. Course requirements will include weekly writings, regular opportunities to participate in and lead discussion, and a seminar paper that situates one or more primary texts within the critical framework established by the class.

**785:01                    Theory and Criticism of Poetry**  
**D. Smith                 M 3:00-5:30**  
**Ext: 6949                djsmith4@olemiss.edu**

THE POET ROBERT PENN WARREN. Warren is the only American writer to hold three Pulitzer Prizes, two in poetry and one in fiction. He regarded himself as a poet and his influence on the course of American poetry in the 20th century was both subtle and substantial. Yet he may be best known today for All the King's Men. This course will examine his

Fugitive origins and fellow-travelers John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate, read selected fiction and criticism, but focus on Warren's poetry, inevitably considering notions of southern and American identity as moving targets. Students will do a teaching presentation, a short paper, and a course project to be determined.



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