Department of English
Graduate Course Descriptions

Fall 2016

Eng 600:01  Introduction to Graduate Study
D. Stout       M 6:00-8:30
Ext: 7106      dstout@olemiss.edu

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.

Eng 679:01  Form, Craft, and Influence for Poets
D. Harriell   TH 3:00-5:30
Ext: N/A       harriell@olemiss.edu

English 679 is a course designed for advanced students of poetry. Its goal is to nurture and develop your knowledge and understanding of the basic discourses of poetry framed by a specific topic. In considering Historical Narrative Poetry, we will familiarize ourselves with the progression of the aesthetic, while simultaneously developing our own working definition. Both primary and scholarly texts will be examined. We will consider and complicate questions such as: What is a Historical Narrative poem? How do we define the sub-genre? How does it intersect with Persona Poetry? What’s the role of history versus subjective imagination? What is the historical responsibility of the historical poet? How should these collections be read? We will additionally produce and workshop our own Historical Narrative poems. With your full engagement, by the end of this course you will have a greater appreciation for poetry as a craft, while also commanding a greater understanding of the Historical Poem.

Eng 680:01  Graduate Fiction Seminar I
Ext: N/A       T 3:00-5:30

This course is an intensive graduate workshop in fiction.

Eng 682:01  Graduate Poetry Seminar
Nezhukumatathil W 3:00-5:30
Ext: N/A

In the first half of this poetry workshop, we will investigate the craft and readings of narrative poetry and then move to an exploration and shift to hybrid poetry experiments for the latter half of the semester. The class will provide students with a fun, intense, and critical discussion of student work and dynamic readings in contemporary poetry. The orientation of the course hopes to push students past their creative norms, and by semester’s end, students will have created and arranged the foundation a new suite of poems or for a larger creative project. We’ll be responsible for writing approx. 8 polished/revised poems by semester’s end.

Eng 703:01  Studies in Early English Literature: Medieval Irish Sagas in Translation
L. Brady       T 6:00-8:00
Ext: 7668      lbrady@olemiss.edu

A woman is transformed by her jealous rival into a beautiful purple fly, then reborn into human form a thousand and twelve years later. The king of Ireland gains his throne when he is the only brother brave enough to sleep with a hideous old hag guarding a well, after which she becomes young and beautiful and grants him sovereignty. On Samhain (Halloween) night, corpses reanimate and doors to the shadowy otherworld open. A studious scholar pauses from his academic duties to write a heartfelt poem in praise of his cat. The medieval Irish literary corpus is a vast and entrancing curio cabinet of some of the most clever, engaging, and imaginative literature written in any time period. Early Irish literature stands with Old Norse as the only native medieval European literary traditions written in vernacular prose instead of verse, and it is a richly
rewarding but vastly understudied body of work to which a high bar for language skills too often prevents entry. This course provides an introductory window into this vivid and powerful literary tradition. We will read, in modern English translation, some of the best representative examples of Old Irish sagas, considering these texts alongside relevant critical trends in Celtic studies scholarship (with a particular focus on ecocritical approaches, where much innovative work is currently being done). This course fulfills the pre-1800 requirement for English graduate students. Course requirements include active weekly participation and response paper, class presentation, and final seminar paper (with a creative option available for MFA students).

Eng 710:01 Early Modern Literature: Rogue Sexuality
A. Friedlander M 3:00-5:30
Ext: N/A ari@olemiss.edu

This class will explore the criminalization of sex and the sexualization of crime in early modern England. We will read popular pamphlets, poetry and drama alongside legal and religious texts that all link excessive sexuality to illegal behavior – particularly to the brand of social outcast known as “the rogue.” Rogues (a category encompassing vagrants, criminals, and prostitutes) were objects of fascination to early modern writers – simultaneously feared and admired because of their perceived freedom from sexual mores. Yet, the struggle to control sexual lust was understood to be a universal experience, even and especially among the settled, the married, and the religious. The rogue’s excessive sexuality thus functioned as a potential discursive site for identification across social differences and across the divide between licit and illicit sexuality. As we will see, it also provided the groundwork for the regulation of labor and reproduction that Foucault describes in his genealogy of the modern concepts of biopower, population, and the security state. Primary readings may include: Shakespeare, Milton, Donne, Jonson, Dekker, Brome; Secondary readings may include Agamben, Arendt, Butler, Foucault, Sedgwick, Traub.

Eng 715:01 British Literature of Restoration, 18th Century: Environmental Criticism and 18th Century Literature
E. Drew TH 6:00-8:30
Ext: 2783 ededrew@olemiss.edu

The eighteenth century witnessed an astonishing transformation in the natural world and the way English culture related to it. From the spread of colonial ties to the Caribbean and Asia to the rise of modern science to the early stirrings of animal rights, English culture experienced an influx of new materials, ideas, and ideologies that challenged and transformed older views of the relationship between humans and nature--and paved the way for environmental challenges we still face today. Yet in spite of this, serious environmental criticism (ecocriticism) has only recently begun to emerge on the literature of this period. In this course we will study the depiction of nature in eighteenth-century literature in order to understand better the connections between the eighteenth-century ideas of “nature” and twenty-first century environmental challenges. In addition, we will read important works of ecocriticism (eighteenth-century and otherwise) to learn how the field has developed, what its current concerns are, what factors have led to the eighteenth-century’s marginalization, and what ecocriticism and eighteenth-century literature may have to contribute to one another in the future.

Eng 737:01 Special Topics in Film Study: Southern Noir in Fiction, Film and TV
D. Barker W 3:00-5:30
Ext: 7758 dbarker@olemiss.edu

In the post WWII US the detective genre in film, TV, and literature was typically set in the urban East or West and was heavily influenced by film noir and crime fiction. While southern writers helped to establish and/or employed the genre (Poe, Twain, Faulkner), the last half of the 20th century has seen a proliferation of southern detective novels, and the emergence of TV series and films which employ a mixture of noir, gothic, crime, and detective genres, and which include both the rural and the urban Souths. As critics have noted, despite the absence of overt racial conflict, noir speaks to racial tensions and inequalities that still plague the nation. The southern detective emerges as a way to confront and/or to obscure race and the southern setting often signifies the legacy of racial trauma and the desire to expose or erase that history and its current manifestations. The southern detective genre, broadly defined, intersects with new trends in southern noir, country noir, and grit lit and is as likely to take place in the city or country. In this course we will explore the contemporary variations on the southern detective in literature, TV, and film (including the southern gentleman, the lawyer, the professional detective of the urban South, the noir detective), and which include both the rural and the urban Souths. In the post WWII US the detective genre...

Eng 760:01 Studies in 19th Century American Literature: Haiti and American Literature: Race, Revolution, and Literary Form, 1790-1865
P. Reed T 3:00-5:30
Ext: 7685 preed@olemiss.edu

Weekly participation and response paper, class presentation, and final seminar paper (with a creative option available for MFA students).
This course examines American literature’s engagement with Haiti and the Revolutionary Black Atlantic from the 1790s to the 1860s. From the earliest moments of the Haitian Revolution, Americans both black and white responded to Haiti’s revolution and its early national presence in a variety of ways. They wrote dramatic dialogues, penned poems, and processed stories of Saint Domingue’s refugees and rebels; they wrote novels and short stories about black revolutionaries; they articulated political appeals and activist programs in terms adapted from Haiti’s revolutionary experience. Americans developed new genres and transformed existing ones, populating the literary landscape with new characters, discourses, gestures, and scenarios. Haiti produced new ways of feeling, acting, and writing in the world, and this class examines the American literary texts and images that show this in action. The class will engage critical race studies, transnationalism, global south, and cultural studies methods and theories, and should complement interests in early American, twentieth-century American, and postcolonial literatures.

Eng 762:01     Race and the Problem of the Human in Antebellum America
C. Ellis        W 6:00-8:30
Ext: 7183       ccellis2@olemiss.edu

Am I not a man and a brother? the well-known abolitionist appeal demands. In this course we will explore how the answer to this question became increasingly unclear in the antebellum US with the rise of the modern, biological concept of race. Reading across major literary as well as scientific writings of the period, and drawing here and there upon works of contemporary critical race, animal, and posthumanist theory, this class will examine the volatility of "the human" as a political category in the antebellum era. We will also consider how emerging concepts of racial, gendered, and human embodiment inspired some of the most important literary innovations of this period known as "the American Renaissance." Primary literary texts may include writings by Frederick Douglass, James McCune Smith, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller, and Julia Ward Howe.

Eng 766:01     Studies in Contemporary American Literature: Black Voices from Prison
P. Alexander    TH 3:00-5:30
Ext: 5602       pealexan@olemiss.edu

Responding to African American literary criticism’s continuing engagements with imprisonment in contemporary U.S. culture, this course examines representations of prisons and imprisoned life in African American literature of the past half-century. We will pay particular attention to works by African American autobiographers, epistolary writers, essayists, and poets who develop a Black carceral aesthetic that exposes and interrogates the state’s increasingly punitive and abusive logics of policing during and after the Civil Rights Movement. We will also consider how African American literature from 1960s to our current #BlackLivesMatter moment anticipates recent scholarship in the field of critical prison studies (the work of Angela Y. Davis, Dylan Rodriguez, Victoria Law) on police intimidation, racial profiling, state violence, gendered social control, discriminatory sentencing, indefinite solitary confinement, and racialized prisoner abuse. Finally, we will explore criticism that has begun to trace the emergence of a bottom-up conceptualization of policing, punishment, (in)justice and (un)freedom in African American literature during our current epoch of racialized mass incarceration—namely, the work of H. Bruce Franklin, Robin Riley Fast, Joy James, Michael Hames-Garcia, Brian Conniff, and Dennis Childs.

Beyond engagement with the work that inspires this course’s title—Etheridge Knight’s edited anthology Black Voices from Prison—primary readings for the course will likely include: Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” the prison letters of George Jackson, the poetry of Knight and Ericka Huggins, the essays of imprisoned intellectual Mumia Abu-Jamal, and the autobiographical writings of Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Angela Y. Davis, Assata Shakur, John Edgar Wideman, Patrice Gaines, Robert Hillary King, R. Dwayne Betts, and Ta-Nehisi Coates.

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