

Department of English

Graduate Course

Descriptions

Fall 2020

Eng 521:01 **Topics for English Teachers: Journeys in American Fiction**
D. Barker **T 4:30-7:00 pm**
Ext: 7758 **dbarker@olemiss.edu**
****For Education Graduate Students only****

The journey is an important motif in American literature, especially given the focus on the frontier as an ever-expanding horizon, providing an opportunity for individual development but also for destruction and the exploitation of the land and the people. In this class we will explore geographical mobility as it intersects with psychological and spiritual journeys in American fiction after the Civil War. Possible works includes: Henry James, *The American*; Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*; John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*; Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeper*; Sherman Alexie, *Smoke Signals: A Screenplay*; Daniel Woodrell, *Winter's Bone*; Kiese Laymon, *Long Division*; and Jesmyn Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing*.

Eng 680:01 **Graduate Fiction Workshop**
M. Ginsburg **T 3:00-5:30 pm**
 mginsburg@olemiss.edu

This graduate fiction workshop will revolve around writing, reading, and critiquing student work. Each student will be required to turn in 2 completed stories (15 pages minimum for each) or equivalent excerpts from longer works. There will be no restrictions on genre, style, or content. We will focus on basic elements of craft, such as structure, point of view, and character development, with the ultimate goal of acquiring new tools for revision.

Eng 682:01
A. Fisher-Wirth

Graduate Poetry Workshop
W 3:00-5:30pm
afwirth@olemiss.edu

This is an intensive graduate poetry workshop. Content varies and may be repeated three times for credit.

Eng 683:01 **Form, Craft, and Influence: Fiction**
T. Franklin **M 6:00-8:30 pm**
 tfrankli@olemiss.edu

This class will focus on novels suggested by class members. We will focus on how and why novels work and work on our own novel chapters.

Eng 686:01 **Studies in Genre: Nonfiction Workshop**
B. Fennelly **M 3:00-5:30 pm**
 bfennel@olemiss.edu

The aim of this graduate nonfiction workshop is to develop and deepen our understanding of the forms and possibilities of nonfiction prose. We'll study both classic and contemporary models, including the book-length nonfiction project. Students will write, workshop, and revise some short essays during the course of the semester and two longer pieces: an essay-length memoir and a personal essay that engages with the outside world through research. In addition to discussing craft, we will study and discuss the nonfiction market and publication opportunities. This class is open first to MFA students, and other students may request permission by emailing the instructor. MFA candidates may repeat this course for credit.

Eng 710:01 **Studies in Early Modern Literature: Genealogies of Biopolitics**
A. Friedlander **W 3:00-5:30 pm**
 ari@olemiss.edu

In an age of pandemics, quarantines, and renewed focus on public health, it is time to think about biopolitics. How did the state come to exercise power through the management of biological life? What social, political, religious, intellectual, and rhetorical factors combined to help reconceive nations as populations rather than territories? How did this switch shape important contemporary ideas about sexuality, disability, race, class, and literature? In this seminar, we will examine literary and non-literary writings on topics that range from the administration of poor relief, to the settlement of the "new world," to the composition of the heavens themselves. In addition to canonical works like Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, we will read lesser-known poetry and prose, including early modern crime

fiction, promotional colonial literature, and love poetry (some good, some very bad). For methodological ballast, we will read theory by Michel Foucault, Eve Sedgwick, Judith Butler, Lee Edelman, and Jasbir Puar, as well as histories of sexuality by Jonathan Goldberg, Valerie Traub, Susan Lanser, Benjamin Kahan, and Greta LaFleur, among others.

Eng 717:01 Eighteenth Century Studies: Two Texts, Three Ways: Approaches to Environmental Criticism of 18th Century Texts
E. Drew M 6:00-8:30 pm
edrew@olemiss.edu

Description: In this graduate seminar, we will analyze two major 18th-century texts (one long poem and one novel) through the lens of three major ecocritical/environmental theories. We will begin by reading the two primary texts to establish a baseline knowledge of them. After that, the course will be broken into three three-week units: one week reading a theoretical text followed by two weeks where we read the poem and the novel through that theoretical lens. Written assignments will include short “readings” of each text through each theorist as we move through them. Students will choose one of those short papers to expand for the final paper.

The goals of this seminar will be to develop familiarity with three important recent theoretical approaches to environmental criticism, to learn how to identify the affordances and limitations offered by each theoretical approach, and to gain skill in applying theoretical texts to literary analysis.

Theoretical texts may include work by Bruno Latour, Jason W. Moore, Donna Haraway, Stacy Alaimo, Monica Allewaert, Richard Grove, and essays on queer ecology. Primary texts may include John Dryden’s *Georgics*, Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Man*, or James Thomson’s *Seasons*; and Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Ann Radcliffe’s *Romance of the Forest*, or Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* or *The Last Man*.

Eng 721:01 Studies in the Victorian Period: Victorian Environmentalisms
D. Kreisel M 3:00-5:30 pm
dkk@olemiss.edu

The Victorian era witnessed the exponential growth of the central drivers of anthropogenic climate change: colonial expansion and the industrial revolution. This course examines nineteenth-century British and Anglophone writing about nature and the environment from our own

current perspective of environmental degradation and ecological collapse. In particular, we will examine the ways in which nineteenth-century writers anticipated some aspects of current ecological thought: the ways they evinced an understanding of “nature” as a cultural construct, and engaged in (explicit and implicit) critiques of industrialization and the environmental effects of colonialism. The course will begin with a broader theoretical introductory section, which will ground our coursework in recent ecocriticism, including perspectives drawn from new materialism and OOO; gender, queer, and trans theory; decolonization studies; and critical race theory. Authors here may include: Donna Haraway, Elizabeth Grosz, Jane Bennett, Stacy Alaimo, Karen Barad, Sara Ahmed, Jordy Rosenberg, Mel Chen, and Alexander Weheliye. The latter half of the course will explore specifically Victorian responses to environmental crisis, both literary and journalistic, and recent Victorianist ecocriticism. Authors here may include Victorian writers John Ruskin, William Stanley Jevons, William Morris, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Olive Schreiner, Richard Jefferies, Emily Brontë, and Thomas Hardy; and contemporary critics Jason Moore, Rob Nixon, Andreas Malm, Amitav Ghosh, Jesse Oak Taylor, Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, and Benjamin Morgan.

Eng 741:01 Cultural Studies: The Blues Tradition
A. Gussow W 6:00-8:30 pm
agussow@olemiss.edu

This course will explore the way in which African American (and selected white American) writers have translated the oral culture and social milieu of blues musicians into a range of literary forms: poems, stories, novels, plays, interviews, autobiographies, and theoretical/prophetic writings. Since the blues tradition is grounded in what David Oshinsky has called “the ordeal of Jim Crow justice,” we’ll devote considerable attention to the way in which adverse social conditions in the early modern South—lynching, segregation, sharecropping, and other forms of racialized exploitation—are represented and contested in blues texts. We’ll cover a range of other themes: the tragicomic dialectic that underlies blues expressiveness; the shaping role played by various forms of interpersonal violence; “signifying” as a textual strategy; womanist self-assertion and the sounding of desire; the emergence of a mass white blues audience in the 1960s; contemporary blues performance and blues literature as scenes of interracial contact in which the legacy of Jim Crow is engaged in both productive and troubling ways. Subject to availability, a local blues musician may be invited to class to share stories and insights. Requirements include three short response papers, a term paper, and an oral presentation.

Eng 747:01 Contemporary African Literature

T. Alabi **W 6:00-8:30 pm**
aalabi@olemiss.edu

This course will focus on how contemporary critical theory can aid our understanding of major developments in African literature. We will start by reviewing aspects of recent literary theories, especially globalization, ecocriticism, postcolonial, and feminist theories that can illuminate our interpretation of African literature. We will then examine the representation of orality, language, culture, patriarchy, ecology, colonialism, and postcolonialism in African literature. The texts for our discussion, selected from various genres and parts of Africa, will include Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Matigari*, Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*, Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, Naguib Mahfouz's *Miramar*, and Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's *Americanah*.

Eng 766:01 **Studies in Contemporary American Literature:
Imprisoned Lives Matter: Prison in Contemporary
Black American Life Writing**

P. Alexander **TH 3:00-5:30 pm**
pealexan@olemiss.edu

“Can the penitentiary teach the academy?” So asks H. Bruce Franklin, the well-known scholar of literary works produced from jail and prison, in a 2008 issue of PMLA. This seminar responds to Franklin’s question through our study of Black orators and/or Black writers whose works of life writing on racialized mass incarceration span from the Civil Rights era to the current #BlackLivesMatter moment. We will be particularly attentive to how these works have redefined the field of African American literary studies and reshaped the terrain of public intellectualism. Our literary journeys will traverse personal experiences with and/or intimate witness of mass criminalization and mass incarceration: we will investigate the aesthetic and political significance of depictions of the prison-industrial complex and the U.S. carceral state as they appear in the speeches, autobiographies, and memoirs of these Black literary authors and intellectuals—who will likely include Fannie Lou Hamer, George Jackson, Rubin “Hurricane” Carter, Angela Y. Davis, Assata Shakur, Safiya Bukhari, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Bryan Stevenson, Shaka Senghor, Susan Burton, and Albert Woodfox. We will also examine the reception of these works in relation to their engagement in (counter-)public intellectualism, whether that (counter-)public intellectualism appears in the form of (open) letters, critical essays, public addresses, widely-distributed prison interviews, critically-acclaimed documentaries, or Hollywood biopics. Finally, we will consider how these works participate in a vibrant tradition of neo-abolitionism within the African American literary tradition, and also how

they anticipate and expand critical discourse on Black intellectual history (the work of Harold Cruse, Grant Farred, and Brittany Cooper), studies of contemporary imprisonment in Black literature (the work of Michael Hames-García, Dennis Childs, and Lisa Corrigan), and engagements in critical prison studies scholarship with imprisoned intellectualism, anticarceral feminism, abolition, policing, state violence, gendered social control, discriminatory sentencing, indefinite solitary confinement, and racialized prisoner abuse (the work of Angela Y. Davis, Joy James, Dylan Rodríguez, and Victoria Law).

Eng 776:01 **Studies in Southern Literature: The Queer South**
J. Harker **T 3:00-5:30 pm**
jlharker@olemiss.edu

The Queer South explores the legacy of the South in American literary imagination as a site of deviant and prolific sexual expression by examining Southern LGBTQ+ literary heritages in the 20th century. Mid-century queer Southern writing by Carson McCullers, Truman Capote, and Tennessee Williams merged queerness and the grotesque; subsequent literary productions, inspired by women’s liberation and gay liberation, embraced literary innovation and explicit depictions of queer desire. African American and working-class queer narratives further develop the Southern queer literary tradition. Possible writers include Rita Mae Brown, Ann Allen Shockley, June Arnold, Alice Walker, Randall Kenan, Shay Youngblood, Dorothy Allison, and Fannie Flagg. Course requirements include weekly response papers and a 20-25 page seminar paper.



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