

# Department of English

# Graduate Course Descriptions

## *Fall 2024*

Required hours	Category	Courses offered <i>during Fall 2024</i> that fulfill each category
3	Eng 600	Eng 600
6	Post-1800	Eng 732, 740, 762, 766
6	Pre-1800	Eng 703
12	Creative Writing Workshops (MFA/PhD-CWC only)	Eng 680, 682, 683

Eng 600  
Solinger  
Introduction to Graduate Studies  
M 3-5:30  
solinger@go.olemiss.edu

**\*\*Required for First Year English Graduate Students in All Programs\*\***

This course is an introduction to theory and methods for graduate study, with emphasis on the impact of theoretical schools of thought on the evolution of the profession.

**Eng 680**                      **Graduate Fiction Workshop**  
**Sundar**                        **TH 3-5:30**  
                                      **smsundar@olemiss.edu**

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

**Eng 682**                      **Graduate Poetry Workshop**  
**Nezhukumatathil**        **T 6-8:30**  
                                      **acnezhuk@olemiss.edu**

Taking cues from June Jordan, I hope to have this workshop “become, in fact, a place where students learned about the world and then resolved, collectively and creatively, to change it!” To that end, this class will most definitely not follow traditional workshop format, so if you are looking for that, alas, you will need to look elsewhere. This semester, we will go back to the roots of the word *poet*, which translate from the Greek as TO MAKE. Most days we will spend part of the time making, dreaming, experimenting, learning names of flora and fauna here in Mississippi where you write, and most of all— how to make this art into a sustainable practice for our lives. For our *whole* lives. To feel whole in our lives. That’s plural, emphasis most intentional— to build a community during a time when so much is working towards making us feel more alone. This workshop will provide us with a fun, intense discovering that can only happen with loads of grace and elbow grease. From all of us. There will be nourishment. We will learn how to nourish ourselves. And each other. The orientation of the course hopes to push students past their creative and pedagogical norms, and by semester’s end, students will have created and arranged the foundation a new suite of poems or the cornerstones of a larger creative project. Other writing art-projects include abecedarian poems and wearable poems and poetry comics, etc. You will also complete a poetics craft essay for possible publication, investigating texts (TBD) and discoveries for this semester, and oh yes, you’ll have conferences with me to discuss your poems and if you like, talk about what sets your hair on fire in the poetry world. Fall in Mississippi—there’s no better place on the planet to be a writer with a superlative capacity for metaphor.

**Eng 683**                      **Form, Craft, and Influence: Fiction**  
**Wang**                         **W 6-8:30**  
                                      **mxwang@olemiss.edu**

This class will pay special attention to genre fiction, particularly sci-fi, speculative fiction, and thrillers, in order to uncover useful techniques that might benefit our own writing, whether we are working within a genre or writing literary fiction. In particular, we will focus on how (literary) genre novels control pacing, create tension, build their worlds, and train their reader so that they are invested in the literature and the outcome of the characters.

**Eng 703**  
**Baechle**

**Studies in Early English Literature**  
**T 3-5:30**  
**sbaechl@olemiss.edu**

This class examines the ways English poetry from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries theorizes politics. Working with disparate genres, both narrative and lyric, we will explore premodern authors' engagement with contemporary questions about power, class, social entanglement. What is the natural state of humanity? What processes spur the formation of states? How do power and authority intersect? What does a healthy state require—what do we owe to one another within a political system and how are we allowed to respond to abuses of power? This class will center the exploration of questions like these in obscene *fabliaux*, in dream vision, in estate satire, in courtly lyric, in medieval romance, in pastoral poetry, and in metaphysical verse.

Throughout the semester, we will focus in particular on how these texts dissect the politicization of identity: that is, how categories like gender, sexuality, or class, for example, enable wider critiques of the operations of power. Our goal will be to account for the poetry of these centuries as, to borrow Francis Oakley's phrase, "the watershed of modern politics," providing fertile ground for imagining consent-driven theories of political formation before their codification in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (long acknowledged the first work of modern political theory). We will examine how literary representations of consent and violation provide scope for understanding how citizens come to be subjected to power; at the same time, we will investigate how these texts articulate problems of justice that continue to resonate with contemporary concerns and offer modern readers scripts for resistance to enduring injustices.

**Eng 732**  
**Stout**

**The Persistence and Possibility of Lyric Poetry**  
**M 6-8:30**  
**dstout@olemiss.edu**

A number of important conversations in contemporary poetry and poetics have centered around the question—or, more sharply, the *critique*—of lyric. Very generally, the sense has been that the modern lyric, as we have inherited it from the romantic tradition, needs to be rethought or even resisted. The charge is that the lyric—shortish poems typically centered on the cognitive and emotional response of an individual speaker, usually to a natural landscape—carries within it a set of regrettable and exclusionary assumptions about (to name a few of the standard critiques) access to nature, the centrality of the individual ego and its perceptions, and the capacity of language to represent the truth of the world. At the same time, the term lyric remains important to contemporary poets (see Claudia Rankine's repeated invocation of the term) and lyric questions continue to occupy many contemporary poetry projects—which remain concerned with questions of authenticity, voice, persona, and the capacities of language to represent a world. So what gives?

This course will provide students with an overview of the critical debate about lyric as it has emerged over the past decades and a kind of “survey-style” set of readings designed to give us a chance to reflect on what that critique captures and/or misses about modern poetry. Some of our example texts will be drawn from romantic and 19<sup>th</sup>-century poets, but our seminars will also give ample space to 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century poets: including Rankine, Layli Long Soldier, Jos Charles, and Danez Smith. Students will have a choice of projects: seminar paper, a series of shorter papers, or a creative option that engages with questions and readings from our class.

**Eng 740**                      **Introduction to Queer Theory**  
**Friedlander**                **TH 3-5:30**  
                                      **ari@olemiss.edu**

This course will introduce students to queer theory by reading foundational works (Foucault, Butler, Sedgwick, Spillers, etc.) and more recent touchstones (Stryker, Puar, Snorton, McRuer, etc.). Students will be introduced to queer theory’s multitudinous angles of approach: as political analytic, as historical lens, as literary hermeneutic, and as activist praxis. The course will also trace queer theory’s increasingly crucial intersections with critical methodologies pertaining to the study of race, religion, affect, class, gender, asexuality, and disability.

**Eng 760**                      **Studies in Early American Literature: Ecocritical Approaches to Early American Literature**  
**Reed**                            **W 3-5:30**  
                                      **preed@olemiss.edu**

This class is oriented around a series of problems in early American literary ecocriticism. Beginning with scholarship central to the field, we will explore the major problems, questions, and methodologies informing early American ecocriticism, aiming to develop a sense of how we do ecocriticism in general, and how Early American Studies has tended to do it. In the semester’s second half, we will move into a range of pre-1800 American literary readings. We will plan to sample influential early American texts such as early European settlement narratives by Smith and Bradford; captivity narratives such as Mary Rowlandson’s; natural histories of North America and the Caribbean, Anglo-American pastoral poetry, and early national theatre’s dramatic representations of the natural world. The course will finish by reserving time for focused consults and class workshopping of seminar-length research projects. This class aims to fulfill pre-1800 curricular requirements and to complement programs of study in adjacent thematic, theoretical, and geo-historical-cultural areas of study.

**Eng 762**                      **Studies in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Literature: Literary Cultures of the Civil War and Reconstruction**  
**McKee**                        **TH 6-8:30**  
                                      **kmckee@olemiss.edu**

This course will approach the periods of the Civil War and “Reconstruction” from the intersection of history, literature, and visual representation. We will follow the lead of scholars Kate Masur and Gregory Downs who, in *The World the Civil War Made* (2015), encourage us to look beyond the narrow window of military Reconstruction (1868-1877) and toward the end of the century in determining the conflict’s repercussions for all Americans. Reading for the course will include both fiction and nonfiction; in addition to primary texts and literary criticism pertinent to the postwar period, we will also read selections from historians and consider the role of the war and its aftermath in both popular and visual culture. Requirements will include short weekly papers and presentations and a final essay. Among the writers we will engage are Harriet Beecher Stowe, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Louisa May Alcott, Emily Dickinson, Sherwood Bonner, Albion Tourgée, Frances E.W. Harper, Constance Fenimore Woolson, Thomas Dixon, and Charles Chesnutt. Suitable for students in English, History, Southern Studies, African American Studies, and those with interests in literary culture, visual culture, and interdisciplinary approaches.

**Eng 766**                      **Studies in Contemporary American Literature**  
**Alexander**                    **W 6-8:30**  
   **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 Black Lives Matter 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 manifestoes, letters, speeches, autobiographies, memoirs, and essays of some (if not all) of the following Black literary authors and intellectuals: Martin Luther King Jr., Fannie Lou Hamer, George Jackson, Rubin “Hurricane” Carter, Angela Y. Davis, Assata Shakur, Safiya Bukhari, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Reginald Dwayne Betts, Bryan Stevenson, Shaka Senghor, Susan Burton, Albert Woodfox, and Keeda J. Haynes.

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, 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 contemporary critical discourse on Black intellectual history (the work of Grant Farred and Brittany Cooper), studies of contemporary imprisonment in Black literature (the work of H. Bruce Franklin, Michael Hames-García, Dennis Childs, and Lisa Corrigan), and engagements in critical prison studies scholarship with imprisoned intellectualism, abolition, anticarceral feminism, abolition feminism, policing, state violence, gendered social control, discriminatory sentencing, indefinite solitary confinement, and

racialized prisoner abuse (the work of Angela Y. Davis [with Gina Dent, Erica R. Meiners, and Beth E. Richie], Joy James, Dylan Rodríguez, and Victoria Law).



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