

**Duke English Department Course Descriptions**  
**Fall 2021**

**ENGLISH 89S.01 FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR IN LITERATURE**  
**PARENTS, CHILDREN, REBELS: LAWS OF LOVE AND OBEDIENCE**  
**Corina Stan**

*How should a person be?* Why, how, and for whom should we live? What do we owe our parents, and should such a sense of debt influence whether to become a parent oneself? How does one make the decision to have children, and are there situations when such an idea might not be morally defensible? In this seminar, we will read and discuss novels, memoirs, poems and art that “come out of one’s own burning” – as Friedrich Nietzsche might say – that is, from one’s own life experiences and the precious little wisdom they yield. These are books about parents, children, and the bonds that connect them; about the difficulties of responsible love and the intimate tug-of-war between what we owe ourselves and what we might owe others; about the fraught choice of staying true to oneself, the awkwardness of familial conversations, the fears and doubts acknowledged candidly or passed over in silence. Why is becoming a parent so intimately tied to vulnerability and the awareness of finitude? Can time, or perhaps art, redeem loss?

The texts on our reading list include meditations on motherhood, family, adoption, the entanglements of home, race, gender, and class; navigating social environments in the transition between childhood, adolescence and adulthood; love in its simple and complicated forms.

Sheila Heti, *Motherhood*  
Lorrie Moore, *A Gate at the Stairs*  
Patrick Flanery, *The Ginger Child*  
Elena Ferrante, *The Lying Life of Adults*  
Kiese Laymon, *Heavy: An American Memoir*  
Rachel Cusk, *A Life’s Work*  
Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born*  
Jacqueline Rose, *Mothers: An Essay on Love and Cruelty*  
Celeste Ng, *Little Fires Everywhere*  
Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*  
Bernardine Evaristo, *Girl Woman Other*  
Caryl Phillips, *In the Falling Snow*  
Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*  
Poems by Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and art by Nikki de Saint Phalle.

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**ENGLISH 90S.01 SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE**  
**SPORTS AND SOCIETY**  
**Amber Manning**

In 2018, basketball star Zion Williamson responded to claims that he was nothing more than a viral video sensation by asserting, “I’m more than just what you see on YouTube.” Williamson’s quip resonates beyond his own participation in college basketball; in fact, it calls us to question how athletes—and the organizations they’re a part of—participate in, form, support, and even resist society.

In this course, we will ask: what role do athletics play in the contemporary global society? How do narratives of sporting events interact with our understanding of race, gender, class, and sexuality? How does writing

about athletics become a way to address social concerns and confront inequalities? And, in a world in flux, why do sports matter so much to us?

In order to answer some of these questions, this course will look at a variety of textual materials, beginning with sports journalism (in newspapers and on social media) on issues like CTE, Title IX, paying college athletes, and discrimination in sports organizations. We will also turn to texts like Bernard Malamud's *The Natural*, Michael Chabon's *Summerland*, selected poetry of Jack Spicer, and Franklin Foer's *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization* (2004). Finally, we will consider media like the baseball documentary *Kokyakyu*, ESPN's *30 for 30: Michael Vick, Bend It Like Beckham, Dear Basketball*, and legal texts from *Cohen v. Brown University* (Title IX) and *Fraser v. Major League Soccer* (among other cases).

Students will use their own writing as the primary method of inquiry; they will complete short weekly responses, a persuasive op-ed (2 pages), a brief podcast or media script (5 pages), and a final essay that uses research, rhetorical strategies, and creativity to situate the role of sports in society (8 pages). We will also have writing workshops that aid in the entire writing process (from pre-writing to final draft).

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## ENGLISH 90S.02 SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE

### BROKEN ENGLISH? CONTEMPORARY LIT AND WORLD ENGLISHES

Eun-hae Kim

What counts as “proper” or “standard” English? In January 2020, the Oxford English Dictionary sparked debate about this question when it introduced 29 Nigerian words into the dictionary. Nigeria is but one among over 60 countries across the globe that recognizes English as one of its official languages. From Singlish in Singapore to Eurenglish in European countries, English language speakers from multiple locations have adapted, appropriated, and diversified English to respond to their local realities. But can speakers of pidgin or creole English be called “native” English speakers? What marks the distinction between a native and nonnative speaker?

In this course, we will explore how contemporary novels have opened, complicated, and pluralized the notion of standardized English. We will ask whether it is possible to own a language, the connection (or lack thereof) between birthplace and fluency, the negotiation of linguistic resources in relation to identity, and the construction of linguistic and geopolitical hierarchies. Our inquiry into the polyvocal landscape of World Englishes will be conducted by close reading novels, which may include: Chang-Rae Lee's *Native Speaker* (1995), Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (2008), and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013). We will also be watching a few films, which may include: *Bend it Like Beckham* (2002), *The Namesake* (2006), *Coco* (2017), and episodes of the sitcom, *Kim's Convenience* (2016-).

\*Assignments: weekly online blog posts (~250 words), a literacy biography (3-4 pages), argumentative essay based on close reading of in-class text (5-7 pages), and a longer final paper (analytic or creative, 8-10 pages).

\*No exams. \*No prerequisites. \*Students from all linguistic and cultural backgrounds and majors are welcome!

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**ENGLISH 101S.01 THE ART OF READING**  
**READING POETRY IN THE SECULAR AGE**  
**Thomas Pfau**

“With the year 1848,” when a movement of liberal revolutions swept across Europe, “the Age of Raptures came to its close and the Age of Progress began.” That is how one of the great twentieth-century poets, Czeslaw Milosz, characterizes the starkly changed world in which poetry would henceforth find its place. Throughout the term, we will study five poets – Blake, Hopkins, T. S. Eliot, Czeslaw Milosz, and Seamus Heaney. Each of them wrestles with developing a lyric voice in a prosaic and seemingly “disenchanted” world: What is the role of poetry in the modern world defined by an anti-metaphysical, strictly immanent view of existence? What fundamental outlook can replace hope, particularly once modern theories of human-engineered “historical progress” fail to deliver what they promise? In a world advancing from utilitarianism to imperialism to totalitarianism, and thus seemingly denuded of hope and charity, is writing poetry still a viable pursuit? Is artistic creativity possible within the immanent and naturalistic framework that has increasingly dominated human reasoning and experience since the seventeenth century? Or, alternatively, does the gradual loss, if not summary rejection, of religious and metaphysical certitude force modern poetry to embrace a naturalistic, liberal-secular stance framework, if not by choice, then by default? Or, conversely, does post-Enlightenment lyric poetry fundamentally position itself outside of, perhaps even against, the customary antinomies of religious/secular, transcendent/immanent, metaphysics/naturalism, hope/desire (or cynicism), etc. – We will tackle these and related issues by focusing on the work of William Blake (1757-1827); Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889); T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), Czeslaw Milosz (1911-2004); and Seamus Heaney (1939-2013).

**Requirements:** 3 medium-length papers (~ 2,000 words each) + one in-class presentation on a poem (15 minutes).

**Books Ordered** (at University Textbook Store):

- William Blake, <http://www.blakearchive.org/work/songsie>
- Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Poetry and Prose* (Oxford World Classics)
- T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (Mariner Books)
- Czeslaw Milosz, *New and Collected Poems* (Ecco)
- Seamus Heaney, *Station Island* (Farrar Straus & Giroux)
- Seamus Heaney, *Seeing Things* (Farrar Straus & Giroux)

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**ENGLISH 101S.02 THE ART OF READING**  
**HOW NOVELS THINK**  
**Nancy Armstrong**

This course takes a careful look at what it means to say that the human being is a thinking being. More specifically, what does it mean to make that claim *now* rather than in centuries past? We will begin by seeing how that claim was put on trial in classic novels spanning the period from 1719-1958 (in four of the following): Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Austen’s *Emma*, Dickens’s *Great Expectations*, Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, and

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*). How do some of the most memorable characters in literature "learn" to think within the norms of self-expression appropriate to their positions in a modernizing society? We must also extend our inquiry beyond these major characters to those who think differently: What non- or subhuman monsters do "others" become by thinking outside the box?

During the second half of the semester, the class will turn to novels that appeared after philosopher of science Donna Haraway's *A Manifesto for Cyborgs* (1985). In her still timely argument, Haraway suggests that the monsters of science fiction—whether they think with their animal instincts or with forms of artificial intelligence—were even then on the way to becoming the new normal. We will want to see if this claim is borne out by more recent novels like Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, Miéville's *The City and the City*, and Whitehead's *The Intuitionist*. How do their protagonists process, store, access, and respond emotionally to social experience in the age of the 24/7 internet?

Writing requirements for the course include regular participation in class; 5 out of 10 one-page single-spaced response papers; and a longer paper developed from the best of the short papers.

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### **ENGLISH 101S.03 THE ART OF READING**

#### **INTRODUCTION TO TRAGEDY**

**Julianne Werlin**

This class is an introduction to the history and interpretation of tragic drama. Taking ancient Athens and the origins of the Greek theater as our starting point, we will move to medieval and Renaissance England to explore how the English tragic tradition has developed across continents over the last five hundred years. In reading masterpieces of tragedy, will discuss some of the difficult questions raised by this powerful form, such as why we take pleasure in watching terrible events on stage; what are the characteristics a tragic hero or heroine ought to have; what special truths can fiction offer; and how can the distinctive characteristics of live theater shape our experience of tragedy. We will also ask how the tragic tradition has changed over time, as new values, conditions of performance, and kinds of dramatists and audiences came into being.

Authors will include Sophocles, Shakespeare, Beckett, and Soyinka. We will also read some major theories of tragedy, including selections from Aristotle, David Hume, Hegel, and Raymond Williams. Assignments will include two papers, two exams, and weekly postings.

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### **ENGLISH 110S.01**

#### **INTRO CREATIVE WRITING**

**Cathy Shuman**

The word, the line, the sentence; the image, the thought, the story – these will be our building blocks as students explore and experiment, write, workshop, revise, and polish substantive work in three genres: poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Along the way, we will analyze published examples of each genre for inspiration and ideas.

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**ENGLISH 110S.02**  
**INTRO CREATIVE WRITING**  
**Mesha Maren-Hogan**

Introduction to Creative Writing is a hands-on, interactive exploration of nonfiction, poetry, playwriting, and fiction. Students will read examples from each genre and then dissect and discuss the craft elements demonstrated in each text. We will then go on to try our own hand at drafting and revising essays, poems, plays, and fictional prose. No previous experience is necessary. This is a studio style course with lots of writing exercises and peer discussion which will be driven by your own interests and desired creative outcomes.

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**ENGLISH 110S.03**  
**INTRO CREATIVE WRITING**  
**Anya Lewis-Meeks**

What do we talk about when we talk about writing? Craft? Form? What are the foundations of creative writing, and how can they carry over to other fields? Introduction to Creative Writing will help interested writers begin to answer these questions. We will read creative works from multiple genres both in order to inform our aesthetic sensibilities and tastes, and also to mine techniques and skills that we may use in our own writing. We will practice these techniques during class, and develop a consistent writing practice on our own. Along the way, we will “workshop” our creative drafts with our peers, and develop a robust, diverse community of writers and thinkers. By the end of the course, we will discuss strategies for transferring our new skills into other forms of writing we may encounter—at Duke, in our creative practice, and beyond. No previous writing experience required.

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**ENGLISH 190FS-2.01 FOCUS PROG SEM LIT**  
**FICTIONALITY AND VIRTUALITY**  
**Aarthi Vadde**

This course uses literary works (mainly novels) and popular culture (video games, TV shows, social-media born fiction) to introduce two key concepts for literary and digital cultural study: fictionality and virtuality. The fictional and the virtual explain how stories immerse us in their worlds: why we can't put a book down, binge watch our favorite shows, and game for hours. Whatever your pleasure (reading, watching, playing), your immersion in a familiar art form is usually preconditioned by the knowledge that it is not real even if it feels real. But what about when art forms are new? In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, novel readers did not yet know what they were reading. They thought novels were autobiographies and characters were real people. Today, when we go online and use social media, we encounter real people who behave like fictional characters. We see parody accounts, curated personas, avatars, deep fakes, and all sorts of other techniques for virtualizing the self. In thinking about the entwined history of fictionality and virtuality, we will gain

perspective on a contemporary world in which readers and viewers, for better and worse, have become players and participants.

**Possible Texts (not all will make the final cut):** Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*; *Minecraft* (game); Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*; *Ever, Jane* (game); Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*; *Sherlock* (TV show); H.P. Lovecraft stories; Victor LaValle, *The Ballad of Black Tom*; *Lovecraft Country* (TV); William Gibson, *Neuromancer*; Teju Cole's Twitter projects; Ayad Akhtar, *Homeland Elegies*. **Short writing assignments;** critical and creative options with opportunity for revision.

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## ENGLISH 190FS-2.02 FOCUS PROG SEM LIT

### SOUTHERN GROTESQUE

Taylor Black

This course will reckon with representations of the region of the United States that, as William Faulkner describes in *Absalom, Absalom!*, has been “dead since 1865 and peopled with garrulous outraged baffled ghosts.”

The historical lens of slavery produces a condition of grotesquerie that itself has blossomed into fields of insanity. Our tour of the South will seek these out, focusing in on the unsavory, haunted and peculiar figures we meet along the way—figures, who, according to O'Connor, are “not images of the man in the street...[but] images of the man forced out to meet the extremes of his own nature...the result of what our social history has bequeathed to us, and what our literary history forces our writers to attempt.”

So, rather than consider works that romanticize or apologize for the South's sordid history, our syllabus will be populated by works that offer distorted visions of Southern life, history and culture.

We will consider depictions of the South in fiction (novels, plays and short stories), music (country, blues, bluegrass, gospel), film and television. This evolving character analysis of the region will tend toward the fantastic, terrible and estranged. With this in mind, your assignments will help you develop strategies for understanding and writing about forms of representation that are, in and of themselves, uncanny and highly stylized.

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## ENGLISH 190FS-2.03 FOCUS PROG SEM LIT

### RENAISSANCE MATH AND POETRY

Astrid Giugni

Renaissance mathematicians theorized the probability of winning games of chance, analyzed ciphers to understand covert military operations, fought duels over the solution of algebraic equations, and discovered imaginary numbers. Their discoveries, in turn, sparked the imagination of other scientists, artists, travelers, as well as of political theorists and writers—but does measuring and quantifying the world spark or suppress the imagination? Is mathematical discovery essential for a sense of wonder at the universe or does it destroy the poetry of the unknown? And how different is science from magic and alchemy?

Taking up these questions in the version proposed by Francis Bacon in his *Novum organon* (1620), this class explores how Renaissance men and women interpreted the new discoveries in algebra, geometry, cryptography, and probability. We will begin by reading, in translation, some of the original mathematical works that broke new ground in these fields and learn how to work with pre-modern mathematical conventions. The main concern of the course will be with how these discoveries influenced thinkers as different as Galileo Galilei, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and John Milton as they wrote about politics, religion, and literature.

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## **ENGLISH 208S.01 CRITICISM AND THE ARTS**

### **THE GENRE TURN in Contemporary Fiction**

**Kevin Gallin**

On recent lists of award-winners and best-sellers, readers may have encountered some surprises. Alongside so-called “realist” novels, hardboiled detectives stalk an abandoned construction site outside Dublin in Tana French’s *Broken Harbour*; spies pass secret notes from South Korea to North Korea in Viet Thanh Nguyen’s *The Sympathizer*; superpowered embodiments of the boroughs of New York City rise up to fight off the powers of gentrification in NK Jemisin’s *The City We Became*; in Emily St. John Mandel’s *Station Eleven*, a ragtag band of entertainers stage both Shakespeare and *The Simpsons* to adoring audiences across a post-apocalyptic America stricken by a pandemic flu.

This course provides a survey of contemporary novels (2000-present) organized around what critics have called “The Genre Turn.” The genres represented by the novels on the syllabus have, until recently, generally been understood as unserious leisure reading, more appropriate for the beach than for the classroom. But these new novels have literary critics paying attention to the kinds of novels they had previously disregarded. Together, we will work through a survey of exemplar contemporary novels in various genres and consider how their participation in these genres provide new ways of imagining how to navigate our world in the present, and in the future. More broadly, we will consider *why* authors have felt compelled to write in these genres – or perhaps more appropriately, why such experiments in genre seem to compel readers of literary fiction more now than they have in the past. We will also consider what makes an individual text “literature,” how that category was historically constructed, and how its terms have shifted. Finally – and most importantly – we will develop the skills necessary to think critically and write clearly about literary texts, both those on the syllabus and in our own reading practice beyond the classroom.

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## **ENGLISH 220S.01**

### **INTRO TO THE WRITING OF POETRY**

**Nathaniel Mackey**

The introductory level genre specific workshops are for students with some experience in creative writing who wish to deepen their knowledge of their chosen genre and gain increased mastery of elements of craft. Recommended for students who have taken English 110S.

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**ENGLISH 221S.01 INTRO TO THE WRITING OF FICTION**  
**WRITING THE UNSPEAKABLE**  
**Amin Ahmad**

As writers of fiction, we try to go beyond the surface and delve deep into uncomfortable emotions: desire, sexuality, loss, belonging, madness, personal and historical trauma. We start with our own raw experiences, but all too often end up self-censoring or resorting to clichés and conventional narrative strategies. How then do we create fresh works of insight, clarity and narrative power?

In this class we will learn from contemporary writers who have successfully engaged this difficult terrain. Reading like writers, we will take apart published work to learn craft issues like point-of-view, time management, characterization, and dialogue. Since writing the unspeakable depends on creating innovative forms, we will also learn to re-invent classic story structures.

Readings include contemporary writers such as Zadie Smith, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sam Shepard, Haruki Murakami, Lauren Groff, Edward P. Jones, and Justin Torres.

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**ENGLISH 222S.01 INTRO TO THE WRITING OF CREATIVE NONFICTION**  
**PLACES, PROCESSES AND THINGS**  
**Cathy Shuman**

Our focus will be on the essay as we explore and experiment with techniques, structures, and themes. Over the course of the semester, students will write short creative exercises leading through workshops and revision to the production of three longer essays. Along the way, we will read and discuss selected examples of published creative nonfiction to help us develop techniques for creating our own. No previous creative writing experience is required for this course.

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**ENGLISH 290S-1.01 SP TOP IN MEDIEVAL / EARLY MODERN**  
**GREAT POEMS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**  
**Victor Strandberg**

Beginning with some medieval ballads and Chaucer, this course will sample poems by major artists—and some not so major—covering a half millennium. The core of the syllabus will feature Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton from the English Renaissance; Pope, Swift, and Dr. Johnson from the Age of Reason; Keats, Wordsworth, and Coleridge from the Romantic period; Tennyson, Browning, and Housman from the Victorians; and Yeats, Eliot, and Dylan Thomas from the Modern period. The American contributors will include Whitman, Dickinson, Frost, Millay, and Pound. Two or three hour exams; two term papers (4-6 pages); and some contributions to class discussion. No three-hour final exam.

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**ENGLISH 290S-4.01 SP TOPICS IN CREATIVE WRITING**  
**PLAYS THAT CHANGE THE WORLD**  
**Faulkner Fox**

“You write in order to change the world, knowing perfectly well that you probably can’t, but also knowing that literature is indispensable to the world...The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you alter, even by a millimeter, the way a person looks or people look at reality, then you can change it.”

--James Baldwin in a 1979 interview

The goal of this creative writing course is for aspiring playwrights to think deeply about what—exactly—they are trying to do, and avoid, in their writing. What causes a play to be heavy-handed and propagandistic, as opposed to impassioned? How can students who believe deeply in a particular issue write artful drama about that issue? In what ways is theater similar—and dissimilar—to social protest in the streets? Students will be encouraged to experiment, question, and revise, at every turn.

This course will closely examine a diversity of plays that have had a marked impact on their cultures—an impact beyond an excellent and meaningful theater-going experience. Recent examples we will study include *Pass Over* by Antoinette Nwandu and *The Talk* by local playwright Sonny Kelly. We will also watch and study more traditional plays like *The Crucible* and *Angels in America*.

Over the course of the semester, students will read—and watch—excellent political plays as well as write their own. They will write and develop their own full-length script, in addition to doing weekly creative responses to produced plays. Class discussion will be divided between focus on student work-in-progress, produced plays, and playwriting craft. Most weeks, we will run scenes (have students read aloud from other students’ scripts-in-progress). Outside of class, students will work in small groups, meet with alumni readers, consultants at the Writing Studio, and individually with me.

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**ENGLISH 290S-4.02 SP TOPICS IN CREATIVE WRITING**  
**WORLD BUILDING: From Genesis to Lil Nas X**  
**Mesha Maren-Hogan**

In this course, we will examine and practice methods for creating fictional worlds. These ‘worlds’ will include utopian and dystopian communities as well as elements of fantasy, speculative and historical fiction. We will explore examples of world building ranging from Genesis to Thomas More’s *Utopia* to Lil Nas X’s *Montero*. Texts will also include *The Water Cure*, *McGlue*, *Tears of the Trufflepig*, *Bring Me The Head of Quentin Tarantino*, and works from authors such as N.K. Jemison, Julio Cortazar, and Marlon James. Students will read and discuss these works from a craft perspective as well as writing and revising a series of fictional pieces set in their own alternative worlds.

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**ENGLISH 310A DUKE IN NEW YORK STUDY AWAY**

**THE BUSINESS OF ART AND MEDIA: Making Media: A Guest Speaker Course**

**Marianna Torgovnick**

In a globalized and ever-more digital world, the arts and media are themselves big business and even small, local non-for-profit organizations require sophisticated 21st-century skills. Where might you fit in? What life lessons can you glean from hearing professionals from a variety of fields discuss with you what they do and how they got to do it? Drawing on Duke alums and others who are New York celebrities within their fields, this guest speaker class gives you the chance to meet and network with people who, like you, have diverse interests and an alert relationship to culture, technology, and society. Readings and active participation in intense question and answer sessions required. A guided journal plus short paper normally assigned.

*This course may be used as an elective toward the English major. Credit toward other majors and certificates possible with approval by the appropriate DUS. Open to the Duke in New York Program.*

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**ENGLISH 312A DUKE IN NEW YORK STUDY AWAY**

**THE ARTS IN NEW YORK: A Thematic Approach**

**Marianna Torgovnick**

Through literature, non-fiction, and films, students learn about New York's rise to cultural preeminence during the 20th century and its evolution in the 21st. Topics to be covered in class include immigration narratives and the history of New York as visible in short stories, neighborhoods, and films; Modernism and post-Modernism in the city; the history of the publishing industry and institutions such as Lincoln Center and the Museum of Modern Art.

Outside of class, students attend performances, exhibitions, films, concerts, and other events as a group. During part of each class, they discuss what they have seen and prepare for what they will see next. Special tours introduce them to the city's venerable institutions and vibrant neighborhoods. Readings, participation in class, two short papers, a research paper accompanies a semester project of your choice in which we invite you to refine a current skill or to learn a new one.

*Open to the Duke in New York Program.*

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**ENGLISH 313A DUKE IN NEW YORK STUDY AWAY**

**INTERNSHIP IN NEW YORK: Writing Your Work Experience / Apprenticeship**

**Marianna Torgovnick**

\*\*\* Duke in NY Arts & Media counts towards the I & E certificate, as a part of its experience requirement. The Work Experience / Apprenticeship course (313A) counts towards the MMS Certificate on a case by case basis. 313A also counts as a Duke course credit towards graduation even if you have already taken an internship for credit at Duke. If you wish credit towards your major, please confer with you departmental DUS.\*\*\*

This course requires you to identify, research, and write a 15 page research paper about an intellectual question that grows out of your work experience / apprenticeship in New York. As for an independent study, you will have required conferences with your instructor during the semester to discuss sources, documentation, and other issues. The work experience / apprenticeship can be in the arts, the nonprofit sector, television, film, or a business that interacts with the arts and media, such as advertising, entertainment law, music production, fashion, public relations, advertising, and events planning. Offered only for Duke in New York Arts & Media students. Staff with Prof. Torgovnick available for consultation. One course.

- Both the Fall & Summer programs have strong relationships with many potential employers: theater from Broadway to off-Broadway; artists in hip Brooklyn; museums like MoMA and the Guggenheim; media from Focus Features to MTV; publishing from Vogue to boutique agencies; businesses from advertising to law to public relations.
- You find your own internship, but we'll provide tips and contacts along the way. We stay in touch and guide you through a paper that enriches your understanding of the internship experience and satisfies Duke requirements for course credit.

*Open to the Duke in New York Program.*

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### **ENGLISH 320S.01**

#### **INT. WORKSHOP IN WTG OF POETRY**

**Joseph Donahue**

The goal of the course is to deepen students' engagement with the history and practice of poetic art in the twentieth and twenty first century. Reading assignments will be drawn from the canon of post WWII avant-garde poetry and literary art. Lectures will provide an historical and cultural context for the works we are reading, and about the controversies and challenges that inform the poetics of the late nineteen forties to the present. The course proceeds from the premise that a deeply internalized command of literary history is critical to the development of any serious writer. Students will be expected to read closely, to acquire an overall grasp of modernism and its development into what is now called the postmodern, and above all to participate in discussions. Further, students will be expected to investigate on their own initiative the texts towards which their own writing leads them. In class and out of class we will explore the possibilities for contemporary poetic practice suggested by earlier works. We will look at a wide range of poems with attention to both how they are made and to the personal urgency that makes the poem more than an exercise, that creates surprise or sorrow or exhilaration in the reader. Our main focus will be on writing poems, or creating letter-based artworks, and on developing both a critical and a generous approach to each other's work.

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### **ENGLISH 321S.01 INT. WORKSHOP WTG OF FICT.**

#### **KNIVES OUT!**

**JP Gritton**

As Mat Johnson, author of the graphic whodunit *Incognegro*, puts it: "The mystery form is the fundamental structure of contemporary storytelling." That *aha!* moment, the moment of catharsis that fiction writers search for, finds a kind of distillation in the whodunit.

Building on concepts outlined in “ENGL 221S – Introduction to the Writing of Fiction,” students will look out at the craft of fiction through the “window” of the mystery genre. As we explore this genre’s (sometimes unpleasantly familiar) conventions and tropes, we’ll complete a series of weekly writing exercises in response to craft essays, short stories, and novel excerpts by the likes of Ottessa Moshfegh, P.D. James, Jorge-Luis Borges, Walter Mosley, and Mark Haddon. How have writers employed the conventions of the genre to surprise and delight? How, for example, does Jorge Luis Borges invert the analytical detective trilogy of Edgar Allan Poe? How, for example, does Walter Mosley (*Devil in a Blue Dress*) use the framework of a mystery to express the particular disaffection of his P.I. narrator, a man who fought fascism in Europe only to discover rampant racism back home? What about Conan-Doyle’s “The Adventure of Silver Blaze” (for another example) allowed novelist Mark Haddon to explore the interiority of a fifteen-year-old boy living with autism? As we study and learn from the work of these authors, and as we hone our own writing, we seek to answer a bigger question: can the conventions of the mystery (or of any genre) serve not only as helpful reference points, but also as points of creative departure, for writers struggling with form and structure?

This is a face-to-face class: in addition to our weekly meetings, we’ll maintain a robust online presence on the class’s Sakai site. For those unable to attend in-person meetings, alternative/asynchronous assignments and readings may be made available, among them: posting discussion questions on readings, as well as informally “workshopping” classmates’ fiction on the discussion board. The semester will culminate in the submission to workshop of a fully revised short story or novel chapter that “responds” explicitly to a narrative tradition.

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**ENGLISH 336.01 SHAKESPEARE THROUGH 1600**  
**THE ELIZABETHAN SHAKESPEARE**  
**Leonard Tennenhouse**

This course will focus on the first half of Shakespeare’s career. Known as the Elizabethan Shakespeare, this was his most productive period. Within the decade from 1590 to approximately 1600 or so, he wrote more than twenty plays including nine history plays, seven romantic comedies, five or six tragedies, several long poems, and over one hundred and fifty sonnets. Reading a representative selection of plays and poems, we will look at his development as a dramatist and ask as well what his preoccupations were in this period, what concerns the various forms shared with one another, and why as the decade came to an end he began to experiment with new forms in which to write. The course will consist of a mixture of lecture and discussion. Lectures will be relatively brief. They will be designed to provide some historical and theatrical background.

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**ENGLISH 338S.01**  
**MILTON: Poetry, Theology, Politics**  
**David Aers**

Why would anyone want to spend a whole semester studying John Milton’s writings and their seventeenth-century contexts? The answer is the extraordinary scope and utterly brilliant quality of the writing in often very demanding but exquisite poetry as well as in passionate prose. This scope includes explorations in ethics, politics and theology on topics that should still be of central concern to us.

John Milton left Cambridge as an orthodox member of the Church of England. He died (in 1674) as one who had rejected this church, defended the execution of its governor (Charles I) and generated a theological system which included a dense cluster of positions which were startlingly “heretical” in terms not only of the magisterial Reformation but also of Catholic traditions. His unfinished treatise on *Christian Doctrine* begins with a statement which sets up the inquiry pursued in this seminar: “If I were to say that I had focused my studies principally upon Christian doctrine because nothing else can so effectually wipe away those two repulsive afflictions, tyranny and superstition, from human life and the human mind, I should show that I had been concerned not for religion but for life’s well being.” As both this statement and the title of this class suggest, poetry, politics and theology are inextricably bound together in Milton’s work. We aim to read much of the poetry and areas of the prose that will provide a rich sense of his theological and political reflections and enable us to have well-informed discussions about the complex relations between the great poems and his evolving theology. For Milton’s approaches to theology, ecclesiology and politics belong to a revolutionary moment in which unprecedented thoughts and practices emerged in the domains of religion and politics, domains inextricably bound together in the seventeenth century. The revolutionary regime Milton had served from 1649 disintegrated and the revolution to which he had been committed was defeated with the restoration of monarchy and state church in 1660. How did Milton and his writing respond to the defeat of the revolution and the restoration of Crown, Church of England, episcopacy and the attempt to suppress nonconforming groups? There has been a strong tendency in recent Milton scholarship to revise the Whig version of Milton into one that fits the narratives of secular postmodernity and some people taking this class may find it offers opportunities to interrogate some of these grand stories.

It will be helpful to read before the class begins the biography of Milton by Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*. Anybody reading Milton’s work would also benefit from some knowledge of the seventeenth century revolution in which Milton became immersed, and for this the best resource is a book by Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution, 1625-1660* (2002), especially parts 3 through 6. Extremely helpful and relevant to some of the issues we will address is Ann Hughes, *Gender and the English Revolution* (2012). Because we will be reading substantial, complex works, the more Milton you read *before* class the better. The **set text** (required) is *The Complete Prose and Essential Poetry of John Milton* edited by John Kerrigan and others (Random House). Before the first class, make sure that you have AT LEAST read (1) *On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity*; (2) *A Masque presented at Ludlow*, also known as, *Comus*.

#### Note on grades, class format, and expectations

This is a seminar and attendance/participation is mandatory. Unwarranted absences will result in failing the course. The grade comes from two essays (8-10 pages), which must be submitted by the given deadline to count. There will be no exams.

Please also note well: laptops and other electronic devices are not to be used in class. A seminar is a dialogic form of learning, very different to a lecture class. In my experience, laptops act as an impediment to the kinds of attention and communication I consider essential to a flourishing seminar. Also, since we will have more than enough to chew on already, please refrain from eating during class.

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**ENGLISH 386.01**  
**SCIENCE FICTION FILM**  
**Priscilla Wald**

The computer running your spaceship has turned homicidal; you have crash landed on a planet run by talking apes. Your little sister can read your mind; your future is revealed in the DNA sample taken moments after your birth. From space travel to time travel, from mind control to genetic manipulation, from aliens to sentient robots, no genre has more fully captured—and influenced—the relationship between important scientific discoveries and profound geopolitical and social transformations than science fiction. It registers the anxieties and hopes, the terror and the anticipation that comes with scientific innovation and social change. This class will consider science fiction film from its rise in the 1950s through the present. From its earliest years, science fiction film offered an important mode of engaging profound social changes and of imagining ethical responses to them. In its depiction of the future or of other worlds entirely, it offered a template for rehearsing a variety of outcomes for contemporary dilemmas, from the cultural negotiations of the multi-galactic crew of the starship Enterprise in *Star Trek* to the consequences of genetic determinism in the sterile world of *Gattaca*. And it staged explorations of human potential and limitations in the Atomic Age through such scenarios as the discovery of alternate universes and mental dimensions, the implications of human evolution and the creation of artificial intelligence, encounters with alien beings and worlds, and the ultimate unthinkable that was never really far from the human imagination: the consequences of full-scale nuclear war or environmental apocalypse. Since its proliferation in the post-war period, this cinematic genre, with its fantastical settings, imaginative plotlines, and inventive special effects, has dramatically registered collective responses to the radical scientific innovations and geopolitical transformations that have characterized the second half of the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first and has forged new mythologies for the contemporary world.

This class will be organized around the relationship between scientific innovation and social and geopolitical transformation: how, for example, the threats of nuclear war and the exhaustion of environmental resources, discoveries in virology and genetics, and the innovations in cybernetics intersect with decolonization and global development, race relations, and new social and geopolitical configurations. We will explore how science fiction film registers and responds to the contours and uncertainties of a changing world: to the challenges to the concept of human being and to the survival of the species. We will consider both how the films stage the dilemmas emerging from scientific and social change and how they posit responses to them. We will explore the cinematic innovations, the social criticism, and the mythological imaginings of science fiction film.

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**ENGLISH 390S-1.01 SINGLE AMERICAN AUTHOR**  
**WILLIAM FAULKNER**  
**Victor Strandberg**

When literary pundits occasionally post a list of the ten greatest novels in world literature, no writer is more likely to be cited than William Faulkner, Nobel Prize winner in 1950. The main question is which of his masterworks will be cited (if not both)—*The Sound and the Fury* or *Absalom, Absalom!* If the list were extended to the top twenty, two other novels could be in play—*As I Lay Dying* and *Light in August*.

As Hemingway conceded, Faulkner “has more talent than all of us [contemporaries]. I would be happy just to be his manager.” This course will begin with several of Faulkner’s best short stories—for example, “A Rose for Emily” and “Red Leaves”—and then follow the divided stream of his creativity, taking up his more conventional novels first (*Sanctuary*, *Light in August*, *The Hamlet*) and reserving until last his greatest and most challenging experimental novels such as *Absalom, Absalom!* Three hour exams, one optional term paper (5-7 pages), no three-hour final exam.

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**ENGLISH 390S-7.01 SP TOPICS IN LANG & LIT**

**FUTURE SHOCK NOW**

**Tom Ferraro**

It is the writer as artist, not the social or political engineer or even the philosopher, who first comes to realize when time is out of joint.

Albert Murray, 1973

A course with Covid-Era Enhanced Hindsight.

By Covid-Era hindsight, I mean the enhanced ability to see the future in the past, as rendered by some of our most cannily observant and thus uncannily prescient serious fiction. We will ask: who saw the Consumer-Made Self, the Social-Media-Fashioned Self, the Cyber-Whatever Self before their time, as they were first coming into sight? What were the original attractions and initial risks of sanctifying the commodity, turning community virtual, achieving (self-) transformative license beyond bounds? In “Future Shock Now,” we will *not* be studying contemporary speculative/science fiction, of which my fellow faculty here at Duke are expert, but rather novels and long stories, primarily American, that were produced in the past, in the century or two before ours, which nonetheless see in *their own time-present* glimmerings of a collective future so immediate and so specific that they challenge our insight still.

Pray tell, what? How so? I anticipate sardonic registerings and suspicious affirmations of the corporate office (now called “the open cubicle” or “the Zoom box”) and the department store (now called “Amazon Prime”) and even moneyed telegraphy (harbinger of the Internet), as they once emerged in Herman Melville’s “Bartleby, the Scrivener,” Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie*, and Henry James’s “In the Cage.” We are likely to encounter sex-celebrity in Willa Cather (in advance of K-Pop); Hollywood fantasy-construction (now called “Netflix”) in Nathanael West; what the sixties called “free love” (polyamory plus trans-surgery) in Marge Piercy; wannabe-racial-self-processing amidst genealogically revealed inter-racial relatedness (witness Michael Jackson’s chemistry box vs. Henry Louis Gates’ DNA tracings) in George Schuyler; and the entertainment division of environmental crisis (now called, “the weather channel” and, indeed, “Covid-TV”) in Don DeLillo. I haven’t decided how close to the present to come, but even DeLillo’s *White Noise* predates the Internet, Social Media, and cellular transmission as we now know it. I confess however to the temptation to read with you Chang-Rae Lee’s *Native Speaker* (1996), which among other things is a delicious exposé of the hauntingly ethnic erotics of surveillance culture in its oh-so-Duke-desired form of management consulting! Lee’s novel entails a whole lot of words and pages, though, on the order of Dreiser and Piercy, so we shall see how much time we have.



The novels to be chosen are in part cautionary tales (anti-capitalist, anti-technological, pro-normativity), what Americanists call after the Hebrew Bible “jeremiads,” as you might expect; but they are also, at the same time, excited and exciting anticipations of change (such as technological and medical empowerment of women and queer folk, a poly-theistic or visceral-materialist countering of the Church-and-State control of spirituality, even cross-class trans-racial poly-ethnicity coupled to the righteous vengeance of the destroyed and disenfranchised). We will read for love *and* irony, change at once awe-filled and awful, the sublime in techno-social form.

Texts to be chosen from:

Herman Melville, “Bartleby, the Scrivener” (1853)  
Henry James, “In the Cage” (1898)  
Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (1900)  
Willa Cather, “Coming, Aphrodite!” (1920)  
Nella Larsen, *Passing* (1929)  
George Schuyler, *Black No More* (1930)  
Nathanael West, *The Day of the Locust* (1939)  
Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976)  
Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (1985)  
Chang-Rae Lee, *Native Speaker* (1995)

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## ENGLISH 390S-7.02 SP TOPICS IN LANG & LIT

### BLAKE AND YEATS

#### Joseph Donahue

This course will take up two essential themes of 19<sup>th</sup> century poetry: esotericism and magic. To do so, we will look closely at two of the greatest poets of that period, William Blake and William Butler Yeats. Both poets were devoted to the secret and the strange. Both understood that the highest purpose of poetry was to fashion a new mythology for their times, and each did so. And so, druids, revolutions, eroticism, heresy, crones, kidnappings, decrepit kings, vengeful tyrants, folktales, trances, spirit possession, blood sacrifice, talking to the dead, and eerie women with much to say will be up for discussion as we read the most visionary and sustaining poetry in the English language. Interest will be paid to the relation of poetry to the visual arts, to the poetics of prophecy, and to the proper way to cast a spell.

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## ENGLISH 390S-7.03 SP TOPICS IN LANG & LIT

### LITERATURE AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

#### Leonard Tennenhouse

Together, we will try to figure out how the religious promise of heaven as the fulfillment of life and self, plenitude and perfect love, continues to operate in modern secular society: How did the pursuit of happiness become the driving force of a world organized by capitalism, one in which human life must seek and find self-transcendence in the world? This is powerful stuff!

To help us identify this elusive and deeply contradictory secular myth, we will consult a few of the major intellectual arguments that proposed and/or challenged it, including those by Locke, Mill, Marx, Weber, Marcuse, and Coetzee. But to understand where these arguments break down or fail to deliver on their promises, we will rely on such works of fiction as Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, short stories by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Oscar Wilde, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the film version of *The Wizard of Oz*, Phillip Roth's *Goodbye Columbus*, Colm Tobin's *Brooklyn*, and Colson Whitehouse's *Underground Railroad*.

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**ENGLISH 395**  
**LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY**  
**Dominika Baran**

This course examines language as a social practice, focusing on different aspects of its role in social life. Topics addressed in the course include: language and social identity, such as ethnicity, social class, age, and gender; variation in language, including dialects, accents, and registers; multilingualism and language contact; new languages such as pidgins and creoles; language, culture, and intercultural communication; language and ideology; language in education and in the media. Through the discussion of these topics and homework including reading and small research projects, students are introduced to key concepts, theories, and methods in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. Course requirements will include class participation, three midterm assignments, and a final paper.

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**ENGLISH 490.01 SPECIAL TOPICS LANG/LIT**  
**ENVIRONMENT IN LIT, LAW, & SCI**

**Priscilla Wald (English, GSF), Daniel Richter (Nicholas School), Saskia Cornes (Duke Campus Farm, FHI)**

Climate change, resource exhaustion, an increase in natural disasters, from tornados, hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes and floods to pandemics: these, we are told, are problems with “the environment.” We are living, it seems, in the Age of the Anthropocene, when humanity has become a geological force.

Racism, unprecedented poverty, inadequate health care, and urban blight in the midst of rising affluence: these, too, are problems with “the environment.” The world population has exceeded seven billion; we are putting increasing pressure on the planet, with dangerous consequences, as the pandemic we are currently living through has made so starkly clear.

So what is this “environment,” and why does this question matter, now more than ever? How might a better understanding of how that term is circulating and being used help us move beyond our impasses and think more productively about how to live more justly, equitably, compassionately, and responsibly in our world.

This class will address these questions by considering the very ground on which Duke is standing: the Southern Piedmont, the City of Durham, and the Duke Campus Farm. Beginning with early human settlement, when the Earth began to get a “history,” we will consider three historical trajectories — settlement; plantation culture and slavery; and the ongoing struggles for Civil Rights from the late 1960s into the environmental

justice and Black Lives Matter movements of the present—to show how science, law, and cultural forms (literary and scientific works, films, news media) contribute to the changing idea of “the environment.”

We will trace the idea of the environment not only across time, but also across geographical space, as we consider how ideas take root locally, and also travel through social, cultural, economic, agricultural, academic, and other networks, reshaping the ever-changing relationship between the local and the global.

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## **ENGLISH 490S-10.01 SP TOPICS IN LINGUISTICS**

### **LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPES**

**Dominika Baran**

Urban spaces in which we live and move – streets, buildings, shopping centers, parking lots, cafés and restaurants – are marked with linguistic signs. All around us are store signboards, billboards, notices, posters, advertisements. In this course, we will examine the local meanings of language visible in the spaces around us, with the particular focus on multilingual signs. We will read about linguistic landscapes around the world, from ancient cities to recently expanding modern ones, from train stations and airports to refugee camps and other transitional spaces, including the linguistic landscapes of protest signs. We will also consider such texts as artifacts, and we will explore how we can think about linguistic landscapes in film, literature, and new media, including social media. Through photographs and stories that situate them, students will have the opportunity to document and map multilingual texts visible in public spaces on Duke campus and in the Durham area, as well as ones in distant locations by using tools such as Google Earth. We will also discuss how the theories and methods for studying linguistic are situated within the larger enterprise of digital humanities. Course requirements will include class participation, homework assignments and blog posts, a final project presentation, and a final project.

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## **ENGLISH 546.01**

### **VICTORIAN LITERATURE**

**Kathy Psomiades**

This is a course about gender and sexuality in Victorian literature and in Victorian Studies. Its aims are literary, historical, and theoretical. That is, we'll be reading a range of Victorian literary works—novels, non-fiction prose, short fiction, poetry—, Victorian extra-literary writing about gender and sexuality, and scholarship in Victorian studies from the late 1970s to the present that takes gender and sexuality as its object.

What books to order: Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*, George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*, Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, Charles Darwin, *Descent of Man*, Michelle Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*.

We'll also read poetry by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Michael Field. Fiction and/or essays by Vernon Lee and Oscar Wilde. And a range of scholarly articles and book chapters on Victorian lit.

This course is also designed to help you develop your scholarly writing skills in two forms—the conference paper and the article-length graduate seminar paper. Depending on your individual needs and goals, you'll choose one of two writing options: A) two separate 10 page conference papers, the first due before midsemester, the second at the end. You'll write abstracts for these papers before the full papers are due, and you'll revise the first conference paper or B) one ten-page conference paper due before midsemester, to be expanded into a 20 page article-length paper that will be revised at least once by the end of the course. There will also be some in-class presentation.

Advanced undergraduate English majors who are interested in learning how to write longer research papers--either because they think they might want to apply to graduate school, or because they want some independent research experience before they write distinction essays--are welcome in this class. Be prepared for a heavy reading load, and a lot of writing.

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**ENGLISH 590S-4.01 SP TOP SEMINAR IN CRITICISM, THEORY OR METHODOLOGY**

**DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS: PERSPETIVES ON COMPOSITION IN BLACK MUSIC AND POETRY**

**Tsitsi Jaji and Stephen Jaffe**

When W.E.B. Du Bois published *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903, he juxtaposed a poetic and a musical epigraph from the sorrow songs to begin each chapter, laying a template for theorizing the lived experience of race in the U.S. in lyric terms. In the next decades writers like James W. Johnson, Alain Locke, and Zora Neale Hurston foregrounded sound in conceptions of Black cultural production while composers like Harry T. Burleigh, and Shirley Graham Du Bois investigated history as grist for their expression in song. This class will take their approach as a starting point for investigations of contemporary music and the literary imagination to ask, how do poetry and music speak to each other?

In this co-led seminar open to undergraduate and graduate students, we consider the fusion of words and music in a participatory space that welcomes scholars, creative writers and composers in productive conversation. We want to investigate the ways that the composer and the poet inhabit artistic and poetic discourses, reflecting lived contemporary experience. We will do this by considering different types of vocality to explore songs of poetic and political witness (including composers like Florence Price, William Grant Still and Wendell Logan); sacred music (Mary Lou Williams *Mass*) and works such as Kanye West's *Blood on the Leaves*, a double-coding of Billie Holiday's anti-lynching blues anthem, *Strange Fruit*). Music and words attuned to the documentary tradition in music of the 1990s such as T.J. Anderson's *Slavery Documents* and the *AIDS Quilt Songbook* will represent one area of inquiry, and another will be the collaborative practices with new media and experimental-visual and performance vocal presentation, such as Pamela Z's *Bagadada* and/or Tommy de Frantz' *Cane*. Theater pieces by Anthony Davis (*The Central Park 5*) and Steve Reich/Beryl Korot *The Cave* will allow us to explore contemporary approaches to the stage in which visual signals are forefront. These investigations will be supplemented by study of two new works commissioned by Duke Performances: David Garner's *Middle Passage*, and Jeff Scott's new creation for the Imani Winds. More regularly our seminar will be enriched by the regular participation of guest singers who will perform new music by graduate composers based on poems by writers enrolled in the class, and by guest speakers.

For students of African American literature, the course offers a window into aurality as a theoretical space; for practitioners of the other arts the course offers an encounter with theories of contemporary practice, including Brent Hayes Edwards, and Anthony Reed, and Daphne Brooks. For creative writers, composers and performers, the seminar will offer a compositional forum: to collaborate and to explore words, music, and contemporary public life.

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**ENGLISH 590S-4.02 SP TOP SEMINAR IN CRITICISM, THEORY OR METHODOLOGY  
PSYCHOANALYSIS, THE WORLD AND THE NON-HUMAN**

**Ranjana Khanna**

This course addresses how psychoanalytic theorists and practitioners have conceived of the non-human. “Psychoanalysis” constitutes a body of theoretical texts with the aim of providing regular therapeutic care to patients by addressing the manner in which conscious life interacts with the unconscious and repressed desires, fears, and emotional reactions. Even as it is a model that was constitutionally developed with an idea of regular, frequent, and long-term sessions with individual humans with the ability to speak paying for their service, it necessarily created techniques with certain ideas of the individual in mind—their relation to the group and the social; ideas of property and self-possession; concepts of sexual difference; the relationship between the neurological and the psychological; the vexed notions of phylogeny and ontogeny and their symmetries; the status of the spiritual and the religious; cultural norms in civilization; and the constitution of desire. The varied and changing body of psychoanalytic theory that has developed over the last 120 years and all over the world has approached these ideas in a variety of ways. And while ideas of the human were proffered, psychoanalysis itself had multiple ways of addressing elements that were apparently in excess of existing ideas of the human, and that had non-human components.

This course will address the “non-human” aspects of psychoanalysis through its history and focus then on the uses of psychoanalysis today in the context of different and distinct ways of conceiving some of its basic categories. What can psychoanalysis give us today to help think of the issues that plague our time like the post-human, climate change, pandemic, technological shifts, racial injustice, and poverty? What is a world and what is life according to psychoanalysis?

Requirements: In addition to attending eight jointly taught classes, students at each institution will be in discussion sessions with their home professor and also will be required to work on projects between institutions with collaborators over a project on psychoanalysis and the non-human.

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**ENGLISH 822S.01  
WRITING IS THINKING  
Toril Moi**

Writing is a fundamental part of academic life. This course aims to teach graduate students at any level, from first-year students to dissertation writers, how to write well and with enjoyment, and how to make writing a part of their daily life as creative intellectuals. The course starts from the premise that writing is thinking: that we develop our own thoughts in the act of trying to express them, and that the more we learn to use writing

at every stage of our work, the more we increase the range and depth of our thinking, and the more likely it is that we will get our writing published. On this view, writing is always rewriting; revision is integral to the process of writing.

In this course, the sentence is the key building block for writing. If every sentence you write make sense, you will find it easier to build paragraphs, and larger units too.

When is note-taking useful, and when is it a waste of time? What is the difference between taking the usual reading notes, and taking the kind of notes that will help us as writers? By practicing different kinds of note-taking, we can integrate writing in our research.

We will learn to read as writers by working closely with selected examples of academic and non-fiction prose. This means learning to read not just as consumers of ideas, but as crafters of sentences, paragraphs, essays and books. What is the difference (if any) between good academic writing and good non-fiction writing? Do academic writers need to care about the shape and structure of their sentences, or paragraphs? Should they? What is “voice”? How do we take the audience’s needs into account?

We will learn to cut our own texts. We will discuss how best to use quotations, and consider the differences between different academic genres: what is the difference between a seminar paper and a published article? An MLA panel paper and a full-scale invited talk? What is the point of footnotes (or endnotes for that matter)?

We will also discuss and practice different types of writing groups. Learn how to ask for the kind of feedback you need, and how to use feedback.

The course will use one writing handbook: Verlyn Klinkenborg, *Several Short Sentences about Writing*. The class as a group will also gain an overview over a wide range of other useful handbooks.

The course will be writing intensive. You will have several weekly deadlines for short pieces of writing. You will also get detailed feed-back on your writing every week. Students need to commit to collective discussion of writing. In return they will learn how to work with suggestions and feedback in a professional manner, and how to use comments creatively.

**Assignments:** Weekly writing assignments of various kinds; participation in exploratory writing groups, participation in collective editing and rewriting in class. A short final essay.

**How to apply:** Send an email to Professor Moi at [toril@duke.edu](mailto:toril@duke.edu), in which you explain why you want to take the course. Why do you need it? What do you hope it will do for you? This course is registration by permission only. You cannot register until you get a permission no. from Professor Moi. **New deadline for applications for Fall 2021: Monday July 5, 2021 by 5 p.m.**

**Admission:** This class usually has a long wait list. Ph.D. students get preference over MA students. Students in Literature and English also get some priority, but not to the exclusion of all other disciplines.

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**ENGLISH 890S.02 SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR**  
**History of Contemporary Literary Criticism**  
**Corina Stan**

This course provides students with a concise historical and theoretical overview of university-based literary criticism, with the goal of enabling graduate students to better understand--and hence, situate their own projects within--the history of their discipline. (The desire for such a course has been expressed at several recent graduate department meetings, and this course is the response to those requests.) We will focus on a number of key twentieth- and twenty-first century methodological orientations and movements, such as new criticism, structuralism, deconstruction, Foucauldian poststructuralism, new historicism, postcolonial criticism, critical race studies, and distant reading. We will also consider how these movements relate to both the changing structure of the university and to non-university publics across this period. Rather than aiming for an exhaustive survey of twentieth- and twenty-first century modes of literary criticism, we will focus on those modes that have had the most impact on current practice.

In addition to providing a historical survey of literary criticism, this course also focuses on several key skills for navigating successfully the first few years of graduate school, including time management strategies; project abstract writing (useful for conference and fellowship applications); and locating, and positioning oneself within existing academic debates/discussions (useful for minor exam creation and articles).

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**ENGLISH 890S.01 SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR**  
**REFORM AND REVOLUTION: John Milton in Christian Tradition**  
**David Aers**

This is a class in Historical Theology, but it is a somewhat unusual one. How and why? It is unusual in that we will be working across poetry, theology, politics, and ethics as well as crossing widely diverse genres. It may also be unusual in that while our inquiries will certainly be diachronic, seeking to understand how Christian tradition works in changing, profoundly contested circumstances (such as the English Civil Wars), it will be shaped by some of my own convictions about grand narratives (or in their less grand form, surveys of theological and intellectual history). I have come to think that because grand narratives are so often composed at a level of sweeping generality, they tend to abstract doctrines from their situatedness within complex texts and social practices, and to compose these abstractions into an orderly, often teleologically shaped story (e.g. the origins of modernity, from Ockham to Hobbes into the 20th century; the origins of the individual; the decline and fall of the Thomistic synthesis; the recovery of freedom from the persecutory medieval church). The results of such manipulations are often a persuasive story of ideas, but one in which the hard ground of specific texts is avoided so that what we may actually end up reading is a grand narrative composed of thoughts that nobody actually thought. And given the constitutional role of specialism (period and disciplinary) in our academy, who will be in a position to call the narratologists back to the solid earth of specific texts?! (For an engagement with just such a gripping and eloquent grand narrative, see the special issue of *JMEMS*, vol.46, no.3, on Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation*, particularly the Introduction to this issue).

An alternative model to the grand narrative, and the model we will pursue together, will be one defined by the attempt to develop a history which concentrates on particular texts belonging to complex traditions that are confronting specific, sometimes unprecedented, challenges. Such a history must try to take seriously the ways ideas are embodied and explored in thoroughly complex, intellectually and affectively demanding texts, texts such as those John Milton wrote to address, increasingly critically, the Reformation in which he was

nurtured. Perfectly licit aspirations to write grand narratives must try to remain responsible to the specific texts and human lives that constitute traditions. It is this model we shall seek to pursue in this course: always back to the hard ground, the minute particulars.

Given this commitment, it will not be surprising that we will continually work outwards from an intensive reading of the poetry, theology, and politics of John Milton, a seventeenth-century writer who produced the greatest Christian poetry in English. In addition to the epic poems *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, we will study his final poem, written while Milton was blind and in defeat, the poetic drama *Samson Agonistes*, published alongside *Paradise Regained* (an account of Christ in the wilderness). These extraordinary, profound poems are replete with Milton's own explorations of Christian teachings and practices as he responded to the Reformation and the Revolution to which he had committed nearly twenty years of his life. His great work, *Paradise Lost*, is his version of Augustine's *City of God*, his version of the earthly city and the city of God as he found it manifest and hidden in contemporary history. One of the issues which will preoccupy us is Milton's changing relations to Calvin and the Calvinist traditions within which he had been brought up in the Church of England as well as Milton's complex relations to Quakers and to various kinds of antinomianism and anti-Niceneism emerging in the Revolution.

Milton also wrote innovative, passionate works on the doctrine and discipline of divorce which forced him to re-think the normative Protestant biblical hermeneutics he had assumed. It also forced him to begin articulating a range of issues involving gender, ethics, and Christian teachings on liberty. We will read one of these works published in 1644. But Milton also wrote a formal theological treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*. While this text advocates many heresies, strenuously argued, it is also a perfectly recognizable work of systematic theology from within Reformed (Calvinist) tradition, one that not only claims to be based on Scripture alone, but also asserts itself to be *more* scriptural than any previous work of Reformed dogmatics. In reading this text closely, we will see how Milton's own astonishing linguistic learning and textual criticism generated a host of problems perhaps in excess of his, or any orthodox Protestant's, intellectual resources within their inherited hermeneutic tradition. The *De Doctrina Christiana* was not published before its discovery in the 1820s: its heterodoxy made publication impossible after the defeat of the Revolution and the re-establishment of the Church of England and Stuart monarchy from 1660. Nevertheless, Milton himself described this treatise in these ringing terms:

“If I were to say that I had focused my studies principally upon Christian doctrine because nothing else can so effectually wipe away those two repulsive afflictions, tyranny and superstition from human life and the human mind, I should show that I had been concerned not for religion but for life's well being.”

This statement exemplifies how theology and politics were inextricably bound together in Milton's thinking and in the culture to which he belonged. Throughout this seminar, I want us together to engage so closely with his poetry and prose that we learn a somewhat alien language: how it works across genres, and to address a wide range of challenges to Christian tradition (it is worth recalling here that Hobbes's *Leviathan* was published in 1651, a work Milton knew and against which he had to work out his own emerging forms of Christian materialism). Perhaps, too, we will be able by the end of the course to consider how Milton's work relates to contemporary narratives of secular modernity, narratives to which some contemporary scholars have sought, perhaps over-hastily, to assimilate Milton.

The **SET TEXT** for this course is:

*The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed., William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon (Random House, 2007). This includes an English translation of substantial selections from *De Doctrina Christiana*. For those wanting to read the full text of the treatise, there is a fine two volume edition of both the



Latin text and an excellent English translation in the Oxford University Press's *Complete Works of John Milton* (volume 8, 2 parts).

### **Important:**

In order to allow us to begin our seminar with the rigour and specificity we intend to pursue throughout, please read **before the first course meeting** the entirety of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, together with the short poems "Lycidas" and "Epitaphium Damonis" (in the English translation). It will also be very helpful to read the biography of Milton by Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

For further background and context to Milton's life and work, students are encouraged (but not required) to consult perhaps the best introduction to the seventeenth century revolution: Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution: 1625-1660* (Oxford University Press, 2004), especially parts 3 - 6. There have of course been many and conflicting attempts to describe Milton's theology in his poetry and prose but the following may be especially relevant to this course:

David Aers, *Versions of Election: From Langland and Aquinas to Calvin and Milton* (Notre Dame University Press, 2020), esp. Introduction and chapter 5.

Dennis Richard Danielson, *Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy* (Cambridge University Press, 1982)

Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton Among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cornell University Press, 1991)

Stanley Fish, *How Milton Works* (Harvard University Press, 2003)

Russell M. Hillier, *Milton's Messiah: The Son of God in the Works of John Milton* (Oxford University Press, 2011)

Maurice Kelley, *This Great Argument: A Study of Milton's De Doctrina Christiana as a Gloss on Paradise Lost* (Princeton University Press, 1941)

Michael Lieb, *Theological Milton: Diety, Discourse, and Heresy in the Miltonic Canon* (Duquesne University Press, 2006)

William Poole, *Milton and the Idea of the Fall* (Cambridge University Press, 2009)

James Simpson, *Permanent Revolution: The Reformation and the Illiberal Roots of Liberalism* (Harvard University Press, 2019)

### **A note on class format, expectations, and grading:**

This class is a seminar, so attendance and participation are mandatory. Laptops (and other electronic devices) are not to be used in class. A seminar is a dialogic form of learning, very different to a lecture class. In my experience, laptops act as an impediment to the kinds of attention and communication I consider essential to a flourishing seminar. Also, since we will have more than enough to chew on already, please refrain from eating during class.

The grade will come from one essay of not more than 25 pages to be handed in during or before the final class.