

Duke English Department Graduate
Course Descriptions SPRING 2024

ENGLISH 590S
Theory of Poetry
Julianne Werlin

What poems are, how they work, and what makes poems good (or not) has been a preoccupation of literary theory since its inception. In recent years, however, there has been a wave of innovative theoretical work on poetry, inspired in part by the New Lyric Theory and exemplified in Jonathan Culler's *Theory of the Lyric* (2015). This class will introduce the theory of poetry in historical perspective, including both classic works and cutting-edge treatments. We will pay particular attention to classic problems such as the nature of metaphor, the "lyric I," meter and scansion, aesthetic judgment, and the social function of lyric. In addition, we will look at work at the intersection of linguistics and literary theory, including such understudied topics as the relation of poetry to linguistic standardization. Texts will include Aristotle, Coleridge, Adorno, and Jakobson, and important recent figures such as Jahan Ramazani, Virginia Jackson, Nigel Fabb and Jonathan Culler. In addition, we will test out the theories we read (and, perhaps, invent) on a small set of poems. The course will include one final paper and one presentation.

ENGLISH 590S-2.01 Special Topics Seminar II
Gothic America
Mike D'Alessandro

What was the European Gothic—a literary mode characterized by crumbling castles, aristocratic oppression, crippling superstition, and the residue of past traumas—doing in early America? If America was a supposed blank slate for settlers, then shouldn't it have been free of all the terrors dotting the Old World? In actuality, the Gothic just looked different here. The US could not replicate Europe's foreboding cliffsides and wastelands, but offered in their place an ominous, everlasting wilderness. America would not build British castles with labyrinthine hallways and dank dungeons, but produced instead new cities with tangled streets and secret gambling cellars. Across these landscapes and others, the Gothic soon installed itself stateside. Moreover, the Gothic gave voice to a series of distinctly American outcasts. If, as Jeffrey Weinstock asserts, "the central topic thematized by the Gothic is inevitably power: who is allowed to do what based upon their subject position within a particular society at a specific moment in time," then the burgeoning US was fertile ground. Racial subjugation and slavery, marginalization and typecasting of women, pity and disgust for the urban underclasses and immigrants: these were the subjects that grounded a Gothic America.

Class will take the form of an intensive discussion seminar, centering on a series of novels, short stories, plays, and city exposés, with perhaps an occasional film screening. While the course is based in the nineteenth century, a final unit will address the echoes of the Gothic in twentieth-century literature. Works include novels by Gothic standbys Edgar Allan Poe (*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*) and Nathaniel Hawthorne (*The Scarlet Letter*), as well as Louisa May Alcott's sensation novella *Behind a Mask*, Hannah Crafts's haunted enslavement text *The Bondwoman's Narrative*, Tennessee Williams's Southern Gothic play *Suddenly Last Summer*, and Shirley Jackson's masterpiece of charmed agoraphobia, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*. Each week, homework will generally consist of one medium-length novel—or equivalent—plus supplementary readings (roughly 200-275 page/week).

Evaluation will be based on 1.) class participation (40%) 2.) a brief oral presentation (20%), and 3.) one 15-20 page seminar paper (40%)

For graduate students and advanced undergraduate students (counts for Area II requirement for English majors)

ENGLISH 590S-2.02 SPECIAL TOP SEMINAR II

Blue Humanities: Ocean Crossings

Charlotte Sussman

This course will focus on the intersection of Migration Studies and the Blue Humanities, two emerging disciplines that have had relatively little to say to each other. We will take as our primary case studies two historically significant mass sea crossings: the coerced transport of captive Africans in the Middle Passage of the transatlantic slave trade; and present-day migrant crossings of the Mediterranean. We will ask how these historical events are causally as well as analogically related. Our consideration of this disciplinary intersection will also engage us in questions of climate change, resource extraction from the seabed, and post-human understandings of the ocean; we will read at least one contemporary novel about the deep ocean. We will work from the assumption that creative engagement with this field through literature, art, and film is as important as policy studies or empirical data for understanding human beings' relationship to both mobility and to the ocean.

Readings may include:

Authors: Julia Armfield, Caroline Bergvall, Edwidge Danticat, Olaudah Equiano, Aracelis Girmay, Martin McInness, Geraldine Monk, Ray Naylor, M. NourbeSe Philip, Ribka Sibhatu, and Derek Walcott.

Theorists: Edouard Glissant, Melanie Jue, John Durham Peters, Philip Steinberg, P. Khalil Saucier and Tyron Woods, Ida Danewid, and Steven Elden.

Artists and filmmakers: Torkwase Dyson, Forensic Architecture, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, Ayana Jackson, Dagmawi Yimer, and Nikolaj Larsen.

Assignments will include short response papers, an annotated bibliography, and a final project developed in consultation with the professor.

ENGLISH 590S-3.02 SPECIAL TOP SEMINAR III

Contemporary American Movies: The State of the Art

Marianna Torgovnick

This class takes an intimate, seminar-style look at individual films, the culture and business of moviemaking, and the state of film theory and study today. For advanced undergraduates, it offers an in-depth consideration of contemporary issues. For graduate students, it offers an effective introduction to the teaching of film.

Questions we will consider include: American cultural history as it informs popular movies; evolving issues related to representation and aesthetics; the increasing role of computer

technology; the corporatization of the industry and how it interacts with the creative impulse.

Films will include movies such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *Easy Rider* (1969), *The Godfather* (1972), *Do the Right Thing* (1989), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *The Wedding Banquet* (1993), *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), *I Am Legend* (2007), *The Hurt Locker* (2008), *Get Out* (2017), and beyond. Films will generally be watched outside of class. Assignments will include directed journaling, in-class writing and oral reports; a final paper or equivalent creative project (written filmed, or enacted).

ENGLISH 590S-3.03 SPECIAL TOP SEMINAR III

Double Consciousness: Perspectives on Composition in Black Music and Poetry

Tsitsi Jaji, 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's *Mass*). Music and words attuned to the documentary tradition in music of the 1990s such as T.J. Anderson's *Slavery Documents* will represent one area of inquiry; another will be the collaborative practices with new media and experimental-visual and performance vocal presentation, such as Pamela Z's *Badagada* and/or Tommy de Frantz' *Cane*, based on the novel by Jean Toomer. 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 all foreground the forms of Double Consciousness and/or Intertextuality; they constitute a body of work which will inform the ways we think about the musical and literary history of the arts. Capping students' experience of the seminar will be sessions devoted to exposure to *Songs In Flight*, a new work of music and text with contributions by faculty members Tsitsi Jaji and Crystal Simone Smith, composer Shawn Okpebholo, and others. The Duke Arts sponsored performance will take place in April 2024, and students are expected to attend.

On a regular basis our seminar will be enriched by the participation of guest singers who will perform new music by graduate composers based on poems by writers enrolled in the class.

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, 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. No formal musical training is expected for students enrolling in ENG 590.

ENGLISH 590S-3.04 SPECIAL TOP SEMINAR III

Black Archival Imagination

Chris Ouma, Khwezi Mkhize

What do we mean when we invoke the idea of a Black Archive? What are the conditions, genres and modes of expression through which Black life, imagination and desire become legible? These questions complicate how we understand the concept of the archive. If Black life has variously been described through terms such as fugitivity, maroonage and waywardness then any engagement with its archival footprints will have to grapple with these logics. This course examines how Black experiences have posed problems with regards to representation across imperial encounters. It takes seriously, narrative and creative reasoning and as such, genres such as the novel, poetry film, photography, sound, critical fabulation and digital spaces in thinking through the idea of the Black Archive. A key objective of the course is to deploy these genres as methodological interventions in understanding what a Black archive could mean. We do not take the Black Archive to be unitary or static, but as mutating repertoires in the figuration and preservation of Black experience, as well as provocations of what the past and future might look like. But we can also think of the Black archive as endangered, erased, possible as well as made and constrained by the conditions of dispersal that define the Black diaspora past and present.

The course will engage with a range of archival material that includes the Robert A Hill papers on Marcus Garvey and the UNIA at Duke, documentaries and creative filmic narratives from Arthur Jafa and John Akomfrah, a novel by Yaa Gyasi, poetry by M NourbeSe Phillips, photography from Zanele Muholi, 'digilittle' magazines like Jalada and sonic curatorial platforms such as the Pan-African Space Station. Classroom engagement will entail close readings of primary and secondary texts, conversations with archivists and invited speakers, screenings, 'listenings' and visitations of both paper and digital archives. Students will be expected to write weekly reflective essays (500 words/reflection) inspired by or based on archival research and engagement with the theoretical debates about Black archives. In addition to these, students will be expected to write two longer essays, the first of these will be a 5-6 page mid-term paper and the second a 9-10 page final term paper.

ENGLISH 890S.01 SPECIAL TOP SEMINAR III

H.D. & Robert Duncan

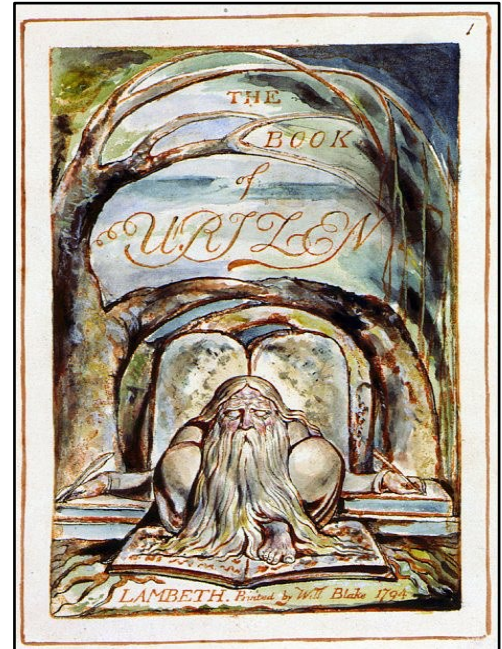
Nathaniel Mackey

A study of the writings of H.D. and Robert Duncan, with particular attention to correspondences between their work and to Duncan's address of H.D.'s writing in *The H.D. Book* and elsewhere.

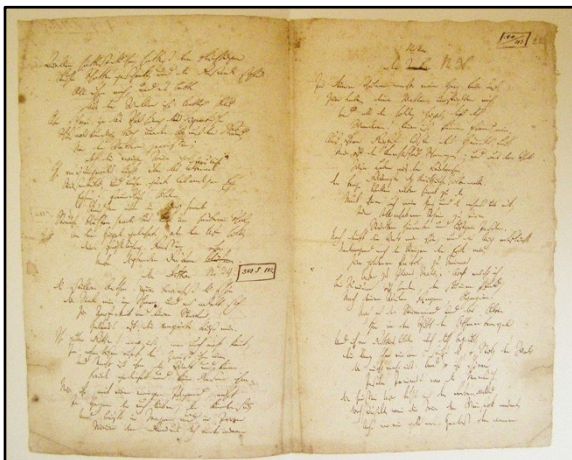
ENGLISH 890S.03 SPECIAL TOP SEMINAR III
Poetry And/As Theology: Blake & Hölderlin
Thomas Pfau

This seminar will focus on two poets: William Blake (1757—1827) and Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843). In starkly different ways, both consider poetic vocation and poetic form inseparable from key issues of Christian theology – e.g., questions of scriptural exegesis, Creation, beauty & form, eschatology; and human agency in relation to divine authority.

PART I (Weeks 1-6): Socialized in a milieu of radical dissent, which had persisted in small communities in late-eighteenth-century London, William Blake (1757-1827) – fiercely anti-clerical, expert engraver and printmaker, and a spiritual “radical” in a militantly secular and revolutionary time -- insists on an indissoluble link between spiritual and artistic vision. Our exploration of Blake’s pre-1800 poetry will focus on three areas: his critique of catechization and pedagogy in his *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789/1794) and in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1789), where Blake satirizes the prophetic persona and style of Emanuel Swedenborg; Blake’s recreation of OT prophecy and NT eschatology in *America* (1793); and, finally, his rewriting of the Christian account of Creation in *The (First) Book of Urizen* (1794). Our readings will be flanked by some of Blake’s shorter prose, marginalia (on Bishop Watson, Swedenborg, and Joshua Reynolds), and a selection of critical prose.



PART II (Weeks 7-11): Widely regarded as the most influential German Romantic poet, Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) is born into the staunchly Pietist world of late-eighteenth century Swabia. Having been exposed to a swelling tide of philosophical and political radicalism during his school-



and seminar years (1783-1791), some of which he shares with G. W. F. Hegel, Hölderlin’s poetry between 1800-1803 not only breaks with the cramped and anti-intellectual world of his upbringing. It also resists the revolutionary secularism of 1790s Jacobinism and also steers clear of the dialectical, liberal-progressive view of history that Hegel is working out just then. – Our focus will be twofold: first on Hölderlin’s elegies (esp. “Elegy,” “The Wanderer,” and “Bread and Wine”) in which he seeks to sift the relationship between the culture of classical Greece, Christianity, and the post-classical, variously rationalist or skeptical epistemologies of his time. The second cluster of poems

to be considered involve Hölderlin’s so-called “Christ Hymns” (“The Only One,” “Celebration of Peace,” and “Patmos”), as well as one of his greatest, albeit incomplete poems (“As when on a Feast-Day ...”). It is here that, gradually edging away from the aesthetic and metaphysical claims of speculative Idealism (Schiller, Fichte, and Hegel), Hölderlin works out a uniquely Christian hermeneutic of history wherein large-scale eschatological questions prove inseparable from exegetical practice and what Hölderlin calls “care for the solid letter.”

ENGLISH 890S.04 SPECIAL TOP SEMINAR III

John Milton & Transformations of the Reformation in the Seventeenth-Century English Revolution 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), they center on close reading of particular texts. Our approach to Christian tradition will take seriously the ways teaching is embodied and explored in complex, intellectually and affectively demanding texts. In this class the central texts are written by John Milton (1608-1674) as he addressed, increasingly critically, the Calvinist Reformation and Church of England in which he had been nurtured. Our understandable aspirations to tell grand narratives about Christian traditions and their conflicts must try to remain responsible, truthful, to the specific human lives and writings that constitute traditions. We will indeed be trying to discover a narrative, to work out what happened to the English Reformation, its theology, ethics, politics, and ecclesiology: but we will always work from and return to the hard ground, the particularities of texts and the experiences they address.

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-Nicenism emerging in the Revolution. Here we will explore Milton both as an emerging agent of transformation and as a product of fragmentations and contradictions within the Reformation. We will consider writing by the Ranter Abiezer Coppe, the Quaker James Nayler, and one of the numerous women prophets in revolutionary England.

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 two of these works published in 1644-1645. 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. But for Milton poetry is woven into theology. Already in 1641/1642 he declared that his poetry would be “doctrinal and exemplary,” displaying “power beside the office of a pulpit, to imbreed and cherish...the seeds of vertu and publick civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune, to celebrate in glorious and lofty Hymns the throne and equipage of Gods Almightynesse, and what he works, and suffers to be wrought with high providence in his Church, to sing the victorious agonies of Martyrs and Saints....Teaching over the whole book of sanctity and vertue...” (*Reason of Church-Government*). 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).

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 contexts for Milton, the Reformation and Revolution, please consult the following: David Aers, *Versions of Election: From Langland and Aquinas to Calvin and Milton* (Notre Dame University Press, 2020), esp. Introduction and chapter 5

Hugh Barbour and Arthur Roberts, *Early Quaker Writings* (Pendle Hill Publications and earlier editions)

Martin Bucer, *De Regno Christi (On the Kingdom of Christ)* in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, ed. William Pauck (John Knox Press), 155-394

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: use either the two-volume edition/translation by John McNeill and Lewis Battles or the older, one-volume and sometimes more literal translation by Henry Beveridge.

Gordon Campbell et al, *Milton and the Manuscript of De Doctrina Christiana* (Oxford University Press, 2007)

David Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil War England* (Stanford University Press, 2004)

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)

Curtis Freeman, ed., *A Company of Women Preachers: Baptist Prophetesses in Seventeenth-Century England* (Baylor University Press, 2011)

Thomas Fulton, *The Book of Books: Biblical Interpretation, Literary Culture, and the Political Imagination from Erasmus to Milton* (Pennsylvania UP, 2021)

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: Deity, Discourse, and Heresy in the Miltonic Canon* (Duquesne University Press, 2006)

Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge University Press, 1995)

C. A. Patrides, *The Cambridge Platonists* (Cambridge University Press, 1980)

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

James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and Its Reformation Opponents* (Harvard UP, 2007)

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

Nigel Smith, ed., *A Collection of Ranter Writings* (Pluto Press, 2014)

Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1640* (Oxford University Press, 1987)

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, except for approved assistive technologies. 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.

ENGLISH 890T.01

Article Writing

Kathy Psomiades

This is a workshop for advanced graduate students in English who want to work on writing an article for publication. Ideally, you'd have something—a conference paper, a dissertation chapter, a paper from coursework—that you'd like to turn into an article. You and your dissertation committee should be in agreement that this workshop is a good use of your time at this point in your graduate career. We'll be working our way through Wendy Belcher's *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks (2nd edition)*. We'll also be making use of Eric Hayot's *Elements of Academic Style*. You'll be workshopping your article, as well as various exercises from Belcher and Hayot, and you'll be giving feedback to others about their articles as well. We will meet every week for the standard 2.5 hours. You'll need a permission number from me to sign up.

ENGLISH 996.01
Teaching College English
Kathy Psomiades

Provides graduate students in the English department with pedagogical training in the teaching of college-level composition and English department courses. Open only to English department graduate students in years 4 and above. Department consent required.

Non-English courses that may be of interest to English Grad Students

HISTORY HS 591S

Environmental (Hi)stories: History, Narrative, and Writing in Practice (Meets Mondays from 1:40 to 4:10 in Classroom Building 229)

Hannah Conway

This class examines the development of modern environmental writing in the field of history and beyond and will help students develop practices of reading for writing and writing for readers. The environmental humanities have adopted unique narrative forms to tell compelling stories about the entanglements of places, people, and non-human worlds. In this course we will read environmental histories as well as other forms of nature writing (including fiction, poetry, non-academic prose, and visual storytelling) for content, style, and structure, focusing on how writers work with a variety of primary sources while maintaining an individual voice and perspective. Course materials will examine the environment as well as environmental justice conflicts and present divergent ways of knowing the natural world with a focus on Indigenous, Black, Global South, and working-class storytellers and writers. Throughout, students will be encouraged to center their own unique relationship to the environment as it has been informed by their background, personal history, and experiential knowledge. This focus on the personal within the environment will allow students to find themselves in their writing and to think about how developing an individual narrative style can benefit them in their long-term writing practices as historians and other scholars of the natural world. Further, we will discuss how environmental scholars must address issues unique to the field like climate and extinction anxieties and environmental racism, as well as how to do so with care and ethical sensibility. By the end of the course students will be familiar with canonical and recent writing in the field of environmental history and in the environmental humanities more broadly.

Course assignments and activities will help students build sustainable and proactive writing and reading practices. Assignments include bi-weekly short reflective essays (1,000-1,500 words), a formal book review as the midterm project, contributions to the collaborative class annotated bibliography and notes, and a final mid-form essay (around 5,000 words) the topic of which can be anything of interest related to environmental studies broadly defined. By the end of the semester students will have a small portfolio of pieces (short essays, book review, and mid-length essay) that would be appropriate for revision and publication in a number of scholarly or popular venues and we will discuss where you might think about publishing your work and how to go about doing so—including in-class guest conversations with writers working in both academic and non-academic careers. We will also work together to develop techniques of generative (and generous) peer review, critique, and collaborative writing. This seminar is for graduate students and advanced undergraduates in history, environmental studies, or English interested in the craft of writing (and reading) about the natural world with confidence and clarity. It is an ideal course for students beginning the dissertation writing process or for senior thesis writers.

545S

ROMANCE STUDIES

Epic as Translation: From Song to Text, and Back Again

Kate Driscoll

This course invites study of the epic as both a constant and a variable across cultures, contexts, languages, forms, and media. Our principle historical investigation concerns the (re)animation of classical epic in early modern Europe and its transformation in Baroque performance cultures. A wide-ranging and politically inclined genre endowed with an ancient oral inheritance, the epic raises as many questions about nationality and cultural unity as it does about cosmopolitanism, tolerance, and coexistence. If nations and their customs evolve over time, how do epics balance in their sight the past and the present? What factors shape the epic's adaptation to new cultural climates? In what ways do epics sustain their political relevance through intertextuality and intermediality? And what new audience-critics emerge when epics develop from the page to the stage? The class's approach to "epic as translation" juxtaposes the practices of literary imitation as they appear in classical and early modern poetry with the modes of reinvention that transport this literature elsewhere. To this end, "translation" is understood according to a sampling of its many operations. Course conducted in English; students trained in other languages will have the opportunity to read texts in their original language. No extensive musical training required.

LIT 690S-03

CRITIQUE, ANTI-SCIENCE, TRUTH

LITERATURE

Nima Bassiri

Course Description

This course explores the specter of anti-science in the contemporary American political imaginary and, concomitantly, how the categories of humanistic 'critique' and 'theory' have been increasingly perceived as complicit with, and as providing intellectual succor for, scientific skepticism and, as such, allegedly culpable not only with the erosion of scientific truth but with the dismantling of core tenets of liberal democracy itself. Drawing upon readings from the fields of science studies and cultural and literary theory, this course considers, first, whether scientific adherence versus denialism is an adequate dichotomy with which to understand the current political-epistemic landscape. Rather than presupposing the givenness and self-evidence of modern anti-scientific sentiments, we will instead explore what precisely scientific denialism, in all of its multiplicity, is as an attitude and form of conduct, how it has transformed historically, how it has been motivated by various political, economic, and racialized vectors, and whether it really represents an antipode to a rational trust in science. The second major objective of the course is to consider whether theory and critique are actually complicit, even tacitly, with a truth-denying attitude, as has been frequently (and exaggeratedly) purported. Scholars of both science studies and literary theory have suggested for decades that the erosion of scientific authority and trust can be linked, in particular, to styles of scholarship indebted to poststructuralist thought. Through detailed examinations of the two thinkers most commonly accused of undermining the concept of truth—namely, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault—the course will consider the validity of so-called post-critique assertions that theory is structurally complicit with the obfuscatory tendency to deny the reality of scientific truth claims. If there is indeed no such complicity, then how might critique and theory be redeemed and revalued as vital forms of scholarly inquiry today, and, furthermore, how might we imagine humanistic theory as productively coinciding with other epistemic practices, such as scientific research, against which it is held often and irremediably apart?

LIT 690S

LITERATURE

PHILOSOPHY AND AUTOMATION: THINKING IN THE AGE OF MACHINE INTELLIGENCE

Luciana Parisi

OVERVIEW

Philosophy and Automation: Thinking in the Age of Machine Intelligence.

This course offers critical reflections about the post-World War II's advance of a computational infrastructure that has formed networks of automated decision-making systems from the media ecologies of algorithms, data, metadata and interface to logistic operations, military strategies, and smart borders. Automation therefore does not simply correspond to the mechanics of the assembly line, but rather to the temporal dynamics of feedbacks, the recursive learning of know-hows in computational systems. As automated systems can think in time and infer decisions by means of trial and error, they have also challenged the exceptionalism of human thinking stemming from the colonial and patriarchal epistemology that grants ontology to Man's reason. Automated systems have replaced the logico-cognitive model of rational procedures with computational processing, a mindless or non-conscious model of prediction. This course addresses this transformation as discussed in current debates about the crisis of the colonial and patriarchal model of modern reason, cognition and consciousness and thus of philosophy as unable to liberate thinking from *techne* (the medium or instrumentality), on the one hand, and the post-Kantian and speculative re-theorizations of the computational image of thought, and of general artificial intelligence on the other. Drawing from cross-disciplinary scholarship, this course addresses the alliance between gender and machines, race and *techne*, class and automation to investigate how intelligent systems can enlarge the epistemological enterprise into the question of thinking.

READINGS

F. Arbab "Computing and Interaction" D. Goldin, A. S. Smolka, P. Wegner Interaction Computation, Springer, 2006.

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