ENGLISH 89S.01 1ST-YR SEM LIT
THE EMPIRE WRITES BACK
Ranjana Khanna

Twentieth-century literature from former European colonies often aimed to give life to minor characters or silenced figures who were nonetheless important in the novels of empire. We will read British novels, some of which demonstrate the impossibility of thinking Europe without its relation to the countries it colonized. And we will pair these texts with ones that write back, in creative and critical forms, to tell the other side of the story, or the voices or lives of characters that were not fleshed out in those earlier texts. Do we understand the early novels as representative of a repressed interest in colonized figures, or as an inevitable presence in the fabric of the worlds represented? And is the response combative or demonstrative of literary complicity in the recent history of the novel?

ENGLISH 89S.02 1ST-YR SEM LIT
DOCTORS' STORIES
Charlotte Sussman

This class will explore both the stories doctors tell about themselves, and the stories that have been told about them. We will begin by considering what “becoming a doctor” has meant to people of different genders, ethnicities and social classes. We will go on to investigate some of the roles doctors play in modern society, and the ethical dilemmas that accompany those roles. Issues to be discussed include: doctors at the intersection of science and social management; the ethics of empathy between doctors and patients; the politics of "cure" and disability; and the specific narrative strategies of medical stories.

ENGLISH 90S.01 SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE
THE AMERICAN NIGHTMARE
Mickey D’Addario

When it comes to the American Dream, there is one constant: for every success story, there are thousands of failures; for every dream, there is a lurking nightmare. Despite the captivating allure of rising from rags to riches, what happens to the individuals who dare to dream and end up losing their possessions, their freedom, or their sanity?

While our attention in this course will center on the dark side of the American Dream, we will explore all of its different sides—from the improbable triumphs to the heartbreaking disasters to the redemptive silver linings of trying to achieve a dream at all—through an examination of literature spanning from America’s beginnings to the 21st century. After starting with tales of prosperity from Ben Franklin and Horatio Alger, we will transition to texts that express more nuanced versions of success such as *The Great Gatsby* as well as those that depict dreams doomed from the start—whether due to suburban malaise, parental negligence, or the undiscriminating path of disease. This trajectory will lead us through
different interpretations and iterations of the dream that intersect with historical period, class, race, and sex.


Assignments consist of a short rhetorical analysis paper (3-4 pages), a medium critical analysis paper based on the close reading of a passage (4-5 pages), and a longer paper with library research (8-10 pages) that can be based on ideas explored in one of the earlier papers. No exams. No prerequisites. No prior knowledge of course texts or themes needed.

---

**ENGLISH 90S.02** SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE  
LITERATURE AND TECHNOLOGY: On Living with Machines  
Russell Coldicutt

If technology is a necessary part of being human, to what extent does it control our actions, thoughts, and desires? From artificially intelligent systems, to vaccines, to social media platforms, it’s hard to imagine contemporary life without the technologies that shape the modern world. But do those technologies govern human behavior? Are we slaves to the machine?

In this class, we will analyze how technology gets used to support and occasionally transform the way humans live and think. We’ll begin by identifying how different technologies shape the way humans act in all kinds of modern spaces, from the battlefield to the bedroom. Then, we’ll figure out how 20th and 21st century authors use those spaces to stage an encounter between humans and machines in their writing and/or art. This class will uncover how modern narratives of technology (both literary and scientific) prepare us to interact with and question technology’s involvement in our lives.


**Assignments** will include two short essays (3-5 and 4-6 pages), and a longer final essay (10–12 pages), which you will have the opportunity to draft and workshop in class. No exams. No prerequisites.

Students from any year and any major are welcome and no prior knowledge of the texts or concepts is necessary! This class meets the first-year seminar requirements. Please email any questions to the instructor at russell.coldicutt@duke.edu.
ENGLISH 90S.03 SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE
THE ART OF SLAM: Go in, Poet!
Jessica Covil

This course invites a discussion of Spoken Word and other forms of performed poetry, with an eye and ear to both language and performance. In addition to analyzing poems, we will also focus on poets and their audiences, and on the connections or energy felt between them. For example, a critical component of Spoken Word is the active engagement shown by listeners, who often demonstrate their feelings of “being moved” through literal movements, such as snapping or stomping. In turn, we will engage with the ways that poets use their own utterances and movements to give witness to life experiences, social environments, and identities. Our critical attention will require an awareness of the multiple cultural inheritances of Spoken Word—which, for example, draws heavily from older African American oral traditions, such as “testifying” and call-and-response. We will also take care to acknowledge how poets and their projects differ, and the effects of incorporating a variety of elements. Course materials will consist mostly of poetry performances recorded from slams or other venues and circulated through online platforms. These will be supplemented by a few short articles or book chapters that will help turn our attention to different components of performance poetry, including: identity, self, and community; voice, sound, music, and orality; the body, gesture, and dance; and, the “page vs. the stage.” We will aim to be open and expansive in our readings of poetry and how it is performed, inviting you to connect in a variety of ways, however these pieces might resonate with you.

Students will complete 3 writing assignments, with opportunities to workshop, revise, and incorporate kind and constructive feedback. The first will be a 3 to 4-page “close reading” of one of the recorded performances on our syllabus. For the second assignment, students will attend an open mic or poetry reading and write a 5 to 6-page response paper in which they consider the poem, the performance, audience engagement, and venue. For the final, students will have the option of: writing a traditional 7 to 8-page academic paper, in which they analyze performances alongside critical texts; or, doing a creative project where they produce (and possibly perform!) original poems, to be accompanied by a 2 to 3-page reflection paper.

ENGLISH 101S.01 THE ART OF READING
FORMS OF ATTENTION
Sarah Beckwith

Throughout the class we will be paying close attention to what writers do in various genres, media, and idioms. We will be noticing how poets, novelists, and dramatists notice the world, and also ourselves noticing. How do we learn to read well poetry, plays, and prose, and what are we doing when we read? How do we do things with words?

In English and American Literature classes we have the privileged luxury of working in the same medium as the writers we study: words. In this course we’ll aid our study of literature by writing quite a bit ourselves. I ask students to build their own primers or handbooks to develop a critical vocabulary. We will work with forms of parody and imitation too to work close up with form. We will also be keeping notebooks of our reading and writing, a record, refinement, practice, and development of the art of attention.
We will look at a range of poetic forms, (ode, sonnet, free verse, elegy, dramatic monologue, lyric, epic) from medieval to modern, and think of poetry as witness (Czeslaw Milosz), and redress (Seamus Heaney), lament, celebration, and prayer in many idioms of human voicing. We will also read a range of fascinating novels in which each succeeding writer rewrites his or her forebears: Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, (1847), Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) which takes up the “madwoman in the attic” i.e. the Creole heiress of Bronte’s novel, Antionette Cosby, and finally Caryl Phillips, *A View of the Empire at Sunset* (2019). Phillips’ book investigates how Gwendolyn Rees Williams, who spent her first sixteen years in Domenica before arriving in England, became Jean Rhys, the writer, and contemplates forms of estrangement and belonging at the heart of empire.

We will also address theatrical and performative forms, focusing on memory plays—Tennessee Williams, Samuel Beckett, and William Shakespeare.

---

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

**POLITICAL THEATER**

Corina Stan

“Power comes only with the death of politics,” one of Wole Soyinka’s characters reflects in *A Play of Giants*; and that is where a certain kind of theater begins, one might add. This course offers both an introduction to the dramatic genre, and a deeper familiarization with some of the major political events that shaped the course of the past century. Our interest in the historical context of the rise of Nazism, apartheid in South Africa, dictatorship in Chile and Romania, the war in Afghanistan, experiences like incarceration and trauma, or the psychological intricacies of powerful obsessions, will be on equal footing with an examination of the plays in their generic specificity. We will trace influences among various playwrights and map out some of the genre’s forms, such as Greek tragedy, Old Comedy, epic theater, the theater of the absurd, the theater of cruelty, “post-dramatic” theater.

---

**ENGLISH 101S.04 THE ART OF READING**

**WAR & WORSHIP, WINE & (WO)MEN & WORK**

Thomas Ferraro

Our age has lost much of its ear for poetry, as it has its eye for color and line, and its taste for war and worship, wine and women.

Henry Adams (1904)

Why read when there is so much else to do? What is there in a novel, a poem, an essay to hold our imagination captive? to make us smarter, wiser, more artful and more courageous? to bring us closer to each other, to the world at large, to the wonder and the terror and the majesty? How are we to know ”it” when we see it; get there when we’re not; speak of it when we are? And how are we to take the next step--to the point where bearing witness becomes a form of making present? embodying, a form of propagating? critical analysis, a form of collective self-interrogation?

These questions are the biggies--the overarching, meta-issues of deeply engaged, bloody demanding, fiercely intelligent, achingly beautiful reading.
Nice to contemplate, for sure. But, speaking practically, how to begin?

I will gather for us some of the best stuff I know, American Romantic texts especially, treating matters of nearly universal interest: those matters of “war and worship, wine and (wo)men and work,” to expand pointedly on Henry Adams’s 1904 alliterative litany. The kind of texts worth reading again and again. We will take character to heart, query idea and plot, describe the sound and sight and feel of the language. We’ll ask each text to tutor us on how it wishes, in particular, to be read. And we’ll work methodically on our game: 1) reading aloud, to catch the tone and the drama of the words on the page, even in expository prose, experiencing form as content; 2) cross-interrogating between part and whole, whole and part (a given phrase vs. its sentence or paragraph, a given passage vs. the text, the text-at-hand vs. the texts-so-far); and 3) cultivating self-reflexivity, in which what is going on in a text is seen to be at stake in how, separately and together, we discuss it. The ultimate goal is to be able to inhabit a text in its own terms, so intimately that it lives in us; to analyze it so cogently that it, in effect, analyzes us.

An introduction, in sum, to the pleasurizing intensities of sustained reading during the age of cyber-immediacy and virtual contact: the visceral texture it offers, the analytic trenchancy (including capacity for contradiction) it demands, the repartee it solicits, the essaying that honors it, and the kinship of word and thought it ultimately inspires.

TEXTS TO BE DRAWN FROM: Poetry by Dickinson, Stevens, Hughes; short and not-so-short stories by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, and Claude McKay; novellas and novels by Zora Neale Hurston, E.L. Doctorow, and Ron Hansen; essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Michael Herr, Richard Rodriguez; maybe even a vocal recording or video clip, or two.

PREREQUISITES: an appetite for risk, a willingness to dig in, and that extra something.

INVITATION/Warning: I know that English 101 fills a requirement, which produces an allergic reaction to all and sundry, even the majors! More damaging still, it is a clear that--thanks to high-school pedagogy, not to mention the current cultural climate—the pendulum has swung back to certain whispered assumptions about "English": above all, that it is a touchy-feely enterprise of dreamy subjectivity for those without the brains or the gumption to do the real stuff. But let me say, at the risk of sounding defensive: Dream on. As former President Brodhead reminds us, almost every single American winner of the Nobel Prize in the Sciences of the last 25 years began intellectual life with an undergraduate Liberal Arts degree heavy on English. Now is the time to start wondering, what am I missing?
ENGLISH 110S.02
INTRO CREATIVE WRITING
Nicole Higgins

“If there were no poetry on any day in the world, poetry would be invented on that day. For there would be an intolerable hunger.” – Muriel Rukeyser

This course invites students to explore the fundamental elements and techniques of creative writing through the genres of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Taking seriously Rukeyser’s suggestion of all the urgent questions, sense-making, expression, and play at stake for writers, we will center three simultaneous and continuous aims. First, we will look to a mix of contemporary literature and craft essays to practice reading, thinking, and responding like writers. Second, we’ll experiment boldly and through a range of forms with our own ideas, images, languages, and rhythms. Finally, we will practice good writerly community, providing thoughtful and constructive feedback on each others’ writing. Keeping in mind the spirit of urgency, we’ll turn an eye toward revision, too, ultimately producing portfolios that come as near as possible to exactly what we need to say.

ENGLISH 190FS-2.01 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.
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, and William Shakespeare as they wrote about politics, religion, and literature.

No mathematical prerequisites assumed.

Readings may include:

- George Sandy, *Relation of a Journey* (selections)
- Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*
- Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist*
- Shakespeare, *Othello*
- Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*
- Francis Bacon, *Novum organon*
- Girolamo Cardano, selections from *Ars Magna* and *Liber de ludo aleae*
- Galileo Galilei, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Grade will be based on short regular writing assignments, a term research project with a creative component, and class participation.

---

ENGLISH 220S.01
INTRO TO THE WRITING OF POETRY
Tsitsi Jaji

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.
This class is a poetry writing workshop with a significant reading component. We will read some of the defining works of modern poetry, and look at the history of various avant garde movements such as Dadaism, Surrealism, Imagism, Futurism and Expressionism. But our main focus will be on writing poetry. We will explore various styles and techniques, collage, random procedures, simulated madness, trance writing, hyperrational nonsense, dream narratives, incantation, spells, arbitrary rules, confessions, and much else as we deepen our own understanding of the sources of human creativity in language, and write our own ever more astonishing poems.

In addition to composing their own pieces of short fiction, students will read work by masters of the short form: among others, Edwidge Danticat, Denis Johnson, and James Alan McPherson. These stories are lenses through which we will explore the “building blocks” of the narrative craft—character, point of view, setting, plot, as well as “voice”—and they will complement chapters from Janet Burroway’s guide to narrative craft, Writing Fiction. Students who remain in the course will be required to purchase this text. In addition to weekly writing exercises, students will submit one fully revised short story at semester’s end.

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.
**ENGLISH 222S.01 INTRO TO THE WTG OF CREAT. N-F**  
**PROCESSES, PLACES, & THINGS**  
Cathy Shuman

Our focus will be on the essay as we explore ways to convey the images, stories, and ideas that matter to us. Over the course of the semester, students will write short creative exercises leading through workshops and revision to the production of three longer essays (around 7-9 pages). Along the way, we will read and discuss selected examples of published nonfiction to help us develop techniques for creating our own. No previous creative writing experience is required for this course.

---

**ENGLISH 236S.01 SP TOPICS IN LANG & LIT**  
**SHAKESPEARE ON NATURE**  
Sarah Beckwith

We face now unprecedented threats to our planet. Birds, insects, and countless species of animals are dying in mass (it is the sixth extinction). We already see profound alterations in our climate and weather systems. Where do our ideas about nature come from? Are there ways of thinking about the earth that we have foolishly discarded?

We inherit ideas about nature, and relations towards it that were emergent and contested in Shakespeare’s time. Francis Bacon pioneered ways of imagining new forms of control and dominion over it beyond that theologically “warranted” in the Book of Genesis; Calvin thought that human nature was utterly depraved without God’s saving grace. Nature was newly “improved”, claimed for cultivation, involving pushing men and women off common land so that it could sustain profitable sheep. New global frontiers were also formed by conquest and settlement, close to home in Ireland, and further away in the New World, that is the Americas. In literary terms, nature was at the center of the idealizations of pastoral, and subjected to the most penetrating analysis in Shakespearean tragedy as well as other genres.

Hitherto interwoven with fable, and folk-story, it was also the object of new taxonomies and considerations of the place of humankind within it. (Indeed the word “kind” is subject to new kinds of pressure. Who is our kin? And how kind are we? Of what kind are we?)

Unlike so many of his contemporaries whose habitat was the city, Shakespeare famously returns to Stratford towards the end of his life, and perhaps, in theatrical and conceptual terms never really left it.

In this class we will examine several habitats in Shakespeare’s plays: forests, gardens, and the sea, for example, as well as ideas around wildness, tameness, cultivation, and creation. We will look at individual animals: Launce’s amazing dog, Crabbe, and dogs in Shakespeare; his most famous stage direction, “Exit, pursued by a bear”, and his hawks, wrens, and sparrows, complex and precise botanies, and their classical and folk heritage, especially in his discussions of the relation of art and nature. Above all we will see how Shakespeare conceived of the human body as the imaginative medium of theatre, and therefore human nature was at the heart of his dramaturgical inquiries about the kinds of creatures we are.
We will explore a range of plays (about 10 Shakespeare plays in all), and also sixteenth and seventeenth century sources that exemplify and interrogate the nature of nature. We will bring to life Shakespeare’s profound testing out of his culture’s resources in relation to what nature (one of the most complex words of our language) is, was, and might be. In this way too we will be exploring the nature of Shakespeare’s work as well as exploration of human relations with the natural world.

Students will have the chance to keep nature journals, and to track flora and fauna imaginatively through Shakespeare’s natural worlds and our own.

ENGLISH 247.01
VICTORIAN LIT
Kathy Psomiades

Victorian literature is both formally experimental and profoundly engaged with the political, social and intellectual changes that made the world in 1901 (the end of Victoria’s reign) so different from the world in 1837 when Victorian came to the throne. We’ll be reading novels, poetry and prose that both changed the things that literature could do, and attempted to imagine and manage a rapidly changing world. We’ll start with Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre, then move on to Elizabeth Gaskell’s North and South, George Eliot’s Daniel Deronda and finally Thomas Hardy’s Tess of the D’Urbervilles. In between, we’ll read poetry by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Christina Rossetti, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and some of the writers of literary and extra literary prose featured in the Victorian Volume of The Norton Anthology of English Literature.

6 1-page response papers, two 7-10-page papers. One presentation.

ENGLISH 251.01 BRITISH LIT: 1900-1945
Virginia Woolf: Before and After
Myles Oldershaw

This class has at its center one of the most celebrated British authors of the 20th century: Virginia Woolf. Over the course of the semester, we will read an array of Woolf’s major works, from the novels Mrs Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, and Orlando to the non-fiction of A Room of One’s Own. Attending closely to each, we will consider a range of questions central to understanding Woolf’s life and work: how and why did Woolf break with literary tradition, and become one of the most innovative and forward-thinking writers of her time? What was Woolf’s relation to the broader artistic movement of modernism? How did feminist thought and politics shape Woolf’s work? What insights does Woolf provide into love, family, and sexuality, and how were these insights shaped by her own experience?

At the same time, however, we will not read Woolf alone. Alongside the works mentioned above, we will also engage with important authors writing before and after Woolf: both those who served as an influence on her, such as James Joyce, and those whom she went on to influence, such as Jean Rhys (Good Morning, Midnight), Christopher Isherwood (A Single Man), and Zadie and Ali Smith (NW, How to Be Both). From the first group, we will gain a sense of the literary forces and precursors that lay behind Woolf’s writing: whom she admired, what she drew on, and how she meshed and transformed these
influences in her work. Through the second, we will fathom the shape of Woolf's literary legacy: what she meant for following generations, how she affected later authors' work, and why she has been acclaimed across decades. This reading will thus complement and enhance our reading of Woolf, and help to illuminate her place in literary history.

Students will be graded on two 8-10 page essays, a series of short response papers, and class participation. Both majors and non-majors are welcome. No prerequisites are required.

ENGLISH 269.01
CLASSICS OF AM LIT, 1820-1860
Victor Strandberg

After a brief look at the Puritan heritage, English 269 will take up major works by major American authors in the generation leading up to the Civil War -- the time of the Transcendentalist movement. The syllabus will include essays and poems by Emerson, Thoreau's Walden and Civil Disobedience, tales, poems and essays by Poe, tales and a novel (The Blithedale Romance or The Scarlet letter) by Hawthorne, Melville's Moby-Dick and Billy Budd and some stories, Emily Dickinson, and a generous selection of poems by Walt Whitman. Background reading will include a slave narrative by Frederick Douglass or Harriet Jacobs. Three hour exams (no three-hour final exam). One term paper focusing on one or more of the writers in the course.

ENGLISH 276.01 AFRICAN DIASPORA LITERATURE
WHAT IS AFRICA TO ME
Tsitsi Jaji

Countee Cullen, a leading poet of the Harlem Renaissance begins his poem “Heritage” with the question: “What is Africa to Me.” In the 1920s he imagined it as a visceral mix of drums, jungle tracks, and dance – many of the same ideas as modernist artists like Pablo Picasso and … He also felt very ambivalent about Africa, “A book one thumbs Listlessly, till slumber comes.” This class focuses on how black people have imagined Africa from multiple standpoints. We will read Phyllis Wheatley’s poems from the 18th century, archival materials and recruitment documents encouraging emancipated slaves to migrate to Liberia, Sierra Leone and other parts of Africa, many of Countee Cullen’s contemporaries in the Harlem Renaissance, travel narratives by Maryse Condé, a Caribbean writer who sojourned in West Africa, Maya Angelou’s memoir of her years in Ghana, All God’s Children Need Traveling Shoes, and Saiydia Hartmann’s moving account of her study trip there, Lose Your Mother.

This class is also interested in the narratives of Africans who leave the continent by choice, and how they come to understand Africa from afar. We will read Graceland, Chris Abani’s story about a Nigerian Elvis impersonator’s efforts to emigrate, short stories by Chimamanda Adichie and one of Africa’s first LGBTQ authors, Chinelo Okparanta. And we’ll read a recent study by Duke professor (and class visitor) Charles Piot about a man who specializes in facilitating migration from Togo. In addition, the class will take advantage of several talks by visiting experts in contemporary issues affecting Africa today. This class focuses on fiction (novels and short stories) but also includes non-fiction and scholarly articles. No
experience in literature is expected, and grades are based on class discussion, short reflection papers, and essays. There are no exams in this class.

ENGLISH 290-7.01 SP TOP IN LANG & LIT
THE RENAISSANCE
Julianne Werlin

The European Renaissance, which stretched from approximately 1400 to 1600, was an age of profound political, religious, and cultural upheaval. In the course of these centuries, writers and artists rediscovered the past and reimagined the future. Religious, commercial, and technological change opened new horizons, yet could also unleash terrible violence. An age of colonialism transformed the globe, while nature and the cosmos were reconceived with advent of the new science. This course surveys some of the literary, philosophical and artistic masterpieces of this exciting period. We will consider the political writings of Machiavelli, the fiction of Cervantes, the essays of Montaigne, and the theater of Shakespeare. We will also look at important visual artists such as Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Holbein.

ENGLISH 290S.01 SP TOP IN LANG. & LIT
CLASSICS OF WORLD LITERATURE
Victor Strandberg

If you are quite certain that you plan to stay in the seminar, it would be an advantage for you to obtain the textbooks now before the term begins. Accordingly, I am sharing with you my decisions concerning the curriculum. A more detailed syllabus will be provided when we meet at our first class.

The first thing to do is to get hold of a Bible. Any version will do, though I favor the King James version, originally published in 1611, because of its immense influence on writers in English during the last four centuries. (Examples: Faulkner’s Absalom, Absalom!, Hemingway’s The Sun Also Rises, and Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath—titles drawn from the KJ Bible.) Hint: this Bible is usually available for free in any hotel room.

I am now planning to begin the course with a series of assignments in whatever version of the Bible you bring to class, including Genesis, Exodus, The Book of Job, The Gospel of Luke, The Book of Revelation, and assorted brief selections along the way.

To save money, I am asking students to purchase the following books via Amazon.com. It is greatly desirable that we all have the same editions.

2. Dante: The Inferno (Signet Classics edition, translated by John Ciardi)
4. Greek Drama: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes (Bantam Classic, edited by Moses Hadas)


In addition to Dante’s Inferno, two stories by Chaucer will represent the Middle Ages: The Prioress’s Tale and The Pardoner’s Tale. To save money, I plan to download these tales from the Internet and distribute paper copies to each student.

If it all works out, we will study works from three ancient civilizations (Greek, Hebrew, Hindu), two medieval masters from Italy and England (Chaucer, Dante), and two giants of the French and English Renaissance (Montaigne and Shakespeare).

---

**ENGLISH 290S-2.01 SP TOP 18TH & 19TH CENTURY LIT**

**THE LITERATURE OF MONEY**

**Akhil Sharma**

Money, like love, has always been at the center of the novel. Money, of course, is never simple, the way that love is never simple. This course will look at major texts from the 18th and 19th century and examine their unstated premises -- is Gulliver’s Travels a fantasia of colonialism? -- as well as how these works are constructed. Among the works we might read are Gulliver’s Travels, Robinson Crusoe, Vanity Fair, The Mayor of Casterbridge.

One of the goals of the course is to develop connoisseurship. As part of this, students will be asked to examine styles and periodically mimic them. There will be a number of short response papers as well as two argumentative essays.

Grades: Writing assignments 50%; Participation 50%.

---

**ENGLISH 290S-2.02 SP TOP 18TH & 19TH CENTURY LIT**

**Topic: TBD**

**Instructor: TBD**

---

**ENGLISH 290S-4.01 SP TOPICS IN CREATIVE WRITING**

**WRITING SCIENCE FICTION**

**Priscilla Wald**

This class will be run as a workshop in science fiction writing. Students will learn the elements of science fiction writing by studying some of the best examples of the genre. While experience is a wonderful teacher, the best way to learn to write is to learn to read. This class will include reading and analysis of some of the best examples of science fiction writing. Students will work on their critical reading and analytic skills in order to help them think about their own writing critically.
The genre of science fiction emerged from writers’ engagement with the impact of scientific and technological developments on society. We will consider how authors turned the key issues of their moment into fiction, which requires reading about the innovations and the transformations—how they were talked about in their moment as well as historically. Those issues will include how, for example, space exploration, the threats of nuclear war and the exhaustion of environmental resources, discoveries in virology and genetics, and the innovations in cybernetics intersect with global development, race relations, and new modes of communication. We will explore how science fiction has registered and responded to the dilemmas of a changing world: to the challenges to the concept of human being and to the survival of the species. We will consider how the most effective writings in the genre engaged those most pressing issues in order to reflect on what inspires us and how we might want to use the form accordingly.

Students will be asked to produce weekly writing (on which they will receive feedback), to be prepared to share the writing with the class, and to revise the writing based on feedback. Final requirements will be two polished short stories or book chapters (or one of each) and a short critical reflection on this work.

---

ENGLISH 290S-4.02 SP TOPICS IN CREATIVE WRITING
PLAYS THAT CHANGE THE WORLD
Faulkner Fox

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. A recent example we will study is “Un Violador En Tu Camino” (“The Rapist In Your Path”), a performance piece by the Chilean feminist theater group Las Tesis that has spread around the world and been performed by thousands of women, just since November 2019. We will also look at more traditional plays like THE CRUCIBLE and ANGELS IN AMERICA.

The goal of the course is for aspiring playwrights to think about what—exactly—they are trying to do, and avoid, in their writing. What causes writing to be heavy-handed, message-laden, or propagandistic, as opposed to impassioned? How can students who believe passionately in a particular social issue write artful drama about that issue?

Students will read—and watch--excellent political plays as well as write their own. Over the course of the semester, they will write and develop their own full-length script, in addition to doing weekly shorter, more informal exercises and reading responses. Class time will be evenly divided between focus on student work-in-progress and produced plays. Students will also be asked to interview the director, producer, and/or playwright of a current production and write about how those professionals view the line between artful moral suasion and propaganda.
ENGLISH 320S.01
INT. WORKSHOP IN WTG OF POETRY
Joseph Donahue

Intermediate workshops present a higher creative standard than introductory workshops and increased expectations in both quantity and quality of revised, finished work. Pre-requisite: English 110S OR English 220S, or consent of the instructor if prior work merits admission to the class (as judged by the instructor).

ENGLISH 321S.01
INT. WORKSHOP WTG OF FICT.
Akhil Sharma

This is a course built around close readings and almost daily writing exercises.

We will be reading a number of preeminent short story writers and examining their styles in depth. We will focus on the beliefs that undergird these styles. What is worth writing about? To what extent does the perceived audience shape the text? In what ways is the apparent present?

Because learning to write creatively involves developing a form of muscle memory, there will be almost daily writing exercises. There will also be, and equally importantly, a daily writer’s diary of the experience of performing the exercise.

Students will write stories that are intended to help them develop a relationship with their talents and sensibilities. They will regularly be asked to write

The end goal of the course is to develop both a suppleness with language and an awareness as to our particular responses to specific subjects and technical challenges.

Requirements: Almost daily writing exercises. Grades: Writing assignments 50%; Participation 50%.

ENGLISH 336.01
SHAKESPEARE THROUGH 1600
Leonard Tennenhouse

This course will focus on the first half of Shakespeare’s career. This was his most productive period. Within the decade from 1590 to approximately 1600, 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, we are going to 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.
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 where 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 England. 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 a competent biography on Milton before this class: I suggest Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns, John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought. 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) The Passion; (3) Ad Patrem; and (4) 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.
For 25 years, I have been reading Mario Puzo’s *The Godfather* (the original novel, not just the films) through the collective lens of the American novelistic tradition, and it is time now to return the favor. The primary purpose of this version of English 373 is to (re)inhabit *The Godfather* and then to read through its prism a half dozen of the indispensable acts of the U.S. imagination composed in its wake. *The Godfather* was at the first and continues to be, among other things, the world’s most successful novel for grown-ups, and there are reasons for that, culturally mythic because narratively ingenious: especially, its sardonic complexity, which outstrips in significant measure even Coppola’s movie, perfect a realization on screen though it otherwise is. By sardonic complexity I mean the thematic entanglements of family and business, bound masculinity and feminine eros, self-interested violence and God-gifted sanctity—of blood and the marketplace—that lie at its thematic center. So blatant, yet so unfamiliar. But by sardonic complexity I also mean the combination of love and irony, reverence and fear, hypnotic romance and insidious condemnation that Puzo’s narrative style conjures, which is at one level again blatant yet in other ways oh-so-unfamiliar. Understanding that “overdetermination” is the offer I will make you won’t want to refuse, I promise. For in the *omerta* between text and readers, Puzo not only portrays but constitutes—embodies, enacts, effects—an alternative mode of knowing and doing (call it “Pagan Catholic”) that challenges at the deepest levels how we in the U.S. have been taught to think (pop liberalism, therapeutic moralism, allegorizing by symbols, either/or dichotomization, the pre-professional libidinal economy) and in so doing calls us forth, as individuals but also as a crew, to bear special witness to the developing American novel—*sotto voce*—in all its dark wisdom, courage, and beauty.

For me, as I say, it has been a quarter century in coming, but revenge, as the Don reminds us, is a dish best tasted cold. That the year 2019 was the fiftieth anniversary of the novel’s publication puts extended icing on the cake. All are welcome to the block party.

Novels to be chosen from: Cormac McCarthy’s *All the Pretty Horses* or *Blood Meridian*, E.L. Doctorow’s *The Book of Daniel*, Joan Chase’s *The Reign of the Queen of Persia*, Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*, Ron Hansen’s *Mariette in Ecstasy*, Oscar Hijuelos’s *Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*, and Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. You will surely want take a look also at one or more of *The Godfather* films, as well as greatest “novel” of the new millenium, David Chase’s *The Sopranos*, Season 1.
and/or adjustment to global disasters. Our task will be to figure out the political fantasy that shapes each of these models and how the novels consequently comment on the way we, as global citizens, might well imagine our relation to the real conditions of our existence.

Provisional organization and required reading:

1. *Zone One* (2011), Colson Whitehead’s apocalyptic rewriting of George Romero’s classic zombie film *Night of the Living Dead*, is the only novel assigned for this course that has no historical referent in mind and so qualifies, for our purposes, as “purely” a model. *Zone One* will allow us to set up the rules of the game, and the basis for comparing the political fantasies activated by novels that do refer to historical events.


Requirements: Regular presence in class; 5 of 10 one-page papers and a final paper.
ENGLISH 421S.01
ADV WORKSHOP WTG. FICTION
JP Gritton

More than an exploration of elements of the craft—characterization, plot, setting, and so forth—this class seeks to explore the ways in which writers are engaged in ongoing “conversations” with one another. We will explore explicit responses writers have made to the work of others (i.e., “The Disasters of Sofía,” a re-telling of “Little Red Cap” by the Brothers Grimm), but we’ll also be thinking about genre as an ongoing discussion of, by, and for storytellers. How can generic conventions and tropes serve as helpful reference points, and perhaps even as sources of inspiration? How do “literary” writers like Jorge Luis Borges use the conventions of genres like the mystery to surprise and delight? As we explore genre’s unique capacity to instruct and inspire, we will complete weekly writing exercises in response to craft essays and short stories by the likes of A.S. Byatt, Clarice Lispector, Nathan Englander, and others. 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.

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: 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.

Terrorism, rising crime rates, unprecedented poverty and urban blight: these, too, are problems with “the environment.” The world population has exceeded seven billion; we are putting increasing pressure on each other, as well as on our natural resources.

So what is this “environment,” and why does that question matter? How might a better understanding of how that term is circulating help us to move past our impasses and begin constructively to think about how to live more justly and effectively in our world?

This class will address that question by considering the very ground you’re standing on: the Piedmont, Durham, and most specifically the area surrounding the Duke Campus Farm. Beginning with early settlement, when the earth began to get a history of its own, we will consider five historical moments—settlement; slavery, plantation culture and the Civil War; urbanization and modernization; the Civil Rights movement, and the present—to show how science, law, and cultural forms (literary works, films, political speeches, 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 travel through social, cultural, economic, agricultural, commercial, and other networks, shaping the ever-changing relationship between the local and the global.
The environment prompts us to think of networks of ever-changing relationships across species and geopolitical boundaries, of ecologies and interdependence. We will consider the changing conceptions of “nature” and “the human” and consider how those changes in turn produce categories such as race, gender, and social class—how, that is, they shape humanity’s relationships to our surroundings and each other.

This class will be “hands on,” using the space of the Duke Campus Farm to explore specifically the connections among science (geology, evolutionary biology, genomics), law and policy, and cultural forms. Foundational to this class is the idea that literary and cinematic works and literary analyses of non-literary works, landscapes and objects can offer crucial insight into the pressing questions of our moment and should be a significant part of our ethical, legal, and policy debates concerning “the environment.” The course begins with the assumption that literature, film and other artistic and cultural forms can help us see how our ideas circulate through language, images, and stories to shape our lived experience: specifically, our sense of “the environment.” We will consider how we are telling these stories through science, law, and policy as well as fiction, film, and the news media. And we will consider how the story of “the environment” unwittingly shapes our approach to our surroundings. Throughout the class, we will ask what alternative stories we might tell, and how they might affect the practice of science, law, and policy and lead to more productive debate and constructive change.

There will be several written requirements for this class (two papers and a blog) as well as a collaborative class project involving Duke, Durham, and the surrounding area.

---

ENGLISH 590S-1.01 SP TOP SEMINAR I
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 5905-3.02 SP TOP SEMINAR III
CONTEMPORARY BLACK SOUTH
Jarvis McInnis

This course explores contemporary representations of the Black US South in African American literature and culture. Journeying through rural Mississippi and the Carolinas to urban centers such as Atlanta, Memphis, New Orleans, and Houston, we will interrogate the geographic and cultural diversity of the contemporary Black South. We will juxtapose canonical texts—by Ida B. Wells, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, Anne Moody, or Alice Walker—that have shaped predominant cultural representations of the region, alongside works by contemporary writers such as Jesmyn Ward, Natasha Trethewey, Randall Kenan, Tayari Jones, Kiese Laymon, and Regina Bradley. We will also examine depictions of the region in media and pop culture, e.g., TV shows Atlanta and Queen Sugar; HipHop artists OutKast, Lil Wayne, and Big Freedia; and experimental films such as Julie Dash’s Daughters of the Dust and Beyoncé’s Lemonade. We will read a range of critical and theoretical works that cut across literary, cultural, media and performance studies, African American Studies, New Southern Studies, gender and sexuality studies, geography, and sociology.

ENGLISH 8265.01
THE GLOBAL NOVEL: Mediation
Nancy Armstrong & Roberto Dainotto

Louis Althusser is known for saying, “ideology represents individuals’ imaginary relation to their real conditions of existence.” Assuming that statement is a pretty good fit for traditional literary realism as well, we feel that it’s time to rephrase this principle for the global novel, “the global novel represents individuals’ imaginary relation to forms of mediation.” Rather than refer to life beyond the page as one organized around the home, the workplace, the school, the legal system and so forth, the novels we have in mind aspire to live not only outside the language in which they were written but also beyond the printed page as film, television series, comic books, audiobooks, electronic games, and so forth. Given that a good number of these novels quite literally want to escape the material confines of the medium, they require us to figure out new procedures for reading them. We shall organize our seminar meetings with this aim in mind.

Murakami, McGurl, Todd, Merchant, English, Brouillette, Illouz and others will help us define the problem posed by works of fiction that present themselves as between media. Each seminar thereafter focuses on a device or topic that lent intelligibility to the operations of the world in which a representative individual succeeded in making a place for her or himself within the given social order. Each week, we will consider how a particular novel of the past two decades has declared one such device or topic obsolete by repurposing or replacing it. Our task will be to determine how, with what, and perhaps why. By the end of the course, we aim to have developed a method of reading for the formal changes by which novels remake themselves for intermediality.

Seminar topics are likely to include: social mobility; origin/destination; production/reproduction; property private and public; protagonist/antagonist; setting/environment; narrative markers/clues.

Assigned novels may well include: Kushner’s The Flamethrowers, Whitehead’s Zone One, Ibrahim’s Season of Crimson Blossoms, Cole’s Open City, Lianke’s Lenin’s Kisses, Saviano, Gomorrah, Cusk’s Transit,

---

**ENGLISH 890S.01 SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR**

**History of Contemporary Literary Criticism**

**Robert Mitchell**

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 town hall 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, including new criticism, structuralism, deconstruction, Foucaultian 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 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).

---

**ENGLISH 890S.02 SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR**

**REDEEMING LOVE**

**David Aers**

*Redeeming Love: Julian of Norwich; Margery Kempe; William Langland; Nicholas Love*

“The medievals located the redemptive value of Christ’s work primarily in his passion and crucifixion, seeing Christ as making *satisfaction* for our sins, and as *meriting* our justification and everlasting life.”

(Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus*, 129)

This quotation introduces some central areas explored in “Redeeming Love.” We will be working with different kinds of writing as we study different models of the redemption. This is a course in vernacular theology. Were it on Latin theologians of the late medieval world, it would not include two women writers. Although the seminar involves the study of central topics in Christian teaching, it is text centered. I have no interest in encouraging intellectual or theological history composed as a grand narrative of ideas or doctrines, no interest in a survey of theories of the atonement (a sixteenth-century term I shall eschew as an unhelpful anachronism). Why not a survey, why not a grand survey? Because such surveys have a habit of abstracting ideas / doctrines from complex exploratory and sometimes self-divided texts: and then composing their abstractions into an orderly, teleological story. The result is often a persuasive, even compelling history of ideas that no texts actually produced and perhaps nobody
actually thought. What alternatives are there? A history concentrating on particular texts belonging to particular practices in particular discourses. A history of the way ideas are embodied and explored in often thoroughly complex, intellectually and affectively demanding texts. With such hermeneutic caveats in mind, we will study four medieval texts. Having done so, we may be able to consider whether these texts tell any kind of story and, if so, what.

We will begin with a text you should read before the first class, bringing a copy of the text to the first meeting: Nicholas Love’s early fifteenth century translation of an immensely popular and formative Franciscan work, *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* (Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies, published by Liverpool University Press, 2004, paperback). Why begin here? Because this work displays in detail the late medieval tradition of affective devotion and its approach to Jesus Christ. The translation by Nicholas Love (a Carthusian from Mount Grace in Yorkshire) also includes some fascinating anti-Wycliffite inflections: the first Wycliffite had been burnt to death in 1401. The form of contemplation was central to Margery Kempe who we study later in this course. I would like participants to have read, before this course, St. Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo* since this was such a decisive text in late medieval accounts of the Redemption. Although I do not intend to discuss this directly in class, it should be a shared reference point. I recommend the translation in Anselm of Canterbury, *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (Oxford World’s Classics, published by Oxford University Press, 2008, paperback). From Nicholas Love’s *Mirror* we will turn to the greatest Christian poem of the Middle Ages written in English: William Langland’s *Piers Plowman*. We will be studying the C version of this work, the final version. Those unfamiliar with Middle English should certainly read the poem in the translation by George Economou, *William Langland’s Piers Plowman: The C Version* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996, paperback); for the Middle English, the set text is the fine annotated edition, with the helpful introduction, by Derek Pearsall: *Piers Plowman: A New Annotated Edition of the C-text*, 2nd edition (Exeter Medieval Texts and Series, published by Liverpool University Press, 2008, paperback). Make sure you get this, “new annotated” edition (2008 and later); not the first edition (1978). This wonderful, demanding poem you should read in the long vacation, before the class, re-reading it during the class. After Langland, we will study another truly great work from the period, the visions and meditations of Julian of Norwich. The most accessible cheap text and one I recommend is *The Showings of Julian of Norwich*, edited by Denise Baker (Norton Critical Edition, 2004, paperback). If you want a good modern translation read the “Long Text” in Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, edited and translated by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (Paulist Press, 1978, paperback). If you want a densely annotated, so-called critical edition, use that by Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins, *The Writings of Julian of Norwich* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005). We conclude the course with some weeks on the astonishing work of a lay woman, mother of fourteen children, pilgrim to Jerusalem and elsewhere, and intimate contemplative of Jesus Christ. Her work, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, should be read in either the fine modern translation by Lynn Staley (Norton Critical Edition including some essays on Kempe, 2000, paperback), or in Lynn Staley’s Middle English edition (TEAMS Texts, Western Michigan University Press, 1996, paperback).

The primary task of anyone enrolling in this course is to read the set texts, slowly and meditatively. I will suggest relevant scholarly work during the class but here are a few excellent introductory works: Rik Van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to Medieval Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).


**Note on class format and 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.