

FALL 2018
Department of English
Graduate
Course Descriptions



ENGLISH 546S-01
SEMINAR: **VICTORIAN LITERATURE**
M 1:25PM – 3:55 PM
Kathy Psomiades

Victorian scientists, political theorists and novelists all addressed the problem of the relationship between individual agency and mass agency. This course will focus on six different takes on this problem: Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*, Elizabeth Barret Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, Margaret Oliphant's *Phoebe Junior*, Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady* and a 6th novel, either by Thomas Hardy or by a New Woman novelist. Dickens and Barret Browning address the social problems of the urban masses in the 1850s, Eliot and Oliphant address the spectre of mass democracy raised by the Reform Bill of 1867, and James and our 6th novelist simultaneously address the biological individual's relation to the species and the novel's relationship to mass culture. We'll be reading these literary works alongside extra-literary writing by thinkers like Thomas Malthus, James Stuart Mill, Henry Maine, Charles Darwin and others. You will want to read at least FOUR of the literary works this summer before the course begins.

Depending on your individual needs and goals, you'll choose one of two writing options: A) two separate 10 page conference papers, the first due before midsemester, the second at the end. You'll write abstracts for these papers before the full papers are due, and you'll revise the first conference paper or B) one ten-page conference paper due before midsemester, to

be expanded into a 20 page article-length paper that will be revised at least once by the end of the course.

Advanced undergraduate English majors who are interested in learning how to write longer research papers--either because they think they might want to apply to graduate school, or because they want some independent research experience before they write distinction essays--are welcome in this class. Be prepared for a heavy reading load (the literary works alone are 400-900 pages each, and you could be reading 250-300 pages a week), and a lot of writing.

LIT 681S-01 / ENGLISH 582S-01

SEMINAR: WITTGENSTEIN AND LITERARY THEORY

Tuesday 10:05AM – 12:35PM

Toril Moi

Key questions in literary theory reconsidered from the point of view of ordinary language philosophy (Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin, Cavell). Topics will vary, but may include: meaning, language, interpretation, intentions, fiction, realism and representation, voice, writing, the subject, the body, the other, difference and identity, the politics of theory. New perspectives on canonical texts on these subjects.

ENGLISH 590S-2-01

SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR: SETTLEMENT & INDIGENEITY

Thursday 3:05PM – 5:35PM

Charlotte Sussman

How did the eighteenth century understand what it meant to be native to a place? What did it believe gave people a right to settle in a place, and what made others vulnerable to be moved? This course will consider these issues in Britain itself in relation to their importance in Britain's expanding empire. We will examine representations, including self-representations, of indigenous people in North America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Pacific alongside debates over the rights and value of these people. In Britain, it will explore debates over the poor laws and the enclosure movement, as well as the late eighteenth-century quest to find art forms indigenous to the United Kingdom—we will investigate how the British came to understand themselves as “native” to Britain.

Texts may include: *The Tempest*; *Paradise Lost*; *Oroonoko*; *Robinson Crusoe*; *Ivanhoe*; the Journals of Joseph Banks and Captain Cook; Byron's *The Island*; McPherson's Ossian poems; and others. We will read historians and theorists of poor relief, settler colonialism, freedom of movement, and other issues.

LIT 590-S-01 / ENGLISH 590S-2-02

SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR: WESTERN PHILOSOPHY, GLOBAL REVOLUTION

W 3:05PM - 5:25PM

Catherine Reilly

This course is an exploration of the concept of revolution as a key engine of social, political, and cultural modernity.

October 2017 marked the centennial of the Russian Revolution. In what ways has the concept and the practice of revolution evolved and/or remained consistent in the one hundred and one years since the “most turbulent revolutionary movement of modern history” (Hobsbawm)? How should the Russian Revolution be contextualized among other revolutionary movements, past and present?

We cover literary works and political philosophy of calls for revolution, from the English Civil War to more current revolutionary movements, such as Occupy and the Zapatistas. The course places particular emphasis on the French and Russian Revolutions as key critical nodes and as touchstones for other major revolutionary struggles (Haiti, 1848, 1968 in worldwide context). What role does aesthetic and philosophical writing play in revolutionary struggle? How do such works construct a revolutionary subject? Figure temporality? Propose internationalism? Readings from Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx and Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Platonov, C.L.R. James, Mao, Césaire.

List of Selected Course Readings/Books:

Roberto Bolaño, *Amulet*; Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; Olympe de Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Woman*; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*; Immanuel Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*; Vladimir Lenin, *Essential Works of Lenin*; Rosa Luxemburg, *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*; Jean-François Lyotard, *Enthusiasm: The Kantian Critique of History*; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*; Andrei Platonov, *The Foundation Pit*; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*; Schiller,

On the Aesthetic Education of Man; Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

ROMST 710S-01 / ENGLISH 710S-01

SEMINAR: **SAYING AND THE UNSAYABLE: INTRODUCTION TO LYRIC/LITERARY THEORY**

Tuesday 1:40PM - 4:10PM

José Rodriguez-Garcia

Do poetry readers listen mainly to “man speaking to man” (Wordsworth), such that the “conversation of humankind” provides a model for a community of equals? Or should literature focus on “*écrire le silence*” (Rimbaud), such that meaning remains in a state of latency and searching for what lies hidden replaces communication? We will sample the work of 16th-c. mystics (and their 20th-c. revivalists), baroque/metaphysical writers, the British romantic poets, and the linguistic revolution of 19th-c. “*poésie ivre*.” What can be said and what is left unsaid will also be explored through censorship, cultural colonialism, and ekphrastic & inter-linguistic translation.

ENGLISH 822S-01

SEMINAR: WRITING IS THINKING

Wednesday 10:05AM – 12:35PM

Toril Moi

This course aims to teach graduate students at any level, from first-year students to dissertation writers, how to write well and with enjoyment, and how to make writing a part of their daily life as creative intellectuals. We will cover questions of style, voice, and audience, and learn to read academic prose as writers. We will also focus on how to move from note-taking to writing, and develop an understanding of different academic genres. The course will be writing intensive. Consent of instructor is required.

LIT 850S-01 / ENGLISH 860S-01

DELEUZE: CINEMA & PHILOSOPHY

Tu 3:05PM - 5:35PM

Markos Hadjioannou

This course is a graduate-level course examining Gilles Deleuze's two books on cinema: *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. In order to understand the deep complexity of Deleuze's film philosophy, we will explore the connections between his concepts of the "movement-image" and the "time-image," and how these are informed by his other philosophical studies on Henri Bergson, Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and Friedrich Nietzsche (all in separate monographs by him). Particular topics we will address will include interpretations of movement and

change, of time and duration, of being and becoming, of expressionism and aesthetics, of subjectivity, of the "will to power" and the "eternal return," of cinema as philosophy and cinema's relation to ethics.

During the semester, we will move progressively through the two cinema books and related reading from Deleuze's other philosophical studies on the separate thinkers. While this approach will offer you an in-depth understanding of Deleuze's complex thinking, it will also challenge you to consider cinema's potential as a medium of philosophical thinking—or as a thinking machine in and of itself. In so doing, Deleuze's work will prompt an examination of cinema as a particular type of image (as movement- or time-image), which places the spectator within a dynamic relationship with the mediated view of the world and with the spectator's own existential position within reality. Such an understanding will also lead us to examine the type of subjectivity that cinema's various worldviews present or trigger, and how movement, time, and change are all integral to the composition of this subjectivity. This, then, will lead us to the ethical core of Deleuze's philosophy of cinema, which looks at the potential and need for moving beyond transcendental idealism in order to exist actively and politically within a rapidly changing world. Above all, this is a course on thinking philosophically about film—and the only way to do so is to think philosophically with film. As such, each week's topic will have as its focal point one or two films (combining feature-length and short films) from primary representatives of art, world, and experimental cinema. More than just applying Deleuze's concepts to the films, we will be concerned with looking at the philosophical prism presented by

each film, in order to understand the extent to which the works replicate, expand on, or challenge Deleuze's thinking.

Some indicative filmmakers whose films we will explore are: Chantal Akerman, Catherine Breillat, David Cronenberg, Claire Denis, Marguerite Duras, Atom Egoyan, Michael Haneke, Ilya Khrzhanovskiy, Kim Ki-duk, Yorgos Lanthimos, David Lynch, Chris Marker, Park Chan-wook, György Pálfi, Alain Resnais, Bela Tarr, Gus Van Sant, Agnès Varda, Wim Wenders, and Andrey Zvyagintsev.

Ethics 890S-01 / English 890S (TBA)

SPECIAL TOPICS IN ETHICS

FACING THE ANTHROPOCENE: FINDING THE HUMAN IN A POST-NATURAL WORLD

Tuesday 7:30PM – 10:00PM

Jedediah Purdy & Norman Wirzba

In a time when humanity has become a force shaping the planet and there is no more "nature" apart from human artifacts, how do thinking and action need to change? What do politics, theology, economics, law, aesthetics, become when they can no longer assume nature as a background? What happens to struggles for justice, democracy, and other ideals? What does the university become? We will read key texts on these questions and host several guest speakers. This

course is not an "Anthropocene survey," but a place to ask: If we start from the Anthropocene, what changes, and how?

This course is connected with the Facing the Anthropocene Project, funded by the Luce Foundation, which the instructors are co-directing. The project revisits basic methodological premises and orienting questions in light of the Anthropocene. The seminar is a forum in which to ask the same questions with graduate students. In what ways do one's assumptions turn out to rely on an explicit or implicit assumption of a certain version of "nature," a certain boundary between the human and the non-human, a certain view of time or causation or value, that may now come into question? What new starting points might make both scholarship and service--the twin goals of the modern university--more valuable in a transformed world? We will invite three leading scholars of these issues as guests of the seminar, and will invite students to join in active, creative, risk-taking exploration of these questions.

Course Texts and materials (a selection, not a complete list): Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement*; Purdy, *After Nature*; Robin Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*; Dipesh Chakrabarty, series of key articles on history in the Anthropocene; Dale Jamieson, *Reason in a Dark Time*; Willis Jenkins, *The Future of Ethics*; Clive Hamilton, *Defiant Earth*.

ENGLISH 890S-02

SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR:

REDEEMING LOVE: FOUR MEDIEVAL TEXTS

Thursday 12:00PM – 2:30 PM

David Aers

“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 between Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109) and Julian of Norwich (mid-fourteenth century, early fifteenth century). The course 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 meeting, bringing the text to the first class. St. Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*. I recommend the translation in Anselm of Canterbury, *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (Oxford World’s Classics paperback, Oxford U. P.). After Anselm I will discuss with you some Questions from the third part of St. Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* alongside strands of Abelard’s *Commentary on Romans*. We will then take several weeks to study 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 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 (University of Exeter Press and now Liverpool University Press, 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 text and one I recommend is *The Showings of*

Julian of Norwich, edited by Denise Baker (Norton 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 paperback). Our final work is an exquisite late fourteenth-century poem composed around the death of the writer’s child: Pearl. The set text here is Poems of the Pearl Manuscript, eds. Malcolm Andrew and Ron Waldron: use the REVISED edition (Exeter University Press) which includes a reliable prose translation in a CD-ROM at the back of the book.

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 U. P.)

Brian Davies, The Thought of Thomas Aquinas (Clarendon Press)

Elizabeth Salter, “Piers Plowman: An Introduction” in her posthumous collection, English and International: Studies in the Literature, Art and Patronage of Medieval England, ed. Derek Pearsall and Nicolette Zeeman (Cambridge U. P., 1988), pp. 111-157.

Denys Turner, Julian of Norwich: Theologian (Yale U. P., paperback).

Eamon Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580, second edition (Yale U. P., paperback 2005), chapters 1-10: anybody studying medieval writing should read the pre-Reformation part of this book.

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.

ENGLISH 890S-03

SEMINAR: **HANNAH ARENDT & THE HUMAN CONDITION**

Wednesday 11:45AM – 2:15PM

Rob Mitchell

Hannah Arendt’s 1951 publication of The Origins of Totalitarianism established her as a key political theorist of the twentieth century. Though subsequent texts such as Eichmann in Jerusalem, On Revolution, and On Violence further

consolidated that reputation, texts such as The Human Condition and The Life of the Mind underscored the singularity and essentially uncategorizable nature of Arendt's intellectual project, which though it encompassed, yet was by no means limited to, political theory and philosophy. It is in part this singularity of Arendt's project that is responsible for the recent reemergence of her texts as a key reference point in the work of authors working both within political theory proper (e.g., Linda Zerilli) as well as authors working within other intellectual traditions (e.g., Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito). The primary goal of this course is to focus closely on Arendt as a writer, with the goal of understanding how her concepts, and her related mode and style of writing, can reconfigure our understanding of the relationships among politics, texts, interpretation, and the arts. (For example, we will consider Arendt's interpretation of Homer, which is important for her overall project; her critique of the form of the novel; etc.). In order to enable this focus, we will read small selections from a number of her texts, as well as some of the authors upon whom she was drawing (e.g., Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger), but devote much of our time to a close and patient reading of The Human Condition, which synthesizes many of her Arendt's key concerns. We will also consider selections from some of Arendt's most important contemporary interpreters, including Linda Zerilli, Giorgio Agamben, and Roberto Esposito.

ENGLISH 890S-04

SEMINAR: **CULT OF PERSONALITY**

Wednesday 4:40PM – 7:10PM

Taylor Black

This seminar/writing workshop considers the cultivation, representation and uses of personality in 20th century popular culture. We will approach major (large, mysterious, complex, problematic) figures from the past one hundred years or so in order to understand the nature of their appeal. These objects of analysis—or, as Deleuze and Guattari would have it, our “conceptual personae”—will anchor our inquiry and wonder. Who exactly we place on our alter will depend on the interests of our group, but you can expect figures as varied and great as: Greta Garbo, Valerie Solanas, Robert Johnson, Jim Jones, Little Richard, Andy Warhol, etc. The only common denominator for our cast of characters will be charisma. To put it another way, we will endeavor to understand the ability these figures seem to have to influence others without relying on logic.

What happens when we apply our critical skills and lenses to figures that seem to resist this kind of understanding or adaptation? And what can we, as writers and intellectuals, do to expand our senses of fascination and interpretation?

To explore and introduce questions like these, we will read and construct our own theories of voice, glamour, beauty, style, etc. Expect to encounter works by scholars and writers that offer particular vocabularies and lenses for considering the mystery of personality. These may very well include sections from writers such as: Hilton Als (*White Girls*), Wayne Koestenbaum (*Jackie Under My Skin*), Fred Moten (*Black and Blur*), Richard Prum (*The Evolution of Beauty*), Avital Ronell (*Crack Wars*), Patti Smith (*Devotion*), John Waters (*Role Models*).

We will think about the art of representation, or description, as at the center of what we do as scholars, thinkers and writers. Students should be prepared to write short pieces each week that will be discussed and workshopped in class alongside and according to particular themes/readings. These writing exercises are meant to encourage you to think about and expand your own modes of inquiry, both formal and exploratory. You will also be invited to consider your own personality as a writer and scholar so that you might begin cultivating it into a style.

GSF 960S-01 / English 890S (TBA)

INTERDISCIPLINARY DEBATES: WHAT HAS LIFE BECOME?

Monday 4:40PM – 7:10 PM

Gabriel Rosenberg, Priscilla Wald

What is life now and what could it become? This class explores how scientific, political, and literary texts articulated the concept of life in three moments: colonial encounter & Enlightenment (natural rights & law); mid 19th century (evolution & ecology); late 20th century (biotechnology & biocapitalism). It surveys key developments in science and political philosophy, how they relate to art and literature, and the centrality of theories of life to the co-emergence of scientific and humanistic thinking. Our working premises: conceptions of life underpin our cosmologies and, thus, how theories of life change and how they shape our thinking is crucial for understanding “theory” generally.

ENGLISH 890T-01
TUTORIAL IN SPECIAL TOPICS: **PLACEMENT TUTORIAL**
Tuesday 12:00PM - 2:00PM
Charlotte Sussman

ENGLISH 891-01
INDEPENDENT STUDY: **DISSERTATION WORKSHOP**
Tuesday 4:40PM – 7:10PM
Priscilla Wald
