

Spring 2019
Department of English
Undergraduate
Course Descriptions



ENGLISH 89S-01
1ST-YR SEM LIT (TOP) (Seminar) **SOUTHERN GROTESQUE**
TuTh 11:45AM - 1:00PM
Taylor Black

“Whenever I’m asked why Southern writers particularly have a penchant for writing about freaks, I say it is because we are still able to recognize one.” – Flannery O’Connor

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.”

Our ongoing subject here is the post-Civil War South, with a particular emphasis on the recent past. 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.

Students enrolled in this course will be expected to participate in class discussion and to complete three short (5-7 page) essays. Potential authors: Dorothy Allison, Truman Capote, William Faulkner, Toni Morrison, Flannery O'Connor, Edgar Allan Poe, Tennessee Williams. Potential films: *Deliverance* (1979), *Wise Blood* (1979), *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1997), *George Washington* (2000), *Winter's Bone* (2010).

ENGLISH 89S-02

1ST-YR SEM LIT (TOP) (Seminar) **LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPES**

MW 11:45AM - 1:00PM

Dominika Baran

Urban spaces in which we live and move – streets, buildings, shopping centers, parking lots, cafés and restaurants – are marked with linguistic signs. All around us are store signboards, billboards, notices, posters, advertisements. In this course we will examine the local meanings of language visible in the spaces around us. We will read about linguistic landscapes around the world, from ancient cities to recently expanding modern ones, from train stations and airports to refugee camps and other transitional spaces. Through photographs and stories that situate them, students will document and map multilingual

texts visible in public spaces in Durham and the Triangle. This course is linked with the Linguistic Landscapes stream in the Representing Migration Humanities Lab in the English Department.

ENGLISH 90S-01

SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE (Seminar) **MAD SCIENTISTS IN LITERATURE**

WF 4:40PM - 5:55PM

Kathleen Burns

Darwin. Einstein. Bill Nye the Science Guy. Rachel Carson. Walter White. Scientists in fiction and popular culture have long captivated the public imagination as celebrity-like oddities, as uncanny figures who skirt the boundary between brilliance and madness. In this class, we will look at what makes these scientific figures, literary and real, tick. We will ask such questions as what gives science and scientists authority? Why and how do scientists acquire superstar status in some cultures? How do they influence our understanding of science and technology? We will look at such famous scientists as Charles Darwin and Neil deGrasse Tyson, as we ask, what is the role of science and scientists in the public and how has it changed over time?

From science fiction to science articles, our class will trace how scientific knowledge forms and circulates in specific cultural contexts including how it translates across fields and disciplines. Using the figure of the scientist to guide and focus our inquiries, this class will delve into the messy and complex

relationship between science, fiction and science fiction as we read works by scientists like Isaac Asimov and science fiction writers like Margaret Atwood. Throughout the class, we will not only consider how science mediates and informs understandings of gender, race, and sexuality--and even the very foundation of what we consider knowledge and facts--but also how culture influences the values and practices adopted by scientists. We'll also grapple with urgent and pressing scientific issues as we interrogate whether climate change will revolutionize scientists as we currently know them.

Throughout the semester, we will read several novels and a number of shorter pieces of literary fiction and nonfiction. We will also engage with scientific reports, articles, films and TV shows including *Arrival* and *X-Files*. Grades will be based on seminar participation, two short essays, and a final essay or creative project. No exams will be given.

ENGLISH 90S-02
SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE (Seminar) **LAW, ETHICS, AND POWER**
WF 8:30AM - 9:45AM
Chandler Fry

Kings, Presidents, and Superheroes: the Laws and Ethics of Power

"[W]hen the president does it, that means it is not illegal."—Richard Nixon

"You see, their morals, their code, it's a bad joke. Dropped at the first sign of trouble. They're only as good as the world allows them to be."—The Joker, *The Dark Knight*

In this class, we will consider forms of power from different cultures—American presidents, English kings, Caribbean dictators—and what laws, if any, prevent the exploitation of these forms of power. We will also think about power outside of government—superheroes, corporate executives, scientists—and the laws that (ideally) bind these forms of power. Our inquiry, therefore, is ethical and political. But we will also consider form. Because we will read a wide variety of texts, literary and theoretical, we will need to think about the relationships between history, theory, and art.

We will begin with Chaucer's short poem *The Manciple's Tale* (paired with HBO's *Game of Thrones*), and we will conclude with Nolan's superhero epic *The Dark Knight*. Between these we will read great political literature—Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Roth's *The Plot Against America*, Márquez's *The Autumn of the Patriarch*—as well as selections of works by Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Jefferson.

Grade: Two essays, 4-6 pages and 8-9 pages (70%); weekly short writing (30%). No exams

ENGLISH 90S-03

SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE (Seminar) **CON ARTISTS AND IMPOSTERS**

TuTh 3:05PM - 4:20PM

Kevin Spencer

To live in the modern world means to live among strangers. Because we must deal with people we do not know, trust plays a major role in mediating relations among people. Con artists and imposters manage to win our trust for their own nefarious ends. By looking at stories of con artists and imposters, this course will examine the contours and dangers of trusting other people in the modern world.

We will read fiction from North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia over the past century and a half. How do we avoid being gullible while also avoid being pathologically suspicious of people's motives? What risks do we take in getting close to people? Why is the fraudster a figure of both fear and fascination? The wager of this class is that stories from various cultures can shed light on what it means to trust and mistrust other people in the modern world.

Possible novels include Melville's *The Confidence-Man* (1857), André Gide's *Lafcadio's Adventures* (1914), Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929), Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955), Sibusio's Nyembezi's *The Rich Man of Pietermaritzburg* (1961), and Tomoyuki Hoshino's *ME* (2010). We will also watch a couple of movies, including *Gaslight* (USA 1944), *The Sting* (USA 1973), and *Helpless* (South Korea 2012). All texts will be read in English.

Writing assignments will consist of weekly online reading responses, a ten-minute presentation, a short essay (5-7 pages), and a longer essay (8-10 pages). There will be no exams. No prerequisites.

ENGLISH 90S-04

SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE (Seminar) **BLACKLISTED BOOKS**

WF 3:05PM - 4:20PM

Michael McGurk

Can a novel really shock you? Do poems really have the power to incite violence? In a time saturated with graphic images of sex and violence, what can the written word do that television, film and the Internet cannot? In this class, we'll look at a few notable novels, poems, plays and short stories that have transcended the status of "artwork" and become political events, religious debates, revolutionary proclamations, threats to decency and order. In short, we will be looking at controversy: What social and political conditions must exist for something so trivial as a novel to erupt like gunfire into the public consciousness?

Some of our texts have been banned for their depictions of sex; others have been critiqued for their critical portrayals of important political figures or for their sympathetic treatments of radical or countercultural movements; still others have been admonished for pushing artistic or representational boundaries. When we look at older literary works, we will see if we can determine the taboos and social mores that existed at

the time and discuss the transgressions that books like *Lady Chatterley's Lover* or *Lolita* represented for their societies. What made *The Satanic Verses* and *Fun Home* so dangerous? We might consider what obligations or duties, if any, literature has to the reading public: Truth? Law? Morality? In our discussions we will give a fair consideration both to the text itself and to the reading public which found its content alarming.

ENGLISH 110S-01
INTRO CREATIVE WRITING
M 3:20PM - 5:50PM
Brenna Casey

"When I write stories," said the author Natalia Ginzburg, "I am like someone who is in her own country, walking along the streets that she has known since she was a child, between walls and trees that are hers." Ginzburg's exile from her natal Rome in the years of Italian fascism must certainly have inspired her analogy—her country landless, borderless, and more literary.

Through the study and exploration of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction, students of this writing workshop will be asked to craft their own worlds. We will have two aims. First, to engage in critical conversations about writing through the study of contemporary literature. Second, to practice the craft of writing by experimenting with various forms and working together to improve our poetry and prose. Students should enroll with an unremitting curiosity, a desire to learn from their own process and that of their peers, and an excitement for conjuring their own creative landscapes.

ENGLISH 110S-02
INTRO CREATIVE WRITING
Th 3:05PM - 5:35PM
Michelle Dove

The whole story is the meaning. A poem is a two-way mirror. Narrative "truth" can emerge more creatively than we first think. In this class we will investigate how the choices we make as writers do more than propel a narrative forward. We will write short stories, personal essays and poems and workshop original work as a class. This course will explore the craft of the three forms but will also pay close attention to dynamic work that lies between or beyond these structures. Students will read and respond in class to a range of literary and creative texts. Grades will be based on class participation, discussion, weekly writing prompts, workshop submissions, and a revised final portfolio.

ENGLISH 184S-01
READINGS IN GENRE (Seminar) **THE GOTHIC**
MW 10:05AM - 11:20AM
Leonard Tennenhouse

This course considers why a literate public who prided itself on its modernity developed such an enduring appetite for gothic fictions and films. How did advances in modern science, the expansion of empires, and the growth of an information society feed this appetite? What aspects of daily life tend to take on gothic qualities and under what conditions? We will address

these questions by examining how selected works of fiction and film challenge and perhaps anticipate changes in established notions of the self, family, nation, and world.

ENGLISH 184S-02
READINGS IN GENRE (Seminar)
CALCULATION AND RECKLESSNESS
MW 11:45AM - 1:00PM
Aarthi Vadde

The American poet John Ashbery said “Most reckless things are beautiful in some way, and recklessness is what makes experimental art beautiful.” In turn, a clever critical reader of Ashbery’s poetry described his style as one of “calculated recklessness.” This course will introduce you to works of modernist, postcolonial, and contemporary literature that feature stories of calculation and recklessness in calculatedly reckless styles of telling. We will consider the idea of plotting (i.e. calculation) in relationship to literary plots, and the recklessness of characters in relationship to the wildly inventive aesthetic modes that shape them. The goal of this gateway course is to give you a solid grounding in 20th century Anglophone literature, especially in the major genres of the novel and poetry. There will also be some drama, short stories, and the manifesto thrown in for good measure.

Works Drawn from: Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895); Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim* (1900); Wyndham Lewis, et. al *BLAST 1* (1915); Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925); Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*

(1947); Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966); Junot Diaz – *The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007). Selected poems by T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, Seamus Heaney, and Derek Walcott.

Requirements: You will be expected to participate actively in class discussions; to do several short writing assignments; and to complete three papers (4-6pgs) designed to teach you the art of literary analysis, argumentation, and reflection.

ENGLISH 184S-03
READINGS IN GENRE (Seminar) **UTOPIAS/DYSTOPIAS IN AM LIT**
TuTh 11:45AM - 1:00PM
Michael D'Alessandro

From *The Hunger Games* to *The Handmaid’s Tale* to *Mad Max: Fury Road*, American culture has become saturated with visions of speculative “other” societies. But why exactly have utopian and dystopian stories become so central to our national landscape? How can so-called utopias allow specific populations to thrive while so many others fail? Moving from the turn of the twentieth century to the present day, this course examines the genre through social, cultural, and political lenses. We investigate traditional examples of utopias and dystopias--from planned communes to futuristic authoritarian regimes--at the same time that we test the boundaries of utopian and dystopian definitions.

Throughout, we ask critical questions of the utopian and dystopian genres, such as: how have speculative futures illuminated fears around changing economic structures, gender dynamics, and race relations? In what ways do utopias and

dystopias offer insight into ideals of individualism and fears of conformity? What aspects of United States history have unfolded as real-life utopias and dystopias? Finally, how distinct are the concepts of utopia and dystopia?

Fiction and film lie at the center of our exploration, but we also engage theatrical dramas, television shows, and cultural criticism. Texts include Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Ira Levin's *The Stepford Wives*, and Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*. Film screenings include David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*, Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report*, Bong Joon-Ho's *Snowpiercer*, and George Miller's *Mad Max: Fury Road*. Evaluation consists of a series of short essays, one oral presentation, a final research essay, and class participation.

ENGLISH 184S-04
READINGS IN GENRE (Seminar) **WAR & WORSHIP, WINE & WOMEN**
TuTh 1:25PM - 2:40PM
Thomas Ferraro

WAR AND WORSHIP, WINE AND WOMEN

(POETRY, COLOR, AND LINE)

A Seminar for Sophomores & Freshfolk

(Mostly)

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, aching 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 those matters of nearly universal interest: "war and worship, wine and (wo)men" (and, if I might add, "work"): 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 pleasuring 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 stories by Hawthorne, McKay, Cather; novellas by James, Melville, and Hansen; essays by Emerson, Herr, 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 184 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 President Brodhead used to remind 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 220S-01

INTRO TO THE WRITING OF POETRY (Seminar)

W 3:05PM - 5:35PM

Joseph Donahue

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.

ENGLISH 221S-01

INTRO. TO THE WRITING OF FICTION. (Seminar)

W 3:05PM - 5:35PM

Melissa Malouf

How to Tell a Story

The "W" designation for this course means that it can satisfy a graduation requirement. Better yet, this course can satisfy your story-telling itch, can arrange for you to practice the how-tos and the what-ifs and the whys, can give you license to make things up, and can help you to celebrate the third (thirty-third?)

draft of a ten-page story. That “W” can be the first letter of the word you utter after you have written a great sentence.

You’ll read several short stories, with a view to trying to understand how they are *made*. And I’ll ask you, for starters, to write several beginnings: to try on different points of views, dictions/vocabularies/prose rhythms as the story requires. You may then help one or two of these beginnings evolve into a sturdy six-to-ten page story.

Your grades will be based on:

Class preparation and participation

Portfolio (all written work)

Overall effort

ENGLISH 222S-01
INTRO TO THE WTG OF CREAT. N-F (Seminar)
WRITING THE SELF
Tu 3:05PM - 5:35PM
Cathy Shuman

How do you craft a self through writing? The semester will be spent exploring approaches to autobiographical writing, as students write preliminary drafts/exercises that will lead through workshops and revision to the production of three 7-9 page autobiographical essays. As we consider topics such as childhood and memory, the people, places, and things that

make up our present selves, and the interweaving stories and ideas that have shaped our lives, we will read selected examples of self-writing that will help us develop techniques for creating our own. No previous creative writing experience is required for this course.

ENGLISH 222S-02
INTRO TO THE WTG OF CREAT. N-F (Seminar)
M 3:05PM - 5:35PM
Verlyn Klinkenborg

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.

ENGLISH 235-01
SHAKESPEARE (Lecture) **SHAKESPEARE & FEMINISM**
WF 10:05AM - 11:20AM
Julianne Werlin

Shakespeare created some of the most memorable women in theater: from the ambitious and sinister Lady Macbeth to Cleopatra, one of the most charismatic figures ever to appear on stage; from tragic heroines such as Desdemona and Ophelia to sharp-witted comic leads such as Portia or Rosalind. Yet Shakespeare lived and wrote in a patriarchal society, and his

extraordinary women characters were initially portrayed by male actors. How do Shakespearean plays negotiate this fraught social context?

In this class, we will examine the logic of sexuality, femininity, and masculinity in Shakespeare's drama. Drawing on historical scholarship and the writings of Shakespeare's contemporaries, we will place his characters in relation to the norms and values of early modern England. Key contexts will include the family, marriage, religious participation, and men's and women's differing forms of work and economic agency. In addition, we will consider themes in the plays such as desire, consent, objectification, selfhood, and violence. We will also look at the reception of Shakespeare's plays, using feminist theory and historiography to reflect on how Shakespeare's women have been interpreted and represented across historical eras. Plays will include *Antony & Cleopatra*, *Othello*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Merchant of Venice*

ENGLISH 269-01

CLASSICS OF AM LIT, 1820-1860 (Lecture)

TuTh 10:05AM - 11:20AM

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, 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 282S-01

MODERNISM AND THE ARTS (Seminar)

MW 11:45AM - 1:00PM

Corina Stan

MODERNISM: Dazzling, scandalous, "new"—always (still!) reinventing itself. One of the reasons why modernism is endlessly fascinating is that artists (writers, painters, composers, filmmakers, dancers, even philosophers) hung out together, conversed, envied one another, influenced each other, collaborated, parodied others, often reinvented themselves, capturing ephemeral beauty (even finding beauty in repulsive realities) in enduring artworks, making outrageous claims ("burn the libraries!"), and offering lucid diagnoses of the contemporary world.

This course places international modernism in an intermedial perspective, presenting it as a broad conversation among international artists across various art forms. In addition to reading slowly and patiently major literary works by writers such as Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Joyce, Eliot, Kafka, Stein, Woolf, Wat, Rilke, Anand, Césaire, Lu Hsun, students will enhance their understanding of modernism through exposure to painting (Matisse, Picasso, Marc, Kandinsky, Chagall, Lam, Schoenberg),

sculpture (Rodin, Brancusi, Giacometti), music (Debussy, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Berg, Gershwin), dance (Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes) and film (Bunuel, Dali, Eisenstein, Vertov, Ruttman, Cavalcanti).

We will approach modernism as a body of reactionary artifacts, that is, as works of art that took a stand against bourgeois morality, against fossilized ways of thinking enshrined in cultural traditions, against developments of the Enlightenment project that had led to two world wars and colonialism. Students examine the ways avant-garde artists challenged the ethical implications of conceptions of language, art, life and community deemed inimical to human freedom (of expression, of inter-racial association, or association across social classes), and the limitations of a central modernist imperative (“make it new”). We will conclude with a brief examination of the expansion of the field in recent years (the New Modernist Studies).

No prerequisites.

ENGLISH 290-7-01
SP TOP IN LANG & LIT (Lecture) **QUEENS OF ANTIQUITY**
WF 11:45AM - 1:00PM
Charlotte Sussman

This course will examine representations of female monarchs from the Classical to the Neo-classical periods, focusing primarily on British literature. Female rule has often been viewed as a threat to the stability of male-dominated governance, but it has also opened up the possibility of new

forms of leadership and challenged existing social structures. This course will focus on three case studies: Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt; Dido, Queen of Carthage; and Elizabeth I of England. It will investigate the historical traces of their reigns, their representation in classical epic, and revisions of that representation in the Renaissance and Restoration, with some attention to contemporary versions of these figures in film, art, fiction, and poetry. We will consider questions of sexuality, ideas of race, national and indigenous identity, the construction of femininity, and the theory of sovereignty, as well as theatrical history and the nature of epic as a genre.

Texts may include: Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*; Dryden, *All for Love*; Virgil, the *Aeneid*; Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*; Marlowe, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*; Tate and Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas*; Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry*; Spenser, *The Faerie Queen*; Nathaniel Lee, *The Rival Queens*.

Assignments will include critical papers, a short research project, and a collaborative virtual exhibition of representations of female monarchs.

ENGLISH 290S-01
SP TOP IN LANG. & LIT (Seminar)
CLASSICS OF WORLD LITERATURE
TuTh 1:25PM - 2:40PM
Victor Strandberg

To My Prospective World Lit Students (English 290s, Spring 2019):

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.

1. The Bhagavad-Gita (Signet Classics edition, Introduction by Aldous Huxley)
2. Dante: The Inferno (Signet Classics edition, translated by John Ciardi)
3. Shakespeare: Othello (Signet Classics edition, edited by Alvin Kernan)

4. Greek Drama: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes (Bantam Classic, edited by Moses Hadas)

5. Montaigne: Essays (Penguin Classics, translated by J. M. Cohen)

Later in the course, two other classics of World Literature will enter our syllabus: Chaucer (*The Pardoner's Tale*) and Montaigne (*Essays*). I could not find sufficiently inexpensive books for these two writers, so I am planning to download these writings from the Internet, which offers superb editions free of charge to anyone interested. When we meet, I will be more specific about which downloads I wish to use, and I would anticipate that each student can print out paper versions of these pages.

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-02
SP TOP IN LANG. & LIT (Seminar) **LATINX LITERATURE**
MW 1:25PM - 2:40PM
Brenna Casey

This survey course will offer an overview of Latinx Literature in the United States from the nineteenth century to the present. We will focus on how identities are constructed and represented in concert with evolving concepts of race, gender,

sexuality, and class. We will tackle themes of immigration, exile, bilingualism, assimilation, and cultural preservation. Students will complete weekly writing assignments and two 5-7 page papers over the course of the semester. Students may choose from a range of creative and critical assignments.

Authors that we may encounter in this course include José Martí, María Amparo Ruíz de Burton, Sandra Cisneros, Gloria Anzaldúa, Helen María Viramontes, Reinaldo Arenas, Cristina García, Junot Diaz, Justin Torres, Edwidge Danticat, and more.

ENGLISH 290S-4-01
SP TOPICS IN CREATIVE WRITING (Seminar) **FLASH NONFICTION**
Th 3:05PM - 5:35PM
Cathy Shuman

Experimenting with creative nonfiction style, tone, and structure, in this class we will explore the challenges and opportunities involved in making brevity the soul of wit. Over the course of the semester each student will gather material for, draft, workshop, revise, and polish a series of six flash nonfiction pieces of 600-800 words each, using a variety of assigned approaches. Along the way, in-class writing exercises and published examples of flash nonfiction will provide inspiration and ideas. No previous creative writing experience is required for this course.

ENGLISH 290S-4-02
SP TOPICS IN CREATIVE WRITING (Seminar)
THE GENRE OF THE SENTENCE
Tu 4:40PM - 7:10PM
Verlyn Klinkenborg

The writer's work is making sentences. Everything else is secondary. But too often our intentions blind us to the sentences we are actually making, or we feel that, somehow, form or genre is more important than the sentence itself. This workshop will scrutinize your nonfiction prose, looking for the opportunities, the energy, the clarity that may be lying hidden there. We'll be aided by many other writers—Auden, Didion, McPhee, Baldwin, Joseph Roth, Kapuscinski, Dillard, Oates, etc. We'll be thinking about writing as an act of discovery and the sentence as the smallest unit of perception. That means we'll be using your writing. The goal is quite simply to clarify the act of discovering sentences and, in doing so, discovering a better writer within you. Everyone writes every week.

ENGLISH 290S-4-03
SP TOPICS IN CREATIVE WRITING (Seminar)
WRITING ACROSS BORDERS
Tu 1:25PM - 3:55PM
Faulkner Fox

This creative nonfiction course focuses around a fundamental challenge: how can a member of one culture effectively and ethically write about another culture? How can Duke students, in particular, become even more cognizant of the dynamics

involved in observing then writing about cultures they encounter? While this class is open to any student who wants to improve his or her writing and observational skills, it may be of particular value to those who have participated in—or plan to participate in—DukeEngage, a study abroad program, or Duke's Hart Leadership Program.

Over the course of the semester, students will write multiple drafts of two final essays, as well as weekly shorter, more informal exercises and reading responses. The class will contain a workshop component in which students discuss drafts of each other's work, as well as several individual conferences with the professor, peers, and the Duke Writing Studio.

The class will begin with an exercise of traveling to a location (of each student's choosing) that constitutes crossing a border within the city of Durham, then writing about what was found there.

ENGLISH 322S-01
INT. WORKSHOP WTG CREATIVE N-F (Seminar)
ART OF THE PERSONAL ESSAY
Tu 4:40PM - 7:10PM
Faulkner Fox

This course will introduce students to multiple styles and types of personal essays. We will closely examine essays that make you laugh out loud, ponder the meaning of existence, or break your heart. And we'll look at a few essays that—arguably—accomplish all three. At the same time, students will write and

revise their own personal essays, drawing from what they have learned via close study of expertly-crafted personal essays by a wide variety of authors.

Over the course of the semester, students will write multiple drafts of three final essays, as well as weekly shorter, more informal exercises and reading responses. The class will contain a workshop component in which students discuss drafts of each other's work, as well as several individual conferences with the professor, peers, and the Duke Writing Studio.

ENGLISH 345-01
19TH CENT BRITISH NOVEL (Lecture)
WF 1:25PM - 2:40PM
Emma Davenport

Victorian Fiction and Novel Theory

This course combines an exploration of the fascinating world of Victorian literature and culture with an introduction to literary theory and method. We will study the theoretical and critical contributions of some of literary theory's most dynamic, controversial, and insightful scholars to reflect on why we read novels and how we interpret them. By the end of the course, you will not only have gained a background in the political, economic, social, and literary world of the Victorians, but also have collected a set of tools, methods, and techniques that can be used to think about the cultural products of any historical era—including our contemporary one. You will be able to carry this analytical toolkit to your future courses, where your

familiarity with a variety of theoretical models will enable you to examine texts with a sensitive, discerning, and creative eye.

Beginning with an early-nineteenth-century masterpiece of bourgeois culture, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, we will turn to some of the most celebrated — and weirdest — novels produced during Queen Victoria's reign. In the course of reading Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, we will engage with theoretical paradigms including feminism, psychoanalysis, Marxism, formalism, structuralism, post-structuralism, post-colonial theory, critical race studies, and queer theory. Our focus, however, will remain on how the novels themselves shape their own theory of the world; and in doing so, how they actively constitute a world they are often thought passively to represent.

Assessment will be determined by class participation, one ten-minute presentation and related digital project, and one paper. No exams. Majors and non-majors alike are welcome in this course. No prior experience in literary theory or Victorian fiction is necessary or presumed, and writing will be approached as an exploratory, recursive, and cooperative process.

This course carries an Arts, Literatures, and Performance (ALP) Area of Knowledge credit. English majors may apply this course towards either the Area II (18th and 19th Century) requirement or the Criticism, Theory, and Methodology (CTM) requirement.

ENGLISH 373-01

AMER LIT COLD WAR & AFTER (Lecture)

TuTh 10:05AM - 11:20AM

Thomas Ferraro

PUZO'S CANON

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 American 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 is the fiftieth anniversary of the novel’s publication puts 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, Ron Hansen’s Mariette in Ecstasy, and Oscar Hijuelos’s Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love. 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. e

ENGLISH 374-01

CONTEMP AMERICAN WRITERS (Lecture)

WF 8:30-9:45 AM

Sasha Panaram

Treasure(d) Maps: Writing the American South

Most twentieth century U.S. Southern literary novels do not begin or end with words but rather with maps. Included as pictorial representations depicting setting or supplemental tools meant to further situate novels within a broader geographic context, oftentimes, maps offer a preview, even a purview, of the literary narratives they supplement. But if we read maps that accompany U.S. Southern literature – read not skim or skip or sidestep – it becomes clear that the very tools that purport to orientation and direction complicate how we understand setting and provide counter-narratives to the stories they accompany. In this course, we will investigate to what ends canonical and non-canonical American authors alike incorporate invented, rewritten, or unfinished maps into their literary works. By considering how these authors-turned-cartographers engage in practices of demarcation, decide which areas are deemed representable, and create legends to assess land, sky, and sea, we will ask whether or not these maps legitimize narratives, engender divergent stories, and/or constrain readerly possibilities.

Attention to writers and the maps they claim describe the U.S. South raises its own set of questions about what constitutes regional identity. Together we will ask what happens if we consider the South as the northern rim of the Caribbean as it is in Paule Marshall’s *Brown Girl, Brownstones*? What if we look south of the South to encounter new places like the unnamed Central American city in Cristina Garcia’s *The Lady Matador’s Hotel*? What if the South is not a place at all but an undesired and inescapable fantasy as in Octavia Butler’s *Kindred*? Broadening our definition of what comprises the South will

inevitably demand that we rethink what we mean by the term “American.” As such, this course will include people you might already expect insofar as reading from William Faulkner, Zora Neale Hurston, and Flannery O’Connor. But we will also attend to material including Native American fiction and Caribbean-American transatlantic novels like that of Michelle Cliff. In addition to participation, students will write three papers (6-8 pp), contribute to a class blog, and complete a creative final project where they create their own digital map for one of the texts we read in the course.

ENGLISH 390S-1-01
SINGLE AMERICAN AUTHOR (TOP) (Seminar) **BOB DYLAN**
TuTh 4:40PM - 5:55PM
Taylor Black

Bob Dylan is certainly a divisive figure. That said, one cannot deny his impact and influence on the ways we understand American culture. His 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature requires us all to reconsider the ways in which we have traditionally approached the worlds of music and literature. In order to understand the impact his work will have on future generations, we must immediately get down into Dylan’s groove. I welcome Dylan devotees as well as those with little to no knowledge of his catalog.

We will analyze Dylan as both a contemporary, living figure and a more opaque, shadowy persona that moves backwards and forwards through time and space. Our work will chart Dylan’s course through time—song by song, album by album and

decade by decade—while also filling in the space surrounding his music with historical materials that add life and meaning to his creations.

This class requires a willingness to accept improvisation as an intellectual skill and openness to new forms of response. On top of the music itself, which we will experience in-class and you will be expected to take in on your own time, we will consider primary materials by Dylan, films, interviews secondary criticism and primary historical documents. Practically speaking, however, students should expect to do a lot of *listening*: to the music itself, but also to the, sometimes counterintuitive, messages that non-musical materials have to offer.

Throughout the semester, we will endeavor to cultivate our habits as critical listeners and musical thinkers. To accomplish this task, regular participation and conversation in class will matter a great deal. Additionally, students will be expected to complete a handful of short (1-2 page) and two longer (8-10 page) essays that will make up a final portfolio due at the end of the semester. I will be open to various approaches to these writing assignments, accepting both traditional academic prose and more creative interpretations of the form.

ENGLISH 390S-1-02
SINGLE AMERICAN AUTHOR (TOP) (Seminar) **EMILY DICKINSON**
WF 11:45AM - 1:00PM
Joseph Donahue

The adultery, betrayal, homoeroticism, tragic death and contested estate would make "The Dickinsons of Amherst," were it ever a series, a hit, at least on PBS. Then there's the central figure, Emily Dickinson, who was, there's no polite way to put this, the greatest lyric poet in the English language. This course is an answer to her own question: Dare you see a Soul at the White Heat? To do so, we will read through her extraordinary Collected Poems, some of her letters, and works that influenced her, and that she influenced. We will explore her confrontations with such matters as love, death, belief, the fate of the soul, in those sharp small poems, by turns witty and grave, that aspire to the condition of lightning.

ENGLISH 390S-2-01
SP TOP SINGLE BRIT AUTH (Seminar) **JAMES JOYCE**
MW 3:05PM - 4:20PM
Arthi Vadde

A seminar dedicated to working through and taking pleasure in the stories and novels of James Joyce. We'll study the evolution of Joyce's style and his centrality to the literary movement of modernism. We will read selections from his short story collection *Dubliners*, the entirety of his masterpiece *Ulysses*, and excerpts from the highly experimental *Finnegan's Wake*. We may also read some works of literary theory and criticism in relationship to Joyce's fiction. Joyce is a challenging and paradoxical writer: brainy and bodily, egotistical and insecure, obsessed by his hometown (Dublin) and intent on escaping it. No prior exposure to Joyce is required to take this course or do well in it. What is required is a willingness to read

slowly, to reread, and to take the plunge of discussing a writer who said this about *Ulysses*: "I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that's the only way of insuring one's immortality." Assignments will include a midterm paper (5-7pgs), final paper (10-11pgs), and occasional short posts (1-2pgs) to complement class discussion.

ENGLISH 390S-7-01
SP TOPICS IN LANG & LIT (Seminar)
REMEMBERING THE MIDDLE PASSAGE
WF 1:25PM - 2:40PM
Charlotte Sussman

Where are your monuments, your battles, martyrs?

Where is your tribal memory? Sirs,

in that grey vault. The sea. The sea

has locked them up. The sea is History.

--Derek Walcott

The Middle Passage, the route by which most enslaved persons were brought across the Atlantic to North America, is a crucial element of modern history. Yet it has been notoriously difficult to document or memorialize. For a long time, as Derek Walcott demonstrates, the best access to this history was through the illuminating imagination of a poet or fiction writer. Recently, however, new strategies in history writing, as well as new

digital methods of aggregating data, have rendered aspects of the passage newly intelligible. This course will juxtapose multiple disciplinary approaches to remembering the Middle Passage—literary, historical, theoretical, archival, and digital—with the goal of asking how their intersections can help us understand its foundational role in the modern world. In addition, the course will investigate the project of remembering itself, reading theories of memorialization, and researching the possibility of a deep sea memorial to the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Possible texts for the course include: Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*; Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*; Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano*; Barry Unsworth, *Sacred Hunger*; Nourbese Philip, *Zong!*; Clipping, “The Deep”; Steven Spielberg, *Amistad*.

Students will be evaluated on short analytical papers, position papers, a collaborative research project and a related individual research project.

This course is affiliated with the Representing Migration Humanities Lab and the Data Expeditions program (<https://bigdata.duke.edu/data-expeditions>). A Data Expeditions representative will teach students to work with a data set of shipping routes drawn from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (www.slavevoyages.org). NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN DATA AGGREGATION OR DIGITAL MAPPING IS REQUIRED, though a willingness to learn these methods would be helpful. Students will work on a collaborative project with this data set, then develop individual research projects by placing their findings in the context of imaginative literature

and theories of memorialization to propose new ways of remembering the Middle Passage.

ENGLISH 390S-7-02

SP TOPICS IN LANG & LIT (Seminar)

ALT ASIA/AM WAR HISTORIES

TuTh 3:05PM - 4:20PM

Ryanson Ku

Is reality in the eye of the beholder? Do people who have undergone widely discrepant processes of (racial, gender, sexual, class) subjectivation see different things, indeed live in different worlds? In what ways do cultural disparities and conflictual historical experiences lead to not only different perceptions of reality, but multiple realities? Anchored in two wars—World War II, from which the US emerged as a world power, and the Vietnam War, America’s notoriously “unwinnable war”—this course focuses on Asian/American entanglement and the other worlds to which it gives rise. There are at least two Japans that emerged in World War II: the imperial power that might have conquered the US, as imagined for example in the alternate history of *The Man in the High Castle*; and the lost land of origin that has brought trauma on its “heirs,” the Japanese interned by the US and comfort women in Asia, who have their own stories to tell. Similarly, the story of the Vietnam War, indelible in US memory as indicated by repeated cultural renderings and political debates, has been told exclusively from an American viewpoint. *The Sympathizer*, only recently published, promises to tell another story: not only of the US in Vietnam as seen by the Vietnamese, but of the

Vietnamese in America, indeed of at least two Vietnams. What realities are created by different, even opposing, perspectives like these? What might we learn from alternate (hi)stories about the political functions and ontological power of narrative in its various modes, in fiction, film, poetry, and history? Texts include *World at War*, *The Man in the High Castle*, *No-No Boy*, *Comfort Woman*, *Oro Plata Mata*, *Apocalypse Now*, protest poetry, veteran testimony, *The Pentagon Papers*, the Vietnamese Oral History Project, *The Sympathizer*, and *Maya Lin*. Assignments include weekly written response, comparative analysis, research prospectus, and historical/literary analysis.

ENGLISH 390S-7-03

SP TOPICS IN LANG & LIT (Seminar)

VISUALIZING AND WRITING THE NATURAL WORLD: 1830-1880

MW 1:25PM - 2:40PM

Thomas Pfau

How did Victorian scientists and artists of the early and mid-nineteenth century conceive of the transition from sight to insight; from intuition to conception; from visual attention first captured by natural phenomena to positively grasping their discrete formal organization and their complex interaction? What is the relation between seeing, imaging, writing, and understanding natural phenomena? – The writers and artists we’ll consider are at once post-romantic and, in a certain sense, still pre-modern: “post-romantic” insofar as their focus is no longer on the subjective experience of the natural world; “pre-modern” to the extent that their imaginative and holistic view of nature still predates the grid of disciplines and sub-

specializations found in the modern university. They neither sit in their study engaged in “speculation” about Nature, nor are they found in a lab sifting and analyzing “data.” Instead, for Alexander von Humboldt, Charles Lyell, John Ruskin, Charles Darwin, and the (Austrian) novelist Adalbert Stifter to comprehend natural forms requires patiently gathering, seeing, sketching and, ultimately, writing about them – and to do so in the particular places where these objects are to be found. What are called “data” is inseparable from encountering and visualizing them in their native environment.

Properly to see, sketch, and describe natural forms – flowers, ferns, insects, birds, skeletons, fossils, minerals, geological strata, soil samples, clouds, climate patterns, etc. – was thought to require a synthesis of forensic, analytic, and imaginative capacities. Understanding nature thus appears to call for both, superior visual attention to the morphological particularity of forms and an imaginative grasp of how they came to be and how they interact with one another. Not coincidentally, the years covered by our course witness the emergence of modern ecological awareness, particularly in Humboldt and Ruskin. For all the writers and artists we’ll consider, emphasis on the *particularity* of the visible, natural world is inseparable from searching for the universal laws, or single Law, to which individual forms owe their very existence and their distinctive formal organization.

Among the materials we will consider are selections from the following: J. W. v. Goethe, *Botanical Writings*, Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos*, Book I (1845-59); Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833); Charles Darwin, selections from his Notebooks (1836-1838); selections from volumes I and II of

Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1843-1860); short prose fiction by the Austrian writer Adalbert Stifter, in particular his astounding novella *Rock-Crystal* (1847), and the Notebooks and poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Additionally, we will also study concurrent developments in pre-Raphaelite painting and drawing.

REQUIREMENTS: 1 in-class report; 1 response paper (~ 1,000 words); 1 medium-length essay (~ 3,500 words); consistent attendance & active participation.

ENGLISH 390S-7-05
SP TOPICS IN LANG & LIT (Seminar)
MUSIC & AFRICAN-AMERICAN LIT
TuTh 11:45AM - 1:00PM
Jarvis McInnis

This course explores the rich interplay between sound and literature in African-American letters. Historically denied the right to literacy and education, African-Americans utilized sound, primarily music and orature, as a mode of protest and an expression of freedom, subjectivity, and citizenship. We will examine how African-American writers have drawn on this rich musical tradition to make political claims about race, gender, class, region, nation, and cultural identity. Alongside musical genres such as blues, jazz, gospel, rock n' roll, and hip hop, we will examine non-musical modes of sonic expression—e.g., laughter, oratory, performance poetry, screams, yells, grunts, and noise.

ENGLISH 420S-01
ADV WORKSHOP WTG. POETRY (Seminar)
W 3:05PM - 5:35PM
Nathaniel Mackey

Advanced Writing Workshops build on the work done at the intermediate level, and are intended for the most well-prepared and gifted creative writing students. Pre-requisite: English 320S or consent of the instructor if prior work merits admission to the class (as judged by the instructor).

ENGLISH 482S-01
CONTEMPORARY THEORY (Seminar)
MW 1:25PM - 2:40PM
Leonard Tennenhouse

This course investigates some of the most important modern theoretical explanations of the relationship between literature and society. At the heart of all the theoretical models you will encounter in this course, lies the question of mediation: Does literature--or any work of art, for that matter--reflect what is actually out there? Does it produce what we consider to be real? Or does it operate in some middle ground between reflection and production? Together, we'll examine major theoretical statements that address these concerns from a variety of perspectives. Using select works of literature, we will consider whether they lend themselves to one or another of these models or resist them: What happens when we use one model versus another model to read with?

ENGLISH 490-7-01

SP TOP LIT/OTHER ARTS (Lecture)

SHAPE OF WATER: FORM/LESSNESS

TuTh 10:05AM - 11:20AM

Ranjana Khanna

This course follows the annual theme of the Franklin Humanities Institute, which this year is WATER. The 2017 movie, "The Shape of Water," will be the starting point of our investigations to consider, first, what water means in that film, and second, what it means to give water shape, how that shape is rendered, and what formal aspects of art and literature move, like water, between form and formlessness. Form and formlessness are, of course, essential aspects of any artistic and cultural production, and we will explore this through various works of literature, film, and art that have water as their central element. What does water do for them? What are the aesthetics of water? and how do we understand the aquatic variously as element, force, life-source, backdrop, limit, border, space, and place? From our largely terracentric view of the world, we sometimes neglect to see how water has also been given shape. This course will foreground the aquatic.

Class will be supplemented by some optional events at the Franklin Humanities Institute on the theme of water.

Texts will include: Films: Guillermo del Toro, *The Shape of Water* (2017); Deepa Mehta, *Water* (2005); Roman Polanski, *Knife in the Water* (1962); Art Installations: Isaac Julien, *Small*

Boats; John Akomfrah, *Vertigo Sea*; Novels: Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide*; Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*; Poetry: Derek Walcott, *Omeros*; and many other texts.

The course will address how we have become accustomed to understanding change on land through documenting the way land is ploughed, built up, organized, and enclosed in ways that we can easily document changes in civilization. We will be studying how civilizational shifts in our understanding of water, and the aquatic, are reflected in the arts. Even as we may understand water to be unchangeable, inexhaustible, impervious in some ways, the course will examine how it has been given shape in various moments.

ENGLISH 590S-1-01

SP TOP SEMINAR I (Seminar) **LIT & ORIGINS OF CAPITALISM**

W 12:00PM - 2:30PM

Julianne Werlin

The origins of capitalism has long been the subject of controversy, with everything from its timing and geography to its economic and cultural basis up for debate. Did capitalism arise gradually, as a consequence of the medieval growth in trade and technology? Or was it a sudden cataclysm, emerging from a unique and relatively short-lived set of conditions in the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth centuries? Was capitalism the result of the birth of global trade, impelled by the momentous effects of imperialism and colonialism? Or can its origin be traced to internal conditions within Europe – or

indeed, within England alone? Was it an urban phenomenon, most keenly realized within growing entrepôts? Or was it, rather, driven by the conditions of labor and ownership in the countryside among the vast majority of the population who still worked the land?

Such debates are not merely of interest to specialists in the period, but have implications for our understanding of modern economics, politics, and culture. They are particularly salient for literary history. The rise of literary markets, the invention of copyright, and the mass production of books, pamphlets and newspapers, which transformed reading and writing, must be understood as part of a wider pattern of economic development. At the same time, literary texts provide important insights into the new social and political values that arose in the course of early modernity.

This class will introduce some of the major works of the 'transition debate' as well as literature and literary scholarship. We will read works of theory and history, including Marx, Weber, Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein, Christopher Hill, Perry Anderson, Robert Brenner, and Ellen Wood, as well as recent works of economic history by scholars such as S.R. Epstein, Craig Muldrew, Alexandra Shepherd, and Jan de Vries. Our primary texts will include *Utopia*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Locke's Second Treatise*, and *Robinson Crusoe*.

ENGLISH 590S-2-01
SP TOP SEMINAR (Seminar) **BESTSELLERS & BOMBS AM LIT**
Th 3:05PM - 5:35PM
Michael D'Alessandro

Best-Sellers and Bombs in Nineteenth-Century American Literature

In 1855, Nathaniel Hawthorne famously wrote, "America is now given over to a damned mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash." Of course, it wasn't just women writers working in the sentimental mode who were crowding Hawthorne out of the marketplace. Popular works of sensation literature, often written by exposé journalists and hack authors, often sold hundreds of thousands of copies by offering readers vicarious thrills about America's hidden underbelly. While writers like Hawthorne, Poe, and particularly Melville often struggled to find readerships with "trash" literature circulating, these renowned authors occasionally borrowed from such pulpy genres in attempts to sell books. This course is an investigation of the canonized writers—whose works are lauded now but were often ignored upon first release. But it is also an examination of forgotten popular authors—whose texts dominated the marketplace in the nineteenth century but are only recently being taken seriously by literary critics. In addition to a full-length novel that anchors each week, secondary criticism focuses on print culture and history of the book.

Works will include Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Alcott's *Little Women*, and Crane's *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*. Evaluation will include class participation, two oral presentations, and a final term paper.

Counts for Area II requirements

ENGLISH 590S-3-01
SP TOP SEMINAR III (Seminar) **CONTEMPORARY BLACK SOUTH**
Tu 4:40PM - 7:10PM
Jarvis McInnis

“The South Got Something to Say”: Representing the Contemporary Black South in Literature & Pop Culture

This course explores contemporary representations of the Black US South in African American literature and culture. While more than ninety percent of African Americans lived in the US South in the early 20th century, by the 1970s, more than fifty percent had fled the region, pushed by the persistent threat of anti-black violence and oppression and pulled by the promise of better socioeconomic opportunities in the North, West, and Midwest. Following the legislative gains of the Civil Rights Movement and “northern” urban decline, however, the 1990s witnessed a reverse migration, such that more than fifty percent of black Americans now reside in the South. This demographic shift has produced a cultural shift—a black southern renaissance, if you will, whereby contemporary artists and scholars are reimagining the region as a viable present and future for black Americans, even as they continue to grapple with its tortured past.

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.

Questions we may take up include: How does the contemporary Black South inform current Black Studies debates regarding Afro-pessimism, Black Optimism, and Black Mysticism? How do the spectres of slavery, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights continue to haunt the physical and psychic landscapes of the region? How does the urban south challenge predominant depictions of the region as primarily rural and homogeneous? What is the relationship between race, region, and ecology in the afterlife of the plantation and sharecropping? Specifically, how do contemporary black southerners view farming, agriculture, and food and environmental justice? How is the South imagined as a space of black vitality and futurity in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?

This course will culminate in a two-day conference on the art and politics of the contemporary Black South, scheduled for early fall 2019.

ENGLISH 590S-3-02
SP TOP SEMINAR III (Seminar) **CULTURE, CIVILIZATION, WORLD**
W 3:05PM - 5:35PM
Corina Stan

Two important novels were published in 2015: Michel Houellebecq's *Soumission* (*Submission*) and Jenny Erpenbeck's *Gehen, ging, gegangen* (*Go, Went, Gone*)—the first about the “end of the West”, ushered in by the electoral victory of a Muslim president in France in 2022; the second about the irrelevance of the cultural foundations of European identity (Greek philosophy, Roman law, and Judeo-Christian morality) exposed in the mismanagement of the refugee crisis. Although set in the near future, Houellebecq's novel paradoxically remains attached to the past: “Eurabia” restores France its lost imperial greatness at the expense of its core liberal values, of its own cultural identity; France, and with it Europe, *submits* to Islam, in a soft “clash of civilizations” from which only one can emerge victorious. Erpenbeck's novel, by contrast, carefully cultivates an “ethics of now”: it revisits the past of colonialism in order to anchor itself firmly in the present, through an attunement of worlds—not the submission of a civilization to another, but a *surrender* to the realization of a shared vulnerability generated by global migration. The publication of *Submission* on 7 January 2015 coincided with the *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attacks, a sinister preface to the refugee crisis that followed, dramatized in *Go, Went, Gone*. These novels' cultural diagnoses, their remedial scenarios, and the nexus of terrorism and immigration highlight an important question: how does global migration affect cultural pessimism in the West?

Using these two novels as points of departure, this course examines the history of the uses of “culture” and “civilization”, and, in relation to this history, the emergence of “world literature” (*Weltliteratur*). Our approach to the distinction established by Kant between “Kultur” and “Zivilisation” will be interdisciplinary and cross-cultural, with readings including Petronius's *Satyricon*, Schiller, Diderot, Herder, Nietzsche, Arnold, Freud, Elias, Spengler, Marcuse, Hall, Said, Fukuyama and Huntington. Possible topics include: the uses of “culture” in the discourse of “Bildung”; the relationship between Romanticism, decadence and modernism; the anthropological critique of modernist elitism; the discourse on culture by British Left intellectuals; the so-called “cultural turn” in debates on multiculturalism; the emergence of postcolonial studies, Orientalism vs. Occidentalism. These debates will provide a broad context for considering the history of “world literature”, a discipline that, in the past two decades, has tended to replace “comparative literature.” Possible readings include Goethe, Auerbach, Casanova, Beecroft, Appiah, Apter, Damrosch, Stanford Friedman, Cheah, Siraj Ahmed, and others. Along the way, we'll watch films like Fellini's adaptation of *Satyricon*, Sokurov's *The Russian Ark*, Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*, and read some fictional texts (Mircea Eliade's *Youth without Youth*, and possibly Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being*).

Over the course of the semester, students will work on producing a conference paper, including an abstract, an annotated bibliography, and the paper itself.