ENGLISH 582S-01/LITERATURE 681S-01
SEMINAR:
WITTGENSTEIN & LITERARY THEORY
Monday 1:25 – 3:55PM
Toril Moi

ENGLISH 590S-1-01
SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR:
MODERNISM, PHILOSOPHY, ARTS & LITERATURE
Thursday 3:05 – 5:35PM
Corina Stan

This course explores modernism as a rich mosaic of intermedial aesthetic practices, focusing closely on intersections between music, visual, and literary arts: Auguste Rodin and R. M. Rilke, Stéphane Mallarmé and Claude Débussy, the artists who frequented Gertrude Stein’s salon in Paris, Stravinsky and Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, the changing figure of Pierrot in works by Watteau, Picasso, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Marcel Carné, Jules Laforgue, T. S. Eliot, and Arnold Schoenberg, expressionist cinema, painting and opera (including Robert Wiene, Edvard Munch, and Alban Berg). Students will have the opportunity to map out the avant-garde across the arts, from Symbolism and Impressionism, through Futurism, Surrealism, Dada, including non-Western texts such as Oswaldo de Andrade’s Cannibalist Manifesto in conversation with the paintings of Wifredo Lam, and Aimé
Césaire’s Notebook of a Return to the Native Land in the context of nègritude. The seminar takes these artifacts of European high culture and non-Western works as expressions of dissatisfaction with an Enlightenment project that failed to deliver on its promises, placing them in conversation with the philosophical reflection on modernity from Friedrich Nietzsche and Richard Wagner to Robert Pippin, Edward Said, and Simon Glendinning, including Max Weber, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Our aim will be to understand modernism as a philosophical and artistic project, and how accounts of modernism have changed over the past century and a half, from its own practitioners all the way to the New Modernist Studies.

ENGLISH 590S-1-02
SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR:
BIOGRAPHICAL METHODS / LITERARY HISTORY
Wednesday 3:05PM – 5:35PM
Julianne Werlin

Despite the well-publicized death of the author, authors remain a key organizing category of literary study. This course will discuss some of the most persistent and puzzling questions about the nature of the author and authorship and attempt to pose a few new ones. We will survey a range of theoretical approaches to authorship, spanning historical periods – from Plato to Dante to Barthes and Foucault. This broad historical sweep will allow us to consider the impact of developments in the history of writing and culture. For example, we will ask how a range of media, from print to new media, have altered authorship? We will consider the effects of national literary cultures, as well as state control. To what extent was authorship, as Foucault claimed, the invention of regimes of censorship? How did authorial copyright again reshape the rights and position of the author? What was the impact of modern modes of fame and celebrity? What marks the limits of authorship – are translators authors? Are editors?

Throughout the course, we will consider not only how the category of authorship was reconceived across historical periods, but also reflect on the changing set of authors. That is, how has the idea of authorship been shaped by the question of who gets to be an author in the first place? How did the category of authorship change when it expanded to include significant numbers of women, for example?

In addition to introducing a theoretical literature and core set of questions, this class will involve a significant independent research component, designed to allow students to pursue their own interests in authorship, literary scholarship, or literary writing.
We will also use our study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century aesthetic theory and aesthetics as a means for developing a schematic history of key movements within twentieth and twenty-first literary criticism. We will use, for early, early twentieth-century New Critical interpretations of Romantic poets as a means for understanding the implicit aesthetic theory of New Criticism, and then compare these to the interpretations and implicit aesthetic theories of subsequent critical movements that have engaged Romantic literature, including deconstruction, “cultural capital” approaches, feminism, critical race theory, and ecocriticism. (This course thus represents a first response—albeit one altered somewhat by departmental scheduling needs for a spring course that focuses on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—for requests for an “introduction to the history of literary criticism in the twentieth century” course.)
This seminar is motivated by a skeptical, yet ultimately reparative, critique of contemporary queer theory (whatever that might be). In spite of (or, perhaps, thanks to) its best efforts to promote queerness as an expansive, non-teleological category of being, the shadow of identitarianism remains. Notwithstanding the fact that the term “queer” refers to styles that are, in and of themselves, off-putting and singular, there are theoretical and political ways of representing queerness that are more conventional and normalizing. As a result of this, historical forms and expressions of homosexuality that do not satisfy present queer theoretical models have fallen between the cracks.

With apologies to M. Foucault and his descendants, our approach will sidestep the usual stops along the route that we take when taking a trip back through the history of sexuality. We will also be careful not to indulge in too much nostalgia or sentimentality, avoiding the trap door of a positivist gay history.

Focusing mostly on America in the second half of the Twentieth Century, we will look at figures that either pre-date or otherwise unsettle presentist models of queerness. These individuals will jump out to us as nothing other than absolutely remarkable and totally homosexual. In remembrance of a time before queerness or the LGBTQ+ umbrella, our work will recall homosexuality as the original blanket term for failed and strange sexual personalities of every stripe.

The course will offer up fiction, film, music, biography, memoir and the academic prose (aka “theory”) that will best aid us in our effort to appreciate the homosexual past. Our manner of approach will seek to recuperate the antique and read with the grain of the anarchic and anachronistic. We will neither avoid nor make excuses for the problematic, but will recall that queerness is always and already difficult. In a spirit of critical conviviality, we will return to the present moment ready to enrich the queer theoretical project with the memory of its strange and still living homosexual past.

*This is a course open to graduate and advanced undergraduate students. Graduate students will be expected to complete a traditional seminar paper and participate as discussants throughout the semester. Undergraduates will be asked to complete two shorter essays and participate in class discussions.

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ENGLISH 890S-01
SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR:
TRAGEDY: SHAKESPEARE & MILTON
Thursday 1:40PM – 4:10PM
Sarah Beckwith, David Aers

In this course, we explore different forms of tragedy in works by William Shakespeare and John Milton. What, we will ask, are the relations between different forms of tragedy? Between drama and epic poetry, and between drama written for performance and drama not intended for the stage? What difference does Christian teaching make in the writing of tragedy? We begin the class with Shakespeare, and you should come to the first class having already read closely and thought carefully about both Macbeth and Hamlet. From Shakespeare, we will move to Milton's Paradise Lost and his Samson Agonistes. Because Paradise Lost is a long and complex work, you should also read this poem before the course begins.

The set texts for the class are as follows:


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 our experience, laptops act as an impediment to the kinds of attention and communication we consider essential to a flourishing seminar. Also, 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-02 / LIT. 890S-01
SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR:
READING FREUDO-MARXISM
Thursday 1:25PM – 3:55PM
Catherine Reilly
ENGLISH 890S-03
SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR:
H.D. & ROBERT DUNCAN
Tuesday 12:00PM – 2:30PM
Nathaniel Mackey

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

ENGLISH 890S-04
SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR:
NOVEL THEORY
Monday 4:40PM – 7:10PM
Nancy Armstrong, Anne Garréta

This course begins by considering a long and robust tradition of critical theory focused on the novel with these questions in mind: Why does the attempt to think about the modern world in dialectical terms encounter some kind of historical limit where that thinking stalls or breaks down? On what basis do novels nevertheless continue to be written, taught in classrooms, and circulated for the pleasure and edification of literate populations? The uneven development of theory and fiction in this respect invites us to go back to the founders of novel theory—Georg Lukács and Mikhail Bakhtin—and see whether their respective concepts of the novel form still provides intelligibility of late twentieth and twenty-first century fiction. The last third of the course will turn the tables on theory. Reading certain critical concepts through the lens of the novel, we want to consider whether novels have taken up the task of critical theory where it seems to falter and how they ask us to modify our critical thinking accordingly.

Required reading:

NOVELS: Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe, Gustave Flaubert’s Madame Bovary, Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway, and Orhan Pamuk’s The Museum of Innocence.

THEORETICAL TEXTS:

Mikhail Bakhtin’s The Dialogic Imagination; Geog Lukács’s Theory of the Novel; Roland Barthes’s S/Z; Frederic Jameson’s Antinomies of Realism; Roger Chartier’s The Order of the Book;
and essays by Genette, Lévi-Strauss, Althusser, Greimas, Benjamin, Foucault, Schor, and McGurl.

ENGLISH 996
TEACHING COLLEGE ENGLISH (Workshop)
Charlotte Sussman

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

CLASS OF INTEREST – NOT CROSSLISTED WITH ENGLISH

ARTSVIS 571S / DANCE 561S / LIT 525S / VMS 571S
ART AS WORK: VALUING LABOR IN THE ARTS
Monday 3:05PM – 5:45PM
Sarah Wilbur

Interdisciplinary seminar on work, working identities, and workplace performances in the arts. Enrolled graduates and advanced undergraduates review theories of artistic production, labor, and value across the analytical traditions of cultural labor studies, critical race and feminist studies, dance and performance studies. Analysis of dominant representations of arts labor and entrepreneurship from arts management, administration and policy discourse. Our goal is to highlight institutional pressures that constrain enabling environments for the arts. Culminating research projects analyze and interpret local arts workworlds, including but necessarily students' own.