## Graduate Courses in English 2018-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eng 410</td>
<td>Introduction to Graduate Study</td>
<td>Evans, Kasey</td>
<td>Monday 2:00-5:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 412</td>
<td>Studies in Drama</td>
<td>Manning, Susan</td>
<td>Wednesday 2:00-5:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 422</td>
<td>Studies in Medieval Literature</td>
<td>Breen, Katy</td>
<td>Monday 2:00-5:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 431</td>
<td>Studies in 16th-Century Literature</td>
<td>Phillips, Susie</td>
<td>Tuesday 2:00-5:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 441</td>
<td>Studies in 18th-Century Literature</td>
<td>Wall, Wendy</td>
<td>Tuesday 2:00-5:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 455</td>
<td>Studies in Victorian Literature &amp; Theory</td>
<td>Thompson, Helen</td>
<td>Thursday 2:00-5:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 461</td>
<td>Studies in Contemporary Literature</td>
<td>Lane, Christopher</td>
<td>Thursday 2:00-5:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 471</td>
<td>Studies in American Literature</td>
<td>Froula, Christine</td>
<td>Johnson, Rebecca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 481</td>
<td>Studies in Literary Theory &amp; Criticism</td>
<td>Stern, Betsy</td>
<td>Wednesday 2:00-5:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following pages list graduate courses on offer in English and related university programs. With permission of the Director of Graduate Studies, graduate students may enroll in 300-level courses which have been approved for graduate credit.
English 431
Studies in 16th-Century Literature

Experiments in Renaissance Poetry: Methods and Making
Knowledge, with Help from Hester Pulter

Wendy Wall
Tuesday 2:00-5:00

How might a remarkable, recently re-discovered manuscript of poems serve as the entry point for exploring Renaissance poetry? For grappling with crucial methodological issues in literary studies? How do current scholarly approaches inform narratives about intellectual production of the past? How do literary works materialize for readers within particular literary histories, intellectual frameworks, editorial practices, and modes of anthologizing?

In this skills-based seminar, participants will read 17th-century poetry (by Shakespeare, Donne, Marvell, Bradstreet, Herbert, and Phillips) and select key research areas to investigate (e.g., astronomy, alchemy, poetics, melancholy, religious debates, devotional writing, race, physiology, pastoral, elegy, complaint, women’s writing, political protest). As an entry into thinking about how to “make knowledge,” we will perform experiments on how the religious, elegiac, personal, and scientific poems of a little known writer named Hester Pulter offers an occasion for thinking about how poetry enters a canon (that is we will discuss methodological debates surrounding editing, digitalization and anthologization).

Experiments might include: contextualizing a group of poems (by various authors) in an array of visual and textual materials of the period; transcribing and editing poems two ways; and/or creating competing ways to insert poems into existing (or imagined) anthologies. To prepare for these experiments, we will dive into scholarship on editing, poetics, authorship, genre studies, media studies (manuscript, print and digital), and knowledge formation.

English 455
Studies in Victorian Literature

George Eliot

Christopher Lane
Thursday 2:00-5:00

This course will read against the accepted tradition of the American Revolution as an essentially rational, Lockean, and non-terroristic Revolution. We will examine American Revolutionary writing as a rhetorical battlefield in which a multiplicity of voices and a plurality of forms—history, letters, notes, autobiography, novel, epic, lyric, pamphlet, and journalistic piece—struggled over the cultural and political formation of America and the American.

We shall pay particular attention to the rhetorics of Revolution—the language, images, myths, and forms through which the American Revolution and the American republic were imagined and constituted in and through writing. We shall focus in particular on sites of contest, contradiction, resistance, and taboo in Revolutionary writing: the representation of “citizens” and “others”; conflicts between reason and passion, liberty and slavery, civilization and savage, progress and blood; anxieties about nature, the body, gender, human psychology, race, and madness; the terrors of democracy, mob violence, slave insurrection, for political reform; marriage and women’s social roles; aesthetics and the impersonal scope of the imagination; providentialism and the limits of tolerance and faith.

Teaching Method: seminar-style discussion, focusing intensively on passages and background arguments.

Evaluation Method: weekly response papers (one of them a literary analysis), class presentation, a research-driven essay, and in-class participation.

Primary Texts (available at Norris Center Bookstore and in order of use):
- George Eliot, *The Lifted Veil* and *Brother Jacob* (ISBN 0199555052);
- *The Mill on the Floss* (ISBN 9780141439624);
- *Silas Marner* (ISBN 9780141439754);
- *Romola* (ISBN 0140434704);
- *Middlemarch* (ISBN 0141439548);
- *Daniel Deronda* (ISBN 0140434275);
- *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (ISBN 9781505811810);

Please follow the editions assigned; comparable pagination will greatly advance our discussions.

English 471
Studies in American Literature

*Betsy Erkkilä*

Wednesday 2:00-5:00

This course will read against the accepted tradition of the American Revolution as an essentially rational, Lockean, and non-terroristic Revolution. We will examine American Revolutionary writing as a rhetorical battlefield in which a multiplicity of voices and a plurality of forms—history, letters, notes, autobiography, novel, epic, lyric, pamphlet, and journalistic piece—struggled over the cultural and political formation of America and the American.

We shall pay particular attention to the rhetorics of Revolution—the language, images, myths, and forms through which the American Revolution and the American republic were imagined and constituted in and through writing. We shall focus in particular on sites of contest, contradiction, resistance, and taboo in Revolutionary writing: the representation of “citizens” and “others”; conflicts between reason and passion, liberty and slavery, civilization and savage, progress and blood; anxieties about nature, the body, gender, human psychology, race, and madness; the terrors of democracy, mob violence, slave insurrection,
and political faction; and debates about the excesses of language, print, and representation itself. We shall read relevant political and cultural theory—from Locke and Kant to Nancy Fraser, Gilroy, and the Frankfurt school—and consider various past and recent contests about the meaning of the American Revolution.

**Evaluation Method:** Book review/oral presentation on a major critical, historical, or theoretical work (3-4 pages); critical essay on a subject of the student’s choosing (10-12 pages); Canvas postings; class participation.

**Texts will include:**
- Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence and selections from *Notes on the State of Virginia*;
- Phillis Wheatley, *Poems*;
- Samson Occom, *Selected Writings*;
- Thomas Paine: *Common Sense*;
- Abigail and John Adams: *Selected Letters*;
- Benjamin Franklin *Autobiography*;
- Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur: *Letters from an American Farmer*;
- Charles Brockden Brown: *Edgar Huntly; or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*;
- Royall Tyler: *The Algerine Captive*;
- selected critical and theoretical essays.

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**English 481/GSS 490**

**Studies in Literary Theory & Criticism**

*Queer Theory & Queer Cinema*

Nick Davis  
Thursday 2:00-5:00

“Queer theory” and “New Queer Cinema” were two neologisms born of the same early-1990s moment in Anglophone academia, artistry, and activism. Both saw themselves as extending but also complicating the intellectual, aesthetic, and ideological parameters of prior formations like “gay and lesbian studies” or “LGBT film.” These new and spreading discourses stoked each other’s productive advances. Scholars developed and illustrated new axioms through the medium of the movies, while filmmakers rooted their stories and images in changing notions of gender performativity, counter-historiography, and coalitional politics. Still, queer theory and queer cinema faced similar skepticisms: did their ornate language and conceptual novelty endow dissident sexualities with newfound political, cultural, and philosophical stature, or did they retreat too far from daily lives, mainstream tastes, and ongoing public emergencies? Did “queer” enable elastic identification and coalition among subjects with a wide range of sexual and gendered identities, or did the term reproduce the demographic and discursive hierarchies it claimed to deconstruct? Was the lack of fixed definitions, consensus ideals, or shared aesthetic practices a boon or a harm in sustaining a long-term movement of art, action, or thought?

This class will explore some decisive shifts as critical theory and narrative film reclaimed “queer” as a boundary-breaking paradigm, in the pivotal era of *Gender Trouble*, *Epistemology of the Closet*, *Tongues Untied*, and *Paris Is Burning*. We will recover scholarly and cinematic trends that laid indispensable groundwork for these queer turns and will also track the subsequent careers of “queer” in the way we perform readings, perceive bodies, record histories, imagine psyches, form alliances, enter archives, and orient ourselves in space and time. Diversities of race, class, and gender identity will constantly inflect our understandings of “queer” and even challenge the presumed primacy of sexuality as the key referent for that term. Participants will develop skills of close-reading films as films and engage nimbly with the overarching claims but also the curious nuances, anomalies, and paradoxes in the scholarship we read. (This seminar satisfies a core requirement toward the Graduate Certificate in Gender & Sexuality Studies.)

**Teaching Method:** Seminar-based discussions

**Evaluation Method:** Mid-quarter essay (7-8 pages); final essay (15-20 pages); shorter writing assignments along the way, including reading and viewing responses; graded participation in seminar


**Assigned films will likely include:**
- *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931);
- *Laura* (1944);
- *Born in Flames* (1983);
- *Looking for Langston* (1989);
- *Tongues Untied* (1989);
- *Paris Is Burning* (1990);
- *Edward II* (1991);
Winter Quarter

English 422
Studies in Medieval Literature
The Theory and Practice of Allegory
Katy Breen        Monday 2:00-5:00

This class will aim to produce an account of personification allegory in and beyond the Middle Ages. To this end, we will read a number of influential early allegorical works, including Prudentius’ gruesome Psychomachia, Boethius’ stately Consolation of Philosophy, Chaucer’s comical Parliament of Fowles, and Langland’s politically volatile Piers Plowman. In general terms, how are the personifications in these texts “good to think with”? What kinds of work do they do that mimetic characters do not? More specifically, what ontological status do these texts accord their personifications? Are they more or less “real” than the fictive persons and authorial personae with whom they interact? Is personification itself a relatively homogenous category, or can we distinguish important subtypes? What different reading practices might these subtypes allow or encourage? In answering these questions, we will consider the wide range of metaphysical and epistemological systems current in the Middle Ages, from Augustine’s Platonism to Aquinas’ moderate realism to Ockham’s nominalism, along with a selection of theoretical texts dealing specifically with personification (de Man, Kantorowicz, Cicero, etc.). Taken together, these shared texts will provide a rich conceptual background for students’ final presentations and papers, which may consider either medieval or post-medieval allegorical works.

English 461, sec 20
Studies in Contemporary Literature
Rethinking Literary Modernism
Christine Froula        Tuesday 2:00-5:00

“Elitist”; “obscurantist”; “formalist”; “autonomous” with respect to its surrounding social worlds: what’s wrong with this picture? Against the outdated view that a “formalist” modernism, “autonomous” in respect to social reality, superseded and opposed “realist” modes of aesthetic representation, we’ll begin with the premise that modernist realisms generate their innovative forms in order to bear witness to historical actualities and human experience in the rapidly shrinking world of the early twentieth century. In an era of accelerating technological change, racialized imperialism, machine warfare, and tremendous social upheaval across national borders, all fueled and/or provoked by capitalist expansion, there emerged worldly, engaged, groundbreaking modernist artworks by such boundary-crossing international artists as the Norwegian Ibsen, the Anglo-Indian Kipling, the Polish Conrad witnessing the depredation of Congo by Belgium’s King Leopold; the “semicolonial” or postcolonial Irish Yeats, Joyce and Beckett, Caribbean Jean Rhys, New Zealander Katherine Mansfield; Americans expatriates Pound and Eliot; and English-born travelers D. H, Lawrence and Virginia Woolf--both critical “outsiders within” their native Britain.

We’ll begin with Ibsen’s influential play A Doll’s House, which helped to launch modernism’s critical struggle against the nineteenth-century imperative that art offer “moral uplift” to confirm the existing social order. Then, depending on class members’ background and interests, we’ll study later moments of that critical struggle, choosing such works as Kipling’s Kim, Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, Mansfield’s “An Indiscreet Journey,” Yeats’s “The Second Coming,” Joyce’s “The Dead” and Ulysses’s “Penelope” episode, Eliot’s Waste Land, Toomer’s Cane, Lawrence’s “Odor of Chrysanthemums,” Woolf’s Between the Acts, passages of Pound’s Pisan Cantos, Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, and Rhys’s Wide Sargasso Sea to put in dialogue with selected secondary texts.

Evaluation: active, informed participation in discussion, weekly reading posts, a class presentation, and a seminar project or paper, which may be a critical essay, a research project, or a creative project.
English 481/RTVF 443, sec 21
Studies in Literary Theory & Criticism
Ordinary Media
Jim Hodge
Thursday 2:00-5:00

This seminar examines the aesthetics and culture of always-on computing, the contemporary technological milieu defined by the popular emergence of smartphones, wireless networks, and social media since the mid-2000s. Departing from alarmist accounts in the popular press about smartphone and internet addiction (and other horribles), our point of entry onto this topic will be ordinariness, a concept variously articulated in ordinary language philosophy (Cavell), habit (Ravaisson, Chun), queer / affect theory (Sedgwick, Stewart, Ngai, Berlant), psychoanalysis (Freud, Ogden) and media theory (Cohen, Richmond). Depending on class interest we may also consider format theory (Sterne on the MP3, Gitelman on the PDF) and Foucault’s writings on techniques of the self and neoliberalism. Ordinariness has different meanings in all these works but we will remain attentive to it as way into thinking the dynamics of habitual experience in an age when the rapid development of new technologies and aesthetic genres force us daily into new “habits” of adjustment and attunement to the flux of networked life.

Artists and writers to be discussed may include Frances Stark, Claudia Rankine, Tan Lin, David OReilly, Faith Holland, Thomson and Craighead, Martine Syms, Lorna Mills, and others.

English 422
Studies in Medieval Literature
Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales"
Susie Phillips
Tuesday 2:00-5:00

From the fifteenth-century glossators to twenty-first century critics, readers of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales have sought to interpret and contain this constantly shifting text. The poem poses numerous interpretative puzzles—the “correct” order of the tales, the identity of their tellers, the objects of the poem’s irony, the politics of its author, and the demographics of its intended audience, to name a few—puzzles that have been “solved” in strikingly different ways at different historical moments. This course takes as its subject the Canterbury Tales and its reception history, exploring in detail both the poem and its multiple interpretative contexts. As we read the Tales, we will consider the narratives (and narrative conventions) that Chaucer transforms and the contemporary voices with whom he is in dialogue. We will investigate the ways in which the tales circulated both individually and as a collection (which tales were the most popular? how and by whom were they published? with which other texts did they travel?) and analyze the various paratexts that accompanied them (glosses, prologues, illustrations, and “spurious” links and tales). Along with the early publication context, we will explore recent Chaucer criticism and the scholarly history to which it responds (old and new historicist approaches, Marxist and exegetical analysis, psychoanalytic, feminist and queer theory readings, etc.) By the end of the course, students will be proficient in both Chaucer criticism and Chaucer’s Middle English.

Texts will include: the Riverside Chaucer, or The Canterbury Tales (ed. Jill Mann)

Texts will be available at Beck’s Book Store

English 441
Studies in 18th-Century Literature
Enlightenment, Sex, Violence and Consent
Helen Thompson
Thursday 2:00-5:00

This seminar will examine foundational liberal articulations of feminine sexual consent—as well as their historical, political, philosophical, and corporeal failings. From the perspective of political theory, feminist legal studies, feminist and queer theory, and literary history, we will track the con-
A tentative, non-exhaustive list of texts (some of which will be chapters or excerpts):

- Anonymous, Prostitute Narratives
- Mary Astell, Some Reflections on Marriage
- Penelope Aubin, The Noble Slave
- Wendy Brown, States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity
- John Cleland, Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure
- Kimberlé Crenshaw, Close Encounters of Three Kinds: On Teaching Dominance Feminism and Intersectionality
- Daniel Defoe, Roxana
- Eliza Haywood, Fantomina and/or Love in Excess
- Frances Ferguson, Rape and the Rise of the Novel
- Janet Halley, The Move to Affirmative Consent
- Saidiya Hartman, Scenes of Subjection
- Annamarie Jagose, Orgasmology
- Mary Hays, The Victim of Prejudice
- Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan
- Laura Kipnis, Unwanted Advances
- John Locke, Two Treatises of Government
- Catharine MacKinnon, From Practice to Theory, or What is a White Woman Anyway?
- Carole Pateman, The Sexual Contract
- Samuel Richardson, Clarissa (abridged format)
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile (Chapter 5)
- Wendy Warren, “The Cause of Her Grief”: The Rape of a Slave in Early New England
- Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary or Maria
- Elizabeth Keckley, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861)
- Julia Collins, The Curse of a Caste (1865)
- 30 Years a Slave
- The Noble Slaves
- The Garies and Their Friends
- Harriet Wilson, Our Nig (1859)
- Frank Webb, The Garies and Their Friends (1859)
- Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861)
- Harriet Wilson, Our Nig (1859)
- Frank Webb, The Garies and Their Friends (1859)
- Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861)
- Julia Collins, The Curse of a Caste (1865)
- Elizabeth Keckley, 30 Years a Slave (1868)
- Frances Harper, Iola Leroy (1892)
Pauline Hopkins, either *Contending Forces* (1900) or *Of One Blood* (1903);
Deborah Willis & Barbara Krauthamer, *Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery* (2012);