HAVERFORD COLLEGE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

SPRING 2018 COURSE GUIDE

Containing descriptions of readings, approaches and course conduct for all department offerings.
Major Requirements:
Admission to the major requires completion of at least two courses, one at the 100 level and 1-2 at the 200 level, by the end of the sophomore year; note: ENGL 150L may be counted as one 200-level course (since its rubrics are in line with 200-level materials).

In the total major requires eleven credits, including a .5 credit tutorial (298j) as part of Junior Seminar. Not 399F and 399B comprise a 1.5 credit course taken over the full senior year.

- Seven courses at the 100, 200 and 300 levels of which
  - At least two must be in literature written before 1800;
  - At least two in literature written after 1800;
  - At least one (and no more than two) must be at the 100 level; a minimum of two, preferably three, must be at the 200 level (150L counts); and a minimum of two must be at the 300 level.
- ENGL 298 and 299, the two-semester Junior Seminar in English
- ENGL 298J, the .5 credit yearlong Junior Seminar in English
- ENGL 399F (Fall) and 399B (Spring) for a total of 1.5 credit Senior Conference

Note: The department will give major credit for one credit for one semester course in a foreign literature in the original language or for Comparative Literature 200. No more than four major credits will be awarded for work done beyond the Tri-College Consortium, whether abroad or in the U.S. Courses taken in the Bryn Mawr English Department, the Swarthmore English Department, and the U. Penn English Department may also be counted towards the major at Haverford.

Creative Writing Concentration:
Creative Writing courses at Haverford are open to all students. Only a handful of English majors per year, however, are accepted into the Creative Writing Concentration.

The Creative Writing Concentration entails:

- Two courses in creative writing (only one of which is counted toward the major).
- Writing a senior thesis composed of an original creative text (usually poetry, fiction or drama) and a rigorous critical introduction.

Students interested in completing a Creative Writing Concentration apply for acceptance in the spring semester of their junior year by submitting a portfolio of creative work to the department chair, Professor McGrane, **by the Friday before Spring Break of their junior year (no extensions)**. The Departmental Concentration Committee will grant admission to students whose work suggests their readiness to generate a substantial literary project.
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Cross-Listing Key: VIST = Visual Studies, AA= Africana Studies
The Western Dramatic Tradition

The focus of this course is dramatic literature from antiquity to the present. We will begin by looking at the ritual origins of Western drama, with a focus on the Theater of Dionysus in ancient Greece and the tragedies and comedies emerging out of that tradition, including the work of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. We will then move to Medieval and Renaissance England followed by Early Modern and Modern Europe. We will close out the semester by looking at contemporary dramatic literature in the Americas. Throughout, we will also engage theory and criticism, with a focus on the material conditions in which acts of performance are staged, including the politics of race, class, gender, and sexuality. We will also interrogate the politics of historization and canonization itself, looking at the ways in which certain texts are included and excluded from the historical record of theater history, as well as the related notion of "the Western" dramatic tradition. Fulfills pre-1800 requirement for English majors. All are welcome.
Documentary Modernisms

A familiar story about American modernism emphasizes its oblique relation to the social world in which it was written. Modernists, the story goes, sought out an autonomous realm of artistic production, free from material concerns and political commitments, even as they helped consolidate an elite economy of artistic patronage. Insular and inward-focused, they privileged psychological exploration over social reference, impressionism over structural critique. As critic Georg Lukács argued in the 1930s, the modernist penchant for “pure psychologism” signaled an aesthetic and moral “sickness,” a failure to envision the range and fullness of a social field that constructed and delimited human possibility. Yet this seemingly foundational tension—between abstract symbolism and social reference—has obscured a long tradition of documentary modernisms, which gave experimental form to pressing social concerns, drew material from the stories and faces of “real” people, and refused the distinction between avant-garde aesthetics and politically-committed art. Written amidst the devastations of the Depression and the restructured artistic and political economies of the New Deal, these texts spoke to a perceived need (primarily but not exclusively on the left) to make art from and for the people. At the same time, they evinced an ongoing commitment to experimentation, fragmentation, and subjective vision—those formal characteristics we think of as the hallmarks of modernist art and literature.

This course examines a series of modernist documentaries, from Muriel Rukeyser’s epic of the Hawks Nest Tunnel disaster in *The Book of the Dead* (1938), to Richard Wright’s critique of racist housing markets in *12 Million Black Voices* (1941), to James Agee and Walker Evans’s collaborative depiction of sharecropper families in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941)—which they described as “an effort in human actuality.” We’ll encounter a wide range of literary and visual practices under the rubric of modernism, and work with texts and photographs that operate (often simultaneously) as artistic, journalistic, ethnographic, and bureaucratic documents. We’ll examine the impact of social realism across multiple fields of cultural production in the 1930s, study the role of New Deal organizations like the Federal Writers Project in transforming the role of art and the artist in the public sphere, track poetic contributions to Civil Rights and other social movements, and explore how modernist writers and photographers understood a complex and evolving relationship between art and social change. Drawing from documentary studies to analyze a series of formally and generically hybrid poems, essays, photo-texts, films, and circulating exhibits, we’ll ask how these texts negotiate the ethics of representation, how they mobilize photography as both a narrative tool and a form of resistance to narrative, and how they theorize the historical “record” to which they also contribute.

Texts:

Muriel Rukeyser, *The Book of the Dead* (1938)
James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941)
Richard Wright and Edwin Rosskam, *12 Million Black Voices* (1941)
William Carlos Williams, *Paterson* (1946-1963)
Edward Steichen and Carl Sandburg, *The Family of Man* (1955)
Richard O. Moore, *Take This Hammer* (1963)

Requirements:

Weekly contributions to course blog; VoiceThread multi-media presentation; Short essay (3-5 pages); Camtasia moving image essay (7-10 min); Final research paper (7-10 pages).
Literary Theory: The Human

First and foremost, this course introduces students to literary theory through readings of philosophical, aesthetic and theoretical texts concerned with what literature is and how it works. Our readings will range from the classical tradition to the early modern period, and on to modern and contemporary approaches to recurrent concerns that herald the rise of “theory” as an interdisciplinary approach to the humanities and its modes of self-reflexive inquiry. The course is divided into three sections: Classical and Early Modern Thought; Post-Enlightenment World-as-Symptom; and Formalism, Structuralism and their Aftermaths. Through readings, lectures and discussions, students will gain an understanding of the historical development of literary study and its disciplinary formation, as well as an appreciation for ongoing conversations about the status of “theory” and its role in literary and other humanistic fields of inquiry.

Over the course of the semester, a closely related topic that will help focus our investigation of these texts is their understanding of the human. Because philosophers, literary and cultural theorists concerned with literature are also ultimately concerned with its place in human life, their perspectives on literature entail certain assumptions, arguments, or claims about the human being – what it is, how it thinks, feels, speaks, reads, makes decisions and acts in ways that shape the course of its life and the lives of others. We'll consider how various forms of power and influence, from structural economic relations to the unconscious to sexuality and gender, are felt in human life and show up in the stories we tell.

This course investigates the status of sleep in literature and philosophy before the
Enlightenment. Because dreams are so enmeshed with the history of literature, readers and critics
often miss other reasons for the enduring literary fascination with sleep. The dreams of Penelope
in Homer’s Odyssey; Scipio’s dream in Cicero’s Republic; the medieval Christian dream allegory
Piers Plowman; Francesco Colonna’s neo-Platonic dream vision Hypnerotomachia Poliphilli;
Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s Kubla Khan; Sigmund Freud’s The Interpretation of Dreams; this
snapshot attests to the deep affinity between dreams and the literary imagination in western
thought, an affinity which appears only to strengthen over time and double back upon itself with
the emergence of psychoanalytic interpretation in the twentieth century, which foregrounds
dream work and analysis as sites of occluded yet deeply significant meaning for the human
subject and its desire.

But before the rise and consolidation of modern medical sciences and psychologies, sleep was
seen as a moment of strange physiological transformation, a site of spiritual and ethical
vulnerability to malevolent forces both natural and supernatural, and a temporary nocturnal
dissolution of the faculties most closely identified with being human: reason, free will, and
intentionality. Our readings and discussions over the course of the semester will therefore focus
on these aspects of sleeping life apart from dreams, even as we allow room for a consideration of
the status of dreams in literary works ranging from classical antiquity to the early modern period.
We will track the changing conceptions of embodiment, nature, spirituality, ethical care, and the
consciousness of the human subject as they come into focus when paying attention to the status
of sleep in literary and philosophical texts. Students in this course will develop a foundation for
the analysis of literature and philosophy through close attention to a perennial topic of concern,
and gain a deeper understanding of our world’s simultaneous distance from and proximity to past
conceptions of the nature of life and how to care for it.

Readings:

Heraclitus, Fragments; Plato, The Republic; Aristotle, De Anima; Ovid, Metamorphoses;
Seneca, Hercules Furens; Paul, Epistle to the Romans; Augustine, Confession; Edmund Spenser,
The Faerie Queene; Thomas Nashe, Terrors of the Night; William Shakespeare, King Lear;
Rene Descartes, Meditations; Margaret Cavendish, The Convent of Pleasure; John Milton,
Paradise Lost
Creative Nonfiction Workshop

How do you tell the truth, but tell it well? In this workshop-centered class, students will explore personal essay and memoir by reading about it, reading examples of it, and generating it themselves. In shorter assignments, class exercises, and discussions of readings (a pool that includes Joan Didion, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Jonathan Lethem, Barry Lopez, and Naomi Shihab Nye, among others), we will address technical issues such as structure, narrative tension, transition, character development, dialogue, interviewing, point of view, imagery, and metaphor, as well as tone and personal voice. Students will complete a small but important assignment, going out into the literary world and partaking in one event.

Enrollment Limit: 15

Lottery Preference(s): Students who register and submit an acceptable writing sample; where more than the limit register, instructor will decide based on writing sample

Course Requirements:

• Prepare for and participate in all class discussions, peer critiques, and writing exercises.

• Write and revise two pieces of 1000-1250 words each.

• Engage with the literary world by partaking in one off-campus event (and then reporting back).

• A final portfolio of revised work is required.

This course has a limited enrollment of 15 students.
English 252b
TTh 2:30-4:00
Stephen Finley

Romantic Poetry and Criticism

Readings in the course will be drawn from five principal romantic careers: Blake, Wordsworth, Mary and Percy Shelley, and Keats. The readings may include, as well, some notice of Scott and Coleridge, even (very briefly) Carlyle. Coleridge and Carlyle provide the direct links to German philosophy, and to the interface between early and later 19th-century Romanticism, that is, between what we often think of as “the Romantic period” proper (1798-1832) and the subsequent Victorian age. There will be two competing models of understanding throughout the course, one ontological or existential, and the other historical, concerned to situate the poetry in its time of revolution and world war and to question conventional models of attending to the poems based on an American literary criticism. This criticism has often been either willfully unhistorical and iconic, both in its formalist and de-formalist phases, or constrained by its own form of romantic ideology. We will try to consider major statements that philosophers and theorists (including the poets themselves) have made about romantic poetry, and we will take the time needed to understand both the manner of address to the poems and the way both poems and address are transformed by the interchange.

If “being” and “history” are allowed to stand for different kinds of interest for the course, then our third term must be visible “nature.” The romantic imagination and reproduction of nature (literally of landscape) will be an integral concern of the course, and we will study, as time allows, contemporary images, not least by Turner and Constable, of the English and European landscapes which the poems traverse and invoke. Further, our interest in nature will extend to the current engagement of many critics with eco-criticism, a romantic ecology, or Green Romanticism. We will also take note of Blake’s own work as a graphic artist of the highest significance, and we will read his work, where possible, in facsimile of his own self-produced “visionary books.” There will be a special unit on romantic cinema, including one or two evening presentations of clips from the long history of film versions of Frankenstein and its “hideous progeny.”

Class requirements: Several shorter writing assignments, including brief responses to poems and to theoretical interventions, and two longer critical essays of 5-7 pages. Final take-home exam.

Texts list: We may use, depending upon availability, the Bloom and Trilling Oxford anthology, Romantic Poetry and Prose (often used in the past for Junior Seminar). This anthology will be supplemented by Moodle documents and class handouts, including from Blake's Poetry and Designs, ed. Johnson and Grant (1979); Wordsworth, The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850, ed. J. Wordsworth, Abrams, Gill (1979); Shelley's Poetry and Prose, ed. Reiman and Powers (1977); Keats, Selected Poems and Letters, ed. Bush (1959).


Topics in Victorian Literature: Desire and Domestic Fiction: The Development of the 19th c. Novel

[N]arrative demands some form of breech, some space of anxiety and desire into which to inscribe itself. Marianne Hirsch, *The Mother-Daughter Plot; Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism* (1989) 37

This course is designed as an introduction to the novel and to narrative theory in a trajectory loosely inscribed from the late 18th to the early 20th century, interrogating a particular narrative form that is charged with the—if not peculiar at least conflicted—task of representing the most intimate affective experience while still concerned with the broad social and political community. To what extent can the novel be drawn to the individual, the intimate, the specific and respond to the cultural, the political, the circumstantial? Can it depict both emotional intimacy and historical determinacy? As well, the course will look at the purchase of contemporary critical investments upon the act of reading itself or how reading is inflected through different models of critical and theoretical discourse: how narrative economies shape and determine the nature of our experience or what we can know of our experience; how narrative determines a subject "self" and how these selves are then transected by race, gender, class, and other social and political determinants; how narratives manage the less obvious and sublimated worlds of desire and the body's disruptions; how narratives negotiate the grotesque, the spectacular, and the sensational; and finally, how these variously constituted needs and desires become constructions of “textual knowledge”.

**Texts**

Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811)
Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1815)
Bronte, *Wuthering Heights* (1842)
Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1871-2)
James, *Portrait of a Lady* (1882)
This course will use the tools of literary history to examine the influence of African-American culture in the United States. Our focus will be on the events and writings of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Works from the old "canon" of American literature will be read in tandem with works from the African-American tradition in an attempt to explore how African-American writers simultaneously influenced, borrowed from, and improvised upon the perception of their world at work in the larger culture of which they were a part. Such an approach will also require an understanding of the emergence of a "color line" and its permeable and impermeable borders. This will entail a look into the privileging of "white" over "black" and its many destructive and ongoing variations.

Readings will include numerous critical essay as well as the following primary texts:

- Emerson, "The Emancipation of the British West Indies"
- Douglass, *The Narrative and Selective Writings*
- Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
- Melville, *Benito Cereno*
- Morrison, *Beloved*
- Hurston, *Mules and Men*
- Harris, *Uncle Remus*
- Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*
- Lee, *Bamboozled (film)*
- Ellison, *Invisible Man*

In addition to two short papers, two sets of course questions and an occasional Moodle post, students will be asked to keep a running blog and complete a written take-home exam involving both the course reading and *Invisible Man*.

This course carries credit toward the Africana Studies concentration.
Thinking Globally and Writing Locally:
Contemporary South Asian Writing

Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and Michael Ondaatje are writers who are well known in the west, and they are but a part of a diverse and energetic tradition of South Asian writing in English that has flourished over the last seventy years. This course is an introduction to contemporary fiction, poetry, and cultural commentary by writers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, as well as the descendants of migrants from these parts of the world to Africa, Australia, Britain, the Caribbean, and the United States. Our starting premise is that the English language and its literary traditions hybridize into rich and strange forms when thrown into contact with regional histories and aesthetic practices of the postcolonial world. We will look at: the effects of the experience of colonialism on attitudes to the English language; the particular tropes allowing writers to focus on the processes of acculturation and identity formation; the ways texts imagine opposition to colonial, sexual, and communal violence; and the ubiquitous tensions caused by the multiple homelands claimed by migrants. Of special interest to us will be the configurations of history, mythology, popular culture, and political discourse through which writers make sense of their relationship to colonial, western, and global cultures while simultaneously engaging indigenous, vernacular, and local traditions.

Texts:
Short stories by Vikram Chandra, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shyam Selvadurai, Kiran Desai, Daniyal Mueenuddin, Shyam Selvadurai, Monica Ali, and Rohinton Mistry

Course Requirements:
2 short essays (about 5 pages long), a book review, and a final essay (about 10 pages long)
Active participation in discussions, and 1 or 2 presentations (depending on class size)
Contemporary American poetry from 1956 to 2014 (from Ginsberg to Rankine): through close readings and use of critical texts, the class examines how poets continued a vital and spirited inquiry to redefine poetry in relation to culture, history, politics, sound, the body, and language itself. The interplay and generative tensions of poetry that challenges the definitions of poetry is examined throughout the survey. The Beats, the New American Poetry of the 1960s, the New York School, the Black Arts Movement, Feminist poetics, Queer poetries, Ecopoetics, and the Language poets are read. Muriel Rukeyser provides one guide: “We wanted something different... not to find ourselves an old, reactionary republic, full of ghost-fears, the fears of death and the fears of birth. We want something else.” In “State of the Art” Charles Bernstein replies: “The magnificence cacophony of different bodies making different sounds.” And “No music to our verse, but vastly incompatible musics.”

Course Requirements:

• brief response assignments; one short critical essay (5-7 pp.); one longer critical essay (12-15 pp.)

• a desire to engage in an extended meditation about a spectrum of poets, texts, and conceptual issues

• close reading and close listening coupled with participation in engaged conversation
POETRY WRITING II – CONTEMPORARY VOICES

English 292-B01 is an advance creative writing workshop on poetry. The focus is on student work. The workshop involves both reading and writing poetry. Students will have the opportunity to expand their repertoire by modeling their pieces on the work of various poets including: Susan Howe, W. S. Merwin, Sherman Alexie, Ocean Vuong, and Morgan Parker. We will analyze selected poems by these artists to investigate issues of form, urgency, and lyricism to enhance our own work. Over the semester the class will work on a collaborative poetry project “Throat Filling with Accidents and Other Resilient Strains.” Muriel Rukeyser offers one path: "Always we need the audacity to speak for more freedom, more imagination, more poetry with all its meanings. As we go deeper into conflict, we shall find ourselves more constrained, the repressive codes will turn to iron. More and more we shall need to be free in our beliefs, as we to our forms."

Requirements:
Students will write two poems a week (using a modeling method) and respond to the selected readings. A final portfolio of revised work is required. The last third of the class will focus on revision and on the student portfolio.

This course has a limited enrollment of 15 students.
Junior Seminar in English

This course is a two-semester Seminar required of all Junior English majors.

Through readings, class discussion, written assignments, and tutorials, students will become familiar with 1) a series of texts selected to represent a range of English language poetry and fiction; and 2) examples of critical writing selected to represent critical theory and practice as it has been influenced by linguistics, hermeneutics, history, sociology, psychology and the study of cultural representation. Junior Seminar aims to cultivate in the student some sense of the variety of British, American, and Anglophone literature and its criticism, and to introduce the student to the activity of criticism as it interacts with literature and the intellectual life of our time. This active criticism will lead students to grasp both the nature of literary convention and tradition and the perspectives that open up the canon to a richer diversity of voices and forms.

Sections will follow the same syllabus, meeting together occasionally for joint sessions. For the most part the two sections will function as independent seminars, with each instructor responsible for a single seminar.

Students will be required to write three papers (5-7 pages) first term, with revisions in response to the critique each paper will receive in tutorial sessions, and take part in an oral examination at the end of the first semester. The second semester includes two longer papers (8-10 pages), and concludes with a comprehensive final examination that covers both semesters of the course. Regular attendance in both discussion and tutorial is required, and students are urged to prepare rigorously for class.

Readings:
The first term is devoted to poetry, poetics, and practical criticism, and includes examples of Renaissance lyrics by Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton; selected British Romantic poetry from Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats; nineteenth-century American poems by Whitman and Dickinson; and post-Romantic poetry by Yeats, Stevens, and Walcott; the second term focuses on narrative and its theorization and criticism, and readings include George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, stories by Henry James and Edgar Allen Poe, and James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. 
Victorian Poverty, Ecology, and Public Health

"For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own threatens to disappear irretrievably" (Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History").

This course will be centered upon the "street folk," the homeless, and the working poor of the 1840's and 1850's, as they are described in the literature and social documents of the period, and with special regard for the relationship between human destitution and environmental degradation. In one enduring sense, it is a course about sewers (or the lack thereof) and sewage—a course about water. We will try to gain access to first-hand accounts of Victorian poverty (as from Mayhew's London Labour and the London Poor [1851-52] and Engels' Condition of the Working Class in England [1845]), even as we read an "industrial novel" of the period, such as Gaskell's Mary Barton (1848), which makes an integral response to the "condition-of-England" debate. The period between 1837-1842 witnessed an economic depression and large-scale unemployment, along with severe tension between the new class of factory owners and their workers, issuing in bitter and often violent strikes and social disruption, which brought human suffering and state repression on a breadth of scale rarely experienced in England in the post-Civil War period. The Victorian mid-century, for all its gathering imperial glories was, as well, a kind of ecological heart of darkness, in which we see the ineradicable tie between the industrial assault upon the environment and the accompanying decline in human health and well-being. The great crowded Victorian city was caught in the paradox of an advancing technological and economic revolution as yet unaccompanied by comparable advances in medical science or the control of the underlying infectious conditions that seeded numerous epidemics, the mortality rates of which remain shocking. The morbidity of poverty and disease did much to give a persistent shape and tenor to the Victorian novel, not least its attempt, through fiction, to bear witness to an unmediated "actual," a visceral history, one that we see in the "literal" work of parliamentary studies and reports, such as Fowler's "Report on the Condition of the Calder." Fowler's unblinking document, about the pollution and saturation by sewage of a once living river, and the misery of those who must drink from it and wash in it, is the kind of material we will be reading, in addition to literary texts. By moving from one kind of discourse to another, from working-class ballads and broadsides, to Parliamentary Blue Books, to Mayhew's eyewitness "sociology" and to Steven Marcus's study of Victorian pornography, and then toward the panoply of social voices in the novel (Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia), we ought to turn up fresh
confrontations in our reading and open pathways in the ideological constructions of class, empire, and “England,” that once “green and pleasant land.”

The “condition-of-England” debate in mid-century gave rise to foundational writings in English about social justice. This course asks: What is the relationship between social concern and social document (the government's Blue Books, or Parliamentary reports and commissions, the public acts of “Reform”), the novel, and radical critique? Carlyle, who became an abusive Tory reactionary, brilliantly used a vignette, or localized anecdote, of social degradation in order to enforce his scathing review of the contemporary industrial and commercial order in Past and Present (1841). Ruskin, in Unto This Last (1862) and in the often pathetic and “mad” letters of Fors Clavigera (1871-1884), was even more concerned than Carlyle with the apparent blindness of the Victorian state and with the machinery/mastery of the ascendant commercial class. These forces in tandem brought about what he saw as the ecological catastrophe of the Industrial Revolution, the ecology, not of wealth, but of “illth.”

Requirements:

Seminar attendance and participation in class discussion; two or three short writing exercises; a class presentation; two essays: one 4-5 pages, earlier in the term, and the second 10-12 pages, due at term's end. There will be a research component to the second of these essays, including a required bibliography. This longer essay will ask students to make a bridge between the supplemental and theoretical materials, and a location or cluster in one/ several of our texts. A list of topics: public health, the epidemic of infectious diseases—smallpox, cholera, typhus; ideological structures of contagion and contamination, sewage, ecology, scatology and scopophilia, crime, prostitution, pornography; sex and wage slavery, commerce in corpses, Victorian sciences of the body, dissection; the workhouse, the poor law, starvation, child labor, child abuse, spouse abuse, the disintegration and/or reification of the family; urban design and class boundaries, industrial technologies, ghetto and suburb; extreme vocations of the poor, urban sociology, the culture of poverty, street life and street folk; industrialism and imperialism; emerging science and practice of public sanitation.

Primary readings from Wordsworth, Carlyle, Elizabeth Gaskell, Engels, Mayhew, Dickens, and Ruskin.
Martyr, fanatic, hero, revolutionary, terrorist, sage? Who was John Brown and what did he come to represent for our culture? When Harriet Jacobs informed Lydia Maria Child that she wished to close her slave narrative with a discussion of John Brown's famous raid on Harper's Ferry, Child strongly advised her against it. Fearful that he would be accused of assisting Brown, Frederick Douglass fled to Canada. So did the husband of Julia Ward Howe, Sam Gridley Howe, one of the "secret six" who backed Brown's cause. Despite their previous belief in the efficacy of civil disobedience, Emerson and Thoreau both gave lectures on Brown's behalf, and upon hearing of his execution, Victor Hugo wrote a long tribute to Brown as a martyr to the cause of freedom.

Douglass, William Wells Brown and Martin Delany praised Brown when the occasion allowed, sometimes connecting and comparing his actions to Nat Turner's slave rebellion. For others, the association with Turner and the violent course adopted by Brown elicited fears of anarchy and social disorder. And indeed, the path to a violent Civil War seemed to get shorter with each new expression of sympathy for a man some took to be a dangerous fanatic.

This course will use the spectacular life and death of John Brown to examine a common set of interests in a diverse set of texts produced across two centuries. These interests include terrorism and the place of violence in the cause of liberty, the relationship of aesthetic value to changing social and political claims, the role of race and gender in the construction of emancipatory rhetoric, the role of that same rhetoric in the creation (or conservation) of a cultural and national sense of history, including the primary forgotten history of Haiti, as well as the terrorizing activity of lynching. We will look at the transformation of this story through a number of forms, including the essay, the short story, the novel, the public letter or lecture, the poem, and the song. This course carries credit toward Africana Studies concentration.

Reading might include the following:

Jean Baudrillard  
Don DeLillo  
W.E.B. Du Bois  
William Faulkner  
Herman Melville  
Henry David Thoreau  
Michel-Rolph Trouillot

The Spirit of Terrorism  
Mau II  
John Brown  
Light in August  
Bartleby and Benito Cereno  
Civil Disobedience and Other Essays  
Silencing the Past
This course will focus on theories that understand language in relation to culture, history, and power. We will begin with Roland Barthes' argument that textual meaning is not rigidly defined, certain, and fixed but rather is open-ended and ever-unfolding. We will then proceed to various theories that explore the processes by which meanings are produced through semiosis or networks of signs linking particular bits of language to other bits and to larger networks of meanings. Our inquiry will be further centered on what this notion of language implies for the political and historical significance of the work of reading and writing. To this end we will explore theories of ideology, subjectivity, language, literature, and culture as they were articulated in what we now call the poststructuralist mode and moment.

Here are some of the questions that we will be investigating: Is it possible to map social concerns such as political struggle and economic conflict on to an investigation of the way language works? Can we understand literary concepts such as irony, ambiguity, and symbolic resonance at the minute level of how words relate to one another rather than in reference to what we call reality? Is there a historically specific meaning or function to indeterminacy? What are the political uses or effects of indeterminacy? Is there such a thing as an identifiable "sex-signature" that marks feminine writing? If so, is this a mark of writing always and only performed by women? How does textuality challenge, reflect, or shape the workings of misogyny, heterosexism, and social hierarchies? What happens to writing, analysis, and argument in the wake of the transformation in language that Barthes, Derrida, Kristeva, and Cixous celebrate?

We will investigate these questions through a reading of theoretical texts and test out their implications for our work as readers against a selection of texts such as poetry by Elizabeth Bishop and Charles Bernstein, and Joyce's "The Dead."

Texts will include:
Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus"
Mikhail Bakhtin, Selections from *The Dialogic Imagination*
Roland Barthes, "Theory Of The Text," "From Work To Text," and "Myth Today"
Catherine Clement and Helen Cixous, Selections from *The Newly Born Woman*
Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*
Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*
Luce irigaray, "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine"
Peggy Kamuf, ed. *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds,*
Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language*
Marx, Selections from *German Ideology* and *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*
McClintock and Nixon, "Racism's Last Word"
Kelly Oliver, ed. *The Portable Kristeva*
Mary Poovey, "Feminism and Deconstruction"
Trinh T Minh Ha, *Woman Native Other*
V.N. Volosinov, Selections from *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*
Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*
Monique Wittig, "The Mark of Gender," and "One is not born a Woman"

**Course Requirements:**
Active participation in class discussions; three position papers (1 page long); two short essays (3-5 pages long), and one final essay (10 pages long)

**Pre-requisites:**
Two 200-level English courses or consent of the instructor.