Haverford College
English Department

Course Guide
Fall 2016

Containing
Descriptions of Readings, Approaches, and
Course Conduct for all Departmental Offerings
**Major Requirements:**

The two-semester Junior Seminar in English with tutorial (298a, 298J, and 299b); Senior Conference (English 399a and b); plus a minimum of seven additional courses within the major. The program should include courses from across the spectrum of the department’s offerings and evince the richness of an archive drawn from British, American, and World Anglophone literature. At least two courses must be in literature written before 1800 and two courses must be taken at the 300-level. Admission to the major requires completion of two courses at the 200-level by the end of the sophomore year; one of these must be an "introductory emphasis" (IE) course. English 150L substitutes for one 200-level course and carries the IE credit.

For Fall Semester 2016, courses 228a and 269a are designated introductory emphasis (IE).

For Spring Semester 2017, courses 212b and 258b are designated introductory emphasis (IE).

300-level topics courses using the same number but with different titles may be taken to satisfy the major requirement.

**Creative Writing Concentration**

The Creative Writing Concentration requires two courses in creative writing (only one of which is counted toward the major) and the writing of a senior thesis (399) composed of an original creative text and a rigorous critical introduction.

Those interested in completing the Concentration as seniors must submit 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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<tr>
<th>COURSE NUMBER</th>
<th>DIV. DISTR. (HU, SO, NA, QU, Social Justice)</th>
<th>COURSE NAME (Abbrev.)</th>
<th>SECTION NUMBER</th>
<th>CLASS HOURS</th>
<th>LTD. ENROLL.</th>
<th>INSTRUCTOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>207a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Cruising Home; Queer Kinship (GS / PEACH)</td>
<td>T 7:30 – 10</td>
<td>J. Pryor</td>
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<tr>
<td>228a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Virtue, Vice, and Profit (IE) (Pre-1800)</td>
<td>T/Th 11:30-1</td>
<td>B. Parris</td>
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<td>257a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>British Topographies 1650 – 1914 (Pre-1800)*</td>
<td>M/W 12:45-2:15</td>
<td>S. Finley</td>
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<td>269a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Sex and Love: Queerness in the American Novel 1850-1950 (IE)</td>
<td>T/TH 8:30-10</td>
<td>G. Stadler</td>
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<td>233a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Topics in Caribbean Literature (AA) (CL)</td>
<td>T/Th 1-2:30</td>
<td>A. Solomon</td>
<td>Meditation Room</td>
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<td>237a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Living with the Dead: Attitudes Towards Death in Medieval Britain (Pre-1800)</td>
<td>T/Th 2:30-4</td>
<td>K. Mills</td>
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<td>289a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Contemporary Poetry</td>
<td>M/W 9-10:30</td>
<td>T. Devaney</td>
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<td>290a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>History of Literary Theory (CL) (Pre-1800)</td>
<td>T/Th 1-2:30</td>
<td>D. Roberts</td>
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<td>291a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Poetry Writing: An Introductory Workshop</td>
<td>W 1:30-4</td>
<td>T. Devaney</td>
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<td>293a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Introduction to Creative Writing: Fiction</td>
<td>F 1:30-4</td>
<td>A. Solomon</td>
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<td>298a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Junior Seminar</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>T/Th 10-11:30</td>
<td>L. McGrane</td>
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<td>298j</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Junior Seminar</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>T/Th 10-11:30</td>
<td>C. Zwarg</td>
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<td>320a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Early Modern Sensation (1800)</td>
<td>M 1:30-4</td>
<td>B. Parris</td>
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<td>3xxa</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Site Work: Place-Making and Performance Practice (HCAH)</td>
<td>M 7:30-10</td>
<td>J. Pryor</td>
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<td>363a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Topics in American Literature: The Construction of Whiteness in Precarious Times</td>
<td>W 1:30-4</td>
<td>G. Stadler</td>
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<td>373a</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td>Topics in British Literature: Modernist Narratives</td>
<td>T/Th 2:30-4</td>
<td>R. Mohan</td>
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**IE Intro Emphasis**  **GS Gender & Sexuality Studies**  **CL Cross listed with Comp. Literature**  **1800 Pre-1800 Literature**  ***See instructor for credit**  **AA Africana**  **DS, RM, SF**
Cruising Home: Queer Kinship in Theory and Practice

What do queer theory and queer culture have to teach us about the tensions among and between home and exile, family and friendship, longing and belonging? In this course, we will explore historical and contemporary questions of kinship as they intersect with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, and queer practices of building home, community, and social movements. Considering kinship as both site of violence and liberation, our texts will include political theory; legal case studies; literary texts—including novels, plays, poetry, and memoirs; and popular and experimental films and videos. Our focus will be queer kinship in the U.S. as well as in transnational and global contexts, with a particular attention to questions of cultural identity—including race, class, gender, and sexuality; and political economy—including migration, marriage, colonialism, and diaspora.

Requirements:
1 oral presentation
4 short (2-3 page) essays based in close reading of course texts
1 creative writing assignment based in close reading of course texts
1 text-to-performance assignment based in close reading of course texts
1 field trip to Philly Fringe Arts
Regular class participation and discussion

Selected Readings::
Plays::
Sophocles, Antigone
Lisa Kron, 2.5 Minute Ride

Films::
Victor Fleming, The Wizard of Oz
Marlon Riggs, Tongues Untied
Silas Howard and Harry Dodge, By Hook or By Crook
Deepa Mehta, Fire
Jennie Livingston, Paris is Burning
Auraeus Solito, The Blossoming of Maximo Olivas

Novels/Memoirs::
Samuel Delany, Bread and Wine
Tom Spanbauer, The Man Who Feel in Love with the Moon

Political Theory::
(selected chapters from)::
Judith Butler, Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death
David Eng, The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy
Gloria Anzaldúa, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza
José Esteban Muñoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity
Judith Jack Halberstam, In A Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives

*Enrollment is limited to 25.
First-year students are welcome.
Topics in Early Modern Literature: Virtue, Vice and Profit

How does drama both reflect upon and participate in economic life, from the assignation of value to the production and exchange of commodities to the abstract processes we identify with the market? This course investigates such questions by introducing students to prominent works of English drama from the late 16th and early 17th centuries, with an emphasis on the rise of political economy. Through an examination of the shifting concepts of virtue, vice, value and profit, we will ask how early modern playwrights conceive of moral and spiritual value, alongside economic value – are these categories of value opposed, complementary, or interwoven, and how does the relation between them shift over the course of the 16th and early 17th centuries?

Our discussions will focus on relevant early modern cultural and historical contexts, such as the waning of aristocratic, romance values in early modern literature as well as classical literary and philosophical influences on Elizabethan writers. We begin by reading some early modern economic and cultural history by Jean-Christophe Agnew. Next is the medieval morality play Everyman, alongside Seneca’s Thyestes, as a quick introduction to some Renaissance notions of spiritual and moral economy, humorism and tragedy. We then read Thomas Kyd’s wildly popular The Spanish Tragedy and other famous takes on “revenge tragedy” by Webster and Marlowe. The second half of the course will focus on English drama in relationship to fledgling capitalism and the rise of political economy. Plays by Jonson, Beaumont and Shakespeare will be considered in light of early modern London’s artisanal and mercantile culture, with readings from Karl Marx’s work on political economy in the first volume of Capital.

Plays:

Seneca, Thyestes
Anonymous, Everyman
Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy
John Webster, The Duchess of Malfi
Christopher Marlowe, The Jew of Malta and Dr. Faustus
Ben Jonson, Volpone and Everyman in his Humour
Francis Beaumont, The Knight of the Burning Pestle
William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice and King Lear

Secondary Readings:

Jean-Christophe Agnew, Worlds Apart
T.S. Eliot, “Seneca in Elizabethan Translation”
A.O. Hirschman, The Passions and the Interests
Karl Marx, Capital: Volume 1

Enrollment Limit: 25
Caribbean Authors: A New Wave

Since the mid-20th century, the literature of the Caribbean has often thematized a sense of racial, economic, cultural, linguistic and geographical marginalization. At the dawn of the 21st century a number of Caribbean writers can be found at the center of contemporary writing in English, selling scads of books, winning the most prestigious prizes, gaining expansive coverage, and becoming household names. These include but are not limited to the recent winner of the Man Booker Prize, Marlon James, Claudia Rankine, Junot Díaz, Edwidge Danticat, Jamaica Kincaid, and even Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of the blockbuster Broadway musical “Hamilton.” Additionally, the theoretical work of Caribbean and Caribbean-American subjects only continues to gain greater universal importance. Students in this course will read contemporary authors including but not limited to those mentioned, as well as influential earlier texts, and the work of Frantz Fanon and Audre Lorde. We will also listen to the appallingly addictive soundtrack to “Hamilton,” and consider how a Scottish-descended American Founding Father has found fame as a New York-based Dominican rapper.

*The Lonely Londoners*, Samuel Selvon  
*Soldier*, June Jordan  
*A Small Place*, Jamaica Kincaid  
*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, Junot Díaz  
*The Dew Breaker*, Edwidge Danticat  
*The Book of Night Women*, Marlon James  
*Don’t Let Me Be Lonely*, Claudia Rankine  
*Hamilton*, Lin-Manuel Miranda

We will be reading a selection of poems as well as stories by the Caribbean-Canadian speculative fiction writer Nalo Hopkinson, and essays by Fanon, Lorde and Wynter.

Requirements for the course will include a series of response papers, two shorter essays, a longer research essay and a midterm.
Living with the Dead: Attitudes Towards Death in Medieval Britain

How have individuals and communities conceptualized their relationship with the dead? This course will examine changing attitudes towards death by considering entwined discourses about burial, the dead, and the afterlife, from the early Middle Ages to the early modern period, focusing on Britain. The medieval Church’s teachings about the place of the soul in the Christian afterlife vied with a range of popular beliefs about restless spirits and walking corpses. Topics to be studied include burial practices, the location of graves, saints’ bodies, the doctrine of purgatory, and tales of the restless dead.
British Topographies, 1650-1914

This course examines the interleaved formation of local and national constructions of landscape, surveying the making and remaking of the English landscape from the immediate post-Civil War era, of mid 17th-century England, to the first years of the 20th century. These two and a half centuries made for a critical span of time in the cultural history of "nature," as we moved from the older hieroglyphic or emblematic landscape (rendered perfectly by Andrew Marvell's Upon Appleton House), through the vast clearances and enclosures of the Georgian estate and landscape garden, to the rise of both picturesque and romantic visions of nature in the later part of the 18th-century. From these followed the rapid development of professional tourism and its associated economies of both consumption (travel and publishing industries) and connoisseurship. All of these cultural filaments or transmissions were disrupted, when not entirely, at least in part, by the enormity of effects of the thermic and industrial transformation of Victorian Britain and the subsequent ecological challenges faced by significant regions of the British Isles.

One focus of the course will be the English and Scottish borderlands—Northumbria, Cumbria, the Scottish Borders, and Galloway and Dumfries—areas marked by centuries of war, uneasily folded, since the 17th century, within the “union” of Britain. Literary texts will be supplemented by a consideration of gardening traditions, especially in virtual and visual tours of the great gardens of Rousham, Blenheim, Stourhead and Stowe; by study of 19th-century landscape painting and water-color (Palmer, Turner, Constable, the Pre-Raphaelites and Ruskin); and by review of the expanding Victorian technologies of the illustrated book, and, ultimately, of photography. If class size permits, we will hope to complete a field trip to a local garden, “Chanticleer,” that often whimsically embodies the history and architecture of landscape, of family, wealth, and ruin, and another to Longwood Gardens, of Kennett Square, an unimaginably rich resource, one the world’s great gardens, truly, although right at our doorstep. Students who have never made a walking tour of a great garden are most particularly invited to consider this course. Haverford’s own campus archives may also be consulted, not least as the grounds of Haverford, over periods of nurture as well as neglect, have embodied significant elements of a landscape aesthetic. The topic of the course encourages learning that is both textual and experiential—boots as well as books. The course emphasizes the material concreteness of place, even as it reveals the entanglement of actual and imagined landscapes. Each student will complete a "topographic project" by term's end. Our readings will conclude with two novels, one by Henry James, and the other, Alan Hollinghurst’s recent (2011) The Stranger’s Child, a remarkable multi-generational novel that centers upon a great 19th-century estate and two associated houses, poised in the summer of 1913, before the Great War.
**Reading List (Primary):**

Ben Jonson  
“*To Penshurst*” (1616)

Sir John Denham  
“*Cooper’s Hill*” (1655)

Andrew Marvell  
“*The Garden*” and *Upon Appleton House* (c. 1650’s)

Alexander Pope  
“*Windsor Forest*” (1713) and “Epistle to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington” (1731)

Thomas Gray  
“*Ode on Distant Prospect of Eton College,*” and  
“*Elegy written in a Country Church-Yard*” (1750)

Hunt and Willis, eds.  
*The Genius of the Place: The English Landscape Garden*

Sir Walter Scott  
from the *Journal* (1837, 1890), and brief selection  
from *Marmion* (1808)

William Wordsworth  
Selected poems and prefaces

Thomas Carlyle  
*Reminiscences* (1881) (brief selection)

John Ruskin  
from *Modern Painters, III, IV, and V* (1856-1860);  
selections from *Fors Clavigera* (1871-84) and  
*Praeterita* (1885-89)

Thomas Hardy  
Selected poems

Henry James  
*The Spoils of Poynton* (1897)

Alan Hollinghurst  
*The Stranger’s Child* (2011)

Simon Schama  
*Landscape and Memory* (1995)
Sex and Love: Queerness in the American Novel 1850-1950

In 1960, the literary and cultural critic Leslie Fiedler published *Love and Death in the American Novel*, a book of literary scholarship preoccupied with the lack of conventional heterosexual romance in classic American fiction. Fiedler tracked how American literature tended to displace, deform, and destabilize the link between the novel and the marriage plot, far more so than its British counterpart. The American novel, in other words, was queer at its core, and the Stonewall Inn uprising—generally considered the inception of gay and lesbian liberation politics—was still almost a decade away. Fiedler was horrified by what he saw; we, on the other hand, will pursue the aesthetic and cultural implications of his discovery—otherwise known as the queerness of the American novel—with curiosity and care. Ghostly wives, spinsters, bachelors, tomboys, (so-called) sissies, loving sisters, bosom buddies: this wide range of characters, and the plots in which they appear, constitute what James Baldwin would call “another country,” a queer territory not so much marginal to the “mainstream” as central for those who know where to look, and how to read. In a series of texts from the late-19th and early-20th centuries, we’ll look at how certain classic tropes of American national identity (independence, difference, etc.) can be read as queer, and how the instability of national identity may have been represented through literary queerness. What was it about this period of U. S. history that made heterosexuality, marriage, and reproduction such vexed topics? What effects did these qualities have on narrative form?

A significant portion of the early weeks of class will be devoted to studying the recent reclamation and rehabilitation of the word “queer” as a critical term, in the fields now known as “queer theory” and “queer studies.” What does “queer” mean? How does it mean differently from “gay,” “lesbian,” and “homosexual”? What is its relationship to (trans)gender identity? How does it help us interpret older texts, from periods in which the very notion of sexual identity had yet to take coherent shape? What is its history, and what histories does it transmit? How does it trouble the supposedly discrete boundaries of heterosexuality and homosexuality? What led to the emergence of these categories in the late nineteenth century? What cultural, historical, and political conditions made this “other country”?

At the same time, we will explore queerness and queer theory as reading practices. Can one queer a novel, regardless of what seem to be its inherent properties? What sorts of readerly engagement and attention are necessary to perform such a practice, and how do they differ from “traditional” ways of reading? Is any text not queer?

Finally, because of the fall exhibit at the Cantor Fitzgerald gallery on art and the archive in transgender culture, we will pay particular attention to transgender theory and thought as a mode of queer reading. Although it is technically outside the historical purview of the course, we will also read a classic transgender novel, Leslie Feinberg’s *Stone Butch Blues* (1993).
**Required Texts:**

The following are available in the College bookstore—please use these editions; they are all cheap, and using other editions disrupts class as we try to find the correct page number for everyone.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance* (Oxford Classics)
Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (Penguin)
Henry James, *The Bostonians* (Oxford Classics)
Willa Cather, *My Antonia* (Broadview)
Nella Larsen, *Passing* (Penguin)
James M. Cain, *Three By Cain* (Random House)
James Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room* (Random House)
Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (Alyson)

The rest of the readings will be posted on Moodle, including selected short stories, as well as theoretical texts by Sigmund Freud, Michel Foucault, Pat Califia, Susan Stryker and others

**Requirements**

As this is a small class, your consistent engagement in class discussion is an absolute necessity. This is a collective endeavor. Our goal, most broadly, is to figure out the best questions to ask about texts to reveal the way cultural understandings of sexuality shape them. Consistent listening to one another, addressing one another, maintaining a consistent line of inquiry: these are all principles we must live by. You should pay as much attention to what your classmates say as what I say. And you should participate every day.

Toward the beginning of every class (often at the very beginning), we’ll hear from two of you. One student will bring one or two questions and an account of how s/he came to formulate them; the other will act as “first responder,” responding to the first student and asking another question enabled by the first student’s. More complete instructions will follow in the first class sessions.

The written requirements are as follows:
- Weekly posting on the reading for the upcoming class session. I will evaluate the effectiveness of your work on this, for yourself and for your classmates, at midterm and again at the end of the term. (And if any major problems arise at other points I will let you know).
- Two short (4-6 pp) papers.
- A final paper of 10-12 pp., attached to a public project—we will discuss the shape of this together.
Contemporary Poetry

English 289a explores contemporary American poetry from 1950 to 2001 (from Ginsberg to Rankine). Through close readings and the 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 a 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.”
History of Literary Theory: Plato to Shelley
English/Comp. Lit./Classical Studies

In this course we investigate central texts in western literary theory from the ancient Greeks to nineteenth-century Europe, with attention to key critical terms and concepts. Topics of discussion will include the nature and origin of literary creation, socio-political ideas about the function of poetry and the poet, mimetic models of literature, the concept of fiction, the roles of art and nature, literature in relation to its audience, the theory and practice of drama, defenses of poetry, allegorical interpretation, the idea of the sublime, definitions of the imagination, poetic language, and the application of critical theory to particular texts.


Requirements:
prepared attendance and participation in discussion
responsibility for asking the opening question or questions on one text
three 2-3 page papers, two 3-5 page papers
final essay exam

This course fulfills the pre-1800 requirement for the English major.
Poetry Writing: An Introductory Workshop

This is a creative writing workshop on poetry. Student work is the focus along with the analysis of a wide variety of poems and poets. Weekly writing prompts will encourage students to widen their scope and develop their craft. Each week students will write poems that respond to other poems and some of the principal genres of poetry. Students will be asked to respond to the works of classmates. A final portfolio of revised poems (10 to 12 pages) is required.

Course Requirements:
Class attendance; completion of assignments including but not necessarily limited to those described above, active participation in commenting on others' work; conferences with the instructor, and a final portfolio of revised work.

This course has a limited enrollment of 15 students.
Introduction to Creative Writing: Fiction

This course is an introduction to fiction writing, with particular emphasis on the short story. Students will gain practice with fundamental elements of fiction including: character, plot and language, both in narrative and dialogue. They will develop the skill of reading as writers and hopefully write distinct and engaging short stories. The centerpiece of class meetings will be a workshop where students discuss their peers’ work and offer productive criticism. Students will also read and discuss a wide range published short fiction, including authors such as Sherman Alexie, Octavia Butler, John Cheever, Edward P. Jones, Flannery O’Connor, Miranda July, Junot Díaz and Denis Johnson. The success of this course depends on each student’s frequent and thoughtful participation; those who expect to miss more than one meeting due to previously scheduled events should consider another course.

Students in this course will write two complete stories for workshop, revise a final project and turn in a wide variety of writing exercises.

This course has a limited enrollment of 15 students. You must submit a writing sample for consideration. Please submit a HARD COPY fiction sample of 5-12 pp, labeled with your name, year and major. To be considered for the class, you must submit this sample to the English Department office, Woodside 100, by the end of the pre-registration period.
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 four papers (5-7 pages) during the first term, with revisions in response to the critique each paper will receive in tutorial sessions. They will also take an oral examination at the end of the first semester. The second semester includes two longer papers (8-10 pages), and concludes with a written 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 Marvell; 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 Allan Poe, and James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. 
Topics in Early Modern Literature: Early Modern Sensation

This seminar focuses on the range of possible meanings gathered under the term “sensation” – feeling, affect, mood, emotion, passion, perception – in classical and early modern literature and philosophy, while offering a contemporary theoretical orientation. On the one hand, our investigations presume that changing theories of sensation reflect significant shifts in western histories of physiology, psychology and selfhood. Hence, we’ll pay special attention to the ways that theories and representations of sensation account for relations among body, environment, thinking and feeling in historical contexts. But the course will also give students a chance to think about these formations of feeling in light of recent theoretical and philosophical interest in the status of affect in the humanities.

Our discussions of readings will target three concepts through which early modern writers interrogate and reimagine classical models of sensation, physiology and environment: Metamorphosis, Humoral Embodiment, and Darkness. Due in large part to the influence of Ovidian poetry, works of Renaissance literature display a deep fascination with psychosomatic transformation and environmental flux. They compose “nonhuman becomings” and give rise to “nonhuman landscapes of nature” (Deleuze and Guattari) that often begin with seemingly routine habits such as eating, bathing, relaxing, and sleeping, as well as more intense forms of affective life. How might these literary reflections on cosmology and metamorphosis posit novel connections among the bodily passions, sensation, and the genesis of ideas? Meanwhile, early modern humoralism treated the body as a system of material flows of fire, water, earth, and air infused with animal spirits that shaped the senses and affected mood. How did theories of humoral embodiment account for oscillations between emotional eruption on one side and self-modifying, disciplinary ends on the other? And finally, the seminar will think through what historian Craig Koslofsky has called an increasing “nocturnalization” of early modern lived experience. What is the status of literal and figurative encounters with darkness in classical and early modern texts – such as Plato’s aversions to darkness in The Republic, Edmund Spenser’s scenes of nightfall and the flattening force of sleep in The Faerie Queene, Rene Descartes’s desire to “dispel the darkness” of his captive mind in Meditations, or the “darkness visible” of John Milton’s Hell in Book 1 of Paradise Lost? How might these latter early modern images rethink classical, humanist and Christian paradigms that link reason and morality with illumination, clarity of the senses, and good thinking? Readings include works by Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Ovid, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Descartes, Deleuze, Foucault, and current criticism on affect and emotion in early modern literary studies.

Primary Texts:

Heraclitus, Fragments
Plato, The Republic
Aristotle, De Anima
Seneca, On Anger
Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene
William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* and *King Lear*
Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*
Robert Herrick, *Hesperides*
John Milton, *Paradise Lost*
Andrew Marvell, *Selected Poems*

**Secondary Texts:**

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*
Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*
Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*

**Enrollment Limit:** 15
Not unlike the past eight years, the 1930s were a period of economic and social crisis brought on by capitalism’s tendency to encourage and reward the recklessness of the wealthy. Certain lives are more vulnerable to the precariousness of such times, owing both to vast gaps in wealth and resources and to the ways certain lives are represented as less valuable than others (cf., at the time of this writing, Flint, Michigan)—that is, to use a term of vital contemporary currency, which lives do and don’t “matter.” This collaborative, interdisciplinary seminar examines the construction of whiteness and class in the 1930s. We’ll look at how class, region, and labor inflected ideas about whiteness among intellectuals, writers, and artists, making poor and laboring whites a problem for the white supremacist assumptions (whether segregationist or liberal “tolerant”) underlying U. S. culture and politics. We’ll examine constructions of the relationship between whiteness and modernity, as evident in simultaneously romanticized and abject representations of poor rural whites in this period’s literature, music, and film. We’ll place our discussions within the shifting and incoherent historical accounts of the (non-)whiteness of European immigrants, and pay particularly close attention to the role played by ideas of blackness in the consolidation of the category “whiteness” across various ethnicities. We’ll examine the role of anti-black racism in the idea of “poor white trash.” We’ll also ask questions about how poverty and class shaped understandings of Southern whites as “deviants” from gender and sexual norms, feeding fantasies about their intimate lives, and resulting in a cultural genre that the American Studies scholar Michael Denning calls “the proletarian grotesque.”

However, the structure of this class will be untraditional. The first five weeks will focus on a close reading and discussion of one book: Let Us Now Praise Famous Men by writer James Agee and photographer Walker Evans (we will also read a couple of critical-historical texts, the popular novel Tobacco Road, and listen to some period music). In this inter-medial text, Agee and Evans employ both writing and photography to document the lives of three white Southern sharecropping families during the Great Depression (originally on assignment from Life magazine). While Evans’ work has become part of the canon of American art photography, Agee’s text veers drastically from the straightforward piece of investigative journalism Life’s editors had asked for. It persistently undermines itself, becoming knotted up in self-critique and in questions about the efficacy of “political art,” of how literature and photography work differently as documentary forms, and, in particular, in deep and tangled thinking about the ethics of representation. Agee turns the book into a series of literary gambits, trying out different modes of writing—narrative, thick description, history, ethnography, personal reflection and others—only to come up hard against the inadequacy of each for realizing what seems to be an ever-shifting project. In one famous section of the book, for example, he spends thirty pages painstakingly describing the contents of a single drawer of a bureau in
one family’s house. In another he writes frankly of his sexual attraction to the eldest
dughter of one of the families.

In other words, *LUNPFM* is a book about how knowledge is created, and about
the stakes of representation in the midst of serious social crisis. This seminar will enter
analogous territory. After we finish our reading of the fascinating, sometimes maddening
text, we will spend two weeks discussing, as a group, what we want to learn and how we
want to learn it—and why. That is, we will write the syllabus for the majority of the
course as a group. We may jettison some or all of the above questions, or add on to them.
Students will make the final decisions about what topics we cover, what we read, and will
be responsible for introducing the material and contextualizing it within the rest of the
class. In other words, *how* we study critical questions about race, class, and
representation is itself a topic of the class. Thus a significant amount of our time will be
spent engaged with questions such as these: How do we decide how to develop an
understanding of a text? What is *con*-text? What counts as research in doing so? What
makes an effective question? What counts as *knowledge*? What is the role of cultural,
political, and other types of history? In a seminar setting, where do we draw the limits
around the topic of the class, and why?

In order to deepen the effects of this displacement of basic assumptions, students
will be responsible for determining parameters of topics, assigning reading, writing study
questions, and leading discussion for the second half of the semester.

The seminar will culminate in a public symposium featuring a guest
respondent/interlocutor from outside of Haverford.

**Readings:**
Agee and Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*
Erskine Caldwell, *Tobacco Road*
Richard Dyer, “White”
Matthew Frye-Jacobson, “The Manufacture of Caucasians”

The rest TBD by the seminar.

**Requirements:**
Engaged and thoughtful participation in all collaborative aspects of the seminar listed
above, and the discussions that ensue.
Weekly journal/position paper
A symposium presentation
A final account of the class as a knowledge-producing project
A final paper of 10-15 pages
Topics in British Literature: Modernist Narratives

This course aims to study the historical, aesthetic, and epistemological features of literary modernism in Britain, and devotes particular attention to the narrative strategies writers develop to bring coherence and resolution to the experience of crisis and fragmentation associated with modernity. The term "modernism" has supported a critical tradition that understands early twentieth century literature as a self-conscious, programmatic attempt to forge a cultural practice and theory by a coterie eminently positioned to reflect and address a rapidly changing world. This course will be an opportunity to examine the contours and limits of this tradition. In the hands of many of the writers we will encounter during the semester, the modern becomes the focal point of cataclysmic change that threatens with dissolution all that is familiar and established in western culture. As such, the modern is wrought with the ambivalent potential for regenerative destruction, and the aesthetic becomes increasingly important as the still point of truth and the only reliable reference point in a world of flux. Our concern will be to investigate and pressure this reading of modernism through our encounters with the stubborn contradictions and vexatious questions posed by the texts we will be reading.

Our focus will be the compensatory function of the aesthetic and its historical emergence in modernist texts as the distinctive experience of uniquely presented objects. Taking the narrative as an instance of the aesthetic, we will explore the historical and political content of this form, paying attention to the strategies modernist narratives adopt as they attempt to synthesize and resolve the unsettling experience of modernity. To this end, we will study the formal experiments writers adopt to narrativize: the experience of time, the workings of the unconscious, the mutations wrought on lived experience by memory, and the perceived disruption of the sensorium by emerging technologies.

Texts:
Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes* (1911)
Ford Maddox Ford, *The Good Soldier* (1915)
James Joyce, *Portrait of An Artist as a Young Man* (1914-1915)
Rebecca West, *Return of the Soldier* (1918)
Virginia Woolf, *The Waves* (1931)

Critical essays by Watt, Cohn, Benjamin, Frank, Woolf, James, Morretti, Jameson, Williams, among others.

Course Requirements:
1. One short paper (5-7 pages long), a book report (5 pages long); a class presentation leading up to a research paper (10-15 pages); active participation in the seminar.

Pre-requisites: 2 200-level courses or consent of instructor.
one family’s house. In another he writes frankly of his sexual attraction to the eldest daughter of one of the families.

In other words, LUNPFM is a book about how knowledge is created, and about the stakes of representation in the midst of serious social crisis. This seminar will enter analogous territory. After we finish our reading of the fascinating, sometimes maddening text, we will spend two weeks discussing, as a group, what we want to learn and how we want to learn it—and why. That is, we will write the syllabus for the majority of the course as a group. We may jettison some or all of the above questions, or add on to them. Students will make the final decisions about what topics we cover, what we read, and will be responsible for introducing the material and contextualizing it within the rest of the class. In other words, how we study critical questions about race, class, and representation is itself a topic of the class. Thus a significant amount of our time will be spent engaged with questions such as these: How do we decide how to develop an understanding of a text? What is context? What counts as research in doing so? What makes an effective question? What counts as knowledge? What is the role of cultural, political, and other types of history? In a seminar setting, where do we draw the limits around the topic of the class, and why?

In order to deepen the effects of this displacement of basic assumptions, students will be responsible for determining parameters of topics, assigning reading, writing study questions, and leading discussion for the second half of the semester.

The seminar will culminate in a public symposium featuring a guest respondent/interlocutor from outside of Haverford.

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