

Spring 2010 Course Descriptions

English 101: Intro to Creative Writing

101 1: Lynn DeVore

101 2: Michael Theune

101 3: Brandi Reissenweber

101 4: Zarina Mullan Plath

Study of both the theory and practice of writing creatively. Reading and understanding of literary forms is combined with practice in the basic processes of and strategies for writing fiction, poetry, or drama. General Education credit in Fine Arts.

English 170 1: Women and Literature

Barbara Bowman

Women and fiction, as Virginia Woolf wrote in *A Room of One's Own*, "might mean . . . women and what they are like; or it might mean women and the fiction they write; or it might mean the fiction that is written about them." This course explores all three possibilities in varying degrees, for, as Woolf also noted, women and fiction also means "that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together."

This section of "Women and Literature" will begin by reading Woolf's *Room* in order to establish certain guiding principles. Beyond that, this course will focus on American women writers of the 20th century, with an emphasis on cultural diversity. We will read short stories, poetry, plays, and novels by such women authors as Amy Tan, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Alice Walker.

English 170 2: The Anti-Hero

Lynn DeVore

The central character in plays, novels, or short stories who displays attributes opposing those of traditional heroes is often called the anti-hero. While intriguing and engaging, anti-heroes always relate a search for identity and self-justification that ends in a new vision of their societies. Tracing this literary being affords an introduction to one of the most popular kinds of characters, to some classic pieces of literature, and to important historic and formal elements of literature.

English 170 3: The Short Story

Pamela Muirhead

We will examine the notion that story is the essence of all literature, even as we question what is essential for a text to be a story. In examining such ideas, we will study short stories from a variety of places to see what they suggest about the genre. We'll distinguish story (with beginning, middle, and end) from plot (which admits the uncertainty of beginnings and endings and everything in between), and we'll examine different styles of literary imagination as they engage us. In considering the traditional elements of fiction—plot, character, setting, point of view, thematic concerns—we will look at how those elements can propose and/or subvert meaning. We will consider, too, the limits of the short story: what it can and cannot accomplish. We will consider the kinds of fictions we offer ourselves and one another and try to discover what that says about us all.

English 170 4: Darkly Ever After
Bobbie Silk

Classic fairytales, such as Cinderella, are woven into the fabric of Western culture. These tales become analogies, archetypes, and metaphors for understanding our world. The word “fairytale” suggests something pleasant for children, but such tales appear to have arisen from the darker impulses in human nature. In this course, we will explore the “shadow” in the fairytale motif and selected fantasy literature. Texts and films will include works such as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the 1956 film *Forbidden Planet*, various versions of selected fairytales, as well as modern literary fairytales.

English 170 5: Slamming, Jamming, Understanding: Poetry through Performance
Michael Theune

About the experience of reading poetry, poet Jorie Graham writes, “Doing what I am asked to *do* is deeply different from interpreting what the poet means.” In this class, we'll engage poems by doing what they ask us to do, by encountering and experiencing them, their meaning and their music, with our whole selves: mind and body and voice. Class participants will perform a wide array of poems, from dramatic monologues to sound experiments, from prophetic blasts to subtle praise-songs, and reflect on their preparation and performances in short essays. As this class will focus on the performance of contemporary poetry, class participants should be adventurous and willing to experiment, or, at least, intrigued by the opportunity to try to be so.

English 170 6: The Short Story
Kathleen O’Gorman

What is essential for a text to be a story? To answer that question, we will study short stories from a variety of places to see what they suggest about the genre. We'll distinguish story from plot and examine different styles of literary imagination as they engage us. In

considering the traditional elements of fiction, we will look at how those elements can propose and/or subvert meaning. We will consider, too, the limits of the short story: what it can and cannot accomplish.

English 170 7: Travellers & Travel Liars

Daniel Terkla

In this course we will explore narratives of discovery, ranging from Homer's *Odyssey* to Thomas More's *Utopia*, from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* to Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*. Our purpose will be to discover what the purposes of travel—personal, political, social, imaginative—have been and how they change over time and from culture to culture. Other possible readings: *Wanderlust*, *The Birthday Boys*, *Invisible Cities*, *Inferno*, *A River Sutra*, and *Gulliver's Travels*, along with selections from the work of Annie Dillard and Michel de Montaigne.

English 202: Writing Poetry

Joanne Diaz

In this course, we will focus on the questions that any poet must address: how do we transform complex emotional and intellectual experiences into poems? What are the formal and rhetorical demands of poetry? How do music and metaphor work together to make a poem? We will also consider the crucial importance of revision in the creative process, and how satisfying that process can be on the journey toward finding your own voice and style.

English 206: Creative Nonfiction

Alison Sainsbury

Creative nonfiction is more easily defined by what it is not than by what it is: it is not poetry, not fiction, not report. Like poetry, like fiction, like report, however, creative nonfiction speaks truths about the world; its truth may not be told objectively like journalism, or “slant” like poetry, or through the parallel worlds of fiction, but creative nonfiction does tell stories, from life, faithful to detail and event, from the perspective of the reflective observer. This course, a workshop in reading and writing creative nonfiction, will focus on the fundamental aspects of the form. Class time will be spent in discussing readings, in informal writing (exercises, drafts, revisions, assessments) and in workshops on drafts of your essays.

English 220 1: Decade of Crescendo: Literature and Society in the 1850s

Robert Bray

The American 1850s constituted perhaps the most crucial decade the U. S. had faced since its founding as a nation. The slavery was being agitated as never before, and the political system strained to keep the Union whole: legislatively, the Compromise of 1850 (including the Fugitive Slave Act) and the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), which effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820; judicially, the Dred Scott decision in the Supreme Court (1857), which denied the any legal rights to slaves; and, politically, the foundation of the Republican Party (1854). But at the same time that the country was futilely struggling to avoid civil war, American writers produced some of the finest poetry, essays and fiction the U. S. has ever known. This course will examine major texts by authors like Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, Stowe, Emerson and Thoreau, with the goal in mind of how this literature both influenced and was influenced by the socio-political ‘crescendo’ of the 1850s.

English 220 2: 20th Century British/Irish Poetry
Kathleen O’Gorman

Beginning with World War I, this class will examine some of the ways in which poets have confronted the social, political, and aesthetic crises of the twentieth century. With selections from David Jones’s “In Parenthesis” and poems by Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, and Isaac Rosenberg, for example, we will study poetic responses to war in the trenches and on the home front. Jones and T.S. Eliot will provide an introduction to Modernism, which takes as one of its important points of departure the Cubist exhibit at the Grafton Gallery in London in 1910 and the challenge that the exhibit posed to all artistic expression. The course will then proceed in accordance with the following categories: The Thirties: poetry and politics in the generation of W. H. Auden (who himself volunteered in the Spanish Civil War); Neo-Romanticism and alternative models after 1945: Dylan Thomas, poets of “The Movement,” Geoffrey Hill; Women’s Voices of Resistance: U. A. Fanthorpe, Fleur Adcock, Frieda Downie, Elma Mitchell, Eavan Boland, Eiléan Ní Chuilléanáin; Nationalism and the Irish past: W.B. Yeats, John Montague, Seamus Heaney.

English 243: English Poetry, 1500-1700
Joanne Diaz

In this course, we will trace the ways in which early modern poets created an entirely new English literary tradition. We will ask: why were these poets drawn to the work of ancient Roman writers like Ovid and Virgil? How did Spenser and Milton use epic poetry to examine religious strife and political upheaval? How did women poets explore themes of love and desire? How did colonization and the scientific revolution transform early modern metaphors? Our readings will include work by Philip Sidney, Mary Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Katherine Philips, Andrew Marvell, and John Milton, among others. Regular attendance and participation, 1 presentation, and 3 papers are required for this course.

English 301 1: Seminar in Creative Writing: Fiction: The Short Story

Lynn DeVore

The short-story cycle is an ancient narrative tradition crossing genre and national boundaries. From *Homer* to the present, this fiction has flourished and established itself firmly in literary history. This course will function as a seminar and tutorial by first engaging students in reading cycles like Ernest Hemingway's *In Our Time*, reporting on the form, and then by starting their own short-story cycles.

English 301 2: Seminar in Creative Writing: Poetry: The Poetic Sequence

Joanne Diaz

In this course, poets will write a sequence—that is, a series of poems that are somehow related, whether it be thematically, formally, or rhetorically. We will consider the power of traditional forms such as the sonnet and ghazal; modes such as elegy, pastoral, and ode; and of course, free verse. Most of our attention will be devoted to the drafting and revision of student work; however, we will also discuss poetic sequences by established poets. Our reading list may include sequences by Agha Shahid Ali, Rita Dove, Cornelius Eady, C.S. Giscombe, Louise Glück, Marilyn Hacker, Jane Kenyon, Sharon Olds, D.A. Powell, and Brian Turner.

English 315: Seminar in Journalism: Public Relations

James Plath

This course is intended to give students background, theory, and practice in the field of public relations, with frequent guest lectures by working professionals on such topics as research, planning, policy statements, media relations, employee relations, and consumer relations. During the semester we will use chapters from the book as a starting point for our discussions and problem-solving exercises, and, in the spirit of both the "team" concept that often drives public relations management and also the "seminar" in academia, this course will operate as a true seminar. For a final project, students must create an inventive and viable plan for a real local organization.

English 341: Medieval Literature

Daniel Terkla

In this course, we'll read Insular (British) and Continental works written from the 9th to the 15th century. All but the Middle English texts will be modern translations from Latin, Old French, Provençal, Arabic, Mozarabic, and Welsh. We'll read exemplars from

various genres--elegy, epic, (dream) vision, (Marian and secular) lyric, chantfable and romance--and will watch *The Thirteenth Warrior* and *Anchoress*.

English 343: Restoration and the 18th Century
Barbara Bowman

We will read satire, romance, the epistolary novel, comedy of manners, sentimental comedy, laughing comedy, neoclassical tragedy, and mock forms by British authors writing between the years 1660 and 1789. They consider such issues as aristocratic decadence, wit as a moral touchstone, the emergence of the middle class, gender issues, and landscape as a reflector of inner states. I will emphasize drama and the novel over the poetry and will include Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Fielding's rollicking novel, *Tom Jones*, Goldsmith and some professional women writers.

English 354: American Literature since 1945: New Identities, New Communities
Pamela Muirhead

American literary voices of the late 20th century, particularly writers who redefine and re-map cultural, aesthetic, and national boundaries. We will focus on the expanded "canon" of ethnic and racial minorities, gays and lesbians, radicals, and women writers. Works by Toni Morrison, the Beats, Robert Hayden, Gwendolyn Brooks, Denise Levertov, Anne Sexton, James Wright, Hisaye Yamamoto, August Wilson, Audre Lorde, and David Henry Hwang, among others.

English 370: Issues in Contemporary American Poetry
Michael Theune

The contemporary American poetry scene is a roiling mass of aesthetic tensions, of creative and conceptual conflicts, which has produced some amazing (and not-so-amazing) new poetry and poetic theory. In order to better understand this scene, we will read and consider some of today's most influential recent poetic theory and most provocative poetry while investigating and charting key phenomena and trends, including the emergence of New Formalism, Language poetry, Post-Avant poetry, and slam. We will directly engage questions of critical evaluation: Is poetry still necessary? Why? What defines a great poem today?

English 380: Literary Theories
Wes Chapman

Literary Theories is divided into two parts. In the first part, designed to familiarize you with some of the main currents of contemporary literary theory, we will read primary and secondary materials explaining or exemplifying various theoretical approaches such as psychoanalysis, reader response, feminism, new historicism, and post-structuralism. In the second part, we will read a variety of texts from these schools and their antecedents that offer differing answers to questions explicitly or implicitly important in literary study, such as "what literature should we read?" and "what is the purpose of literature?" This course should develop your ability to recognize and understand common theoretical arguments, engage you in some of the crucial debates in literary studies today, help you to define your own position as a critic, and develop in you the critical thinking skills necessary for working with theoretical texts (such as summarizing accurately, analyzing assumptions and implications, making connections between disparate texts, and evaluating claims).

English 394: Shakespeare's Tragedies & Romances
Mary Ann Bushman

This course investigates the ways our culture is informed by Shakespeare's works and the ways in which we construct meaning from them. While focusing on the dramatic form we may occasionally include the sonnets and verse romances.

English 480 1: Senior Seminar: Brilliant Failures: Word, Image and Representation
Daniel Terkla

In this seminar we'll investigate ways in which artists have created and arranged space and manipulated time in various media. The basis of our interdisciplinary investigations into word-and-image theory will be Simonides of Ceos' dictum, *ut pictura poesis* ("as the painting so poem"), and W.J.T. Mitchell's *Iconology*. We'll tussle with these and other questions: Are verbal images capable of representing what visual images represent-and vice versa? Are there essential differences between word-and-image based systems of signification? Just what is an image? An icon? What are the cognitive processes that enable us to read verbal images and to "read" visual images? How do they work? How do we understand (and write about) a work of art that combines words with images?

English 480 2: Senior Seminar: Emily Dickinson and Friends
Robert Bray

Intensive comparative study of lyric sequences by the three most important 19th century American poets: The "Fascicles" of Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," and F.G. Tuckerman's "Sonnets: First Series" (all written between 1855 and 1863). We will spend the major part of our time on E.D.'s Fascicles, or manuscript books, looking at the mystery of the poet's having arranged and bound together certain groups of her poems. We will ask, among other questions: What are the fascicles? Why did E.D. construct them? For herself? For a particular private reader? For posterity? And what is their peculiar power? The critical test will be the extent to which each fascicle constitutes a lyric sequence—that is, a new, modern genre in which a series of individual short lyrics makes a larger artistic whole. To aid us in our work, we will employ the characterization of lyric sequence in Rosenthal and Gall's 1983 book, *The Modern Poetic Sequence*. Whitman and Tuckerman's work will serve as touchstones for comparison with E.D.-poems that are clearly lyric sequences ("Song of Myself") and poems that very probably are ("Sonnets: First Series"). The final product of our discoveries will be a major paper, a précis of which will be presented to the seminar; along the way, students will also give oral presentations, lead critical discussions, and present a "work-in-progress" essay around mid-term time.

English 480 3: Senior Seminar: Fictions of Empire
Alison Sainsbury

Rudyard Kipling may have written "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet," but the loyalties of his eponymous hero Kim are so thoroughly divided between East and West that he becomes known as "Little Friend of All the World." In this section of senior seminar we'll take up these questions of alterity and hybridity—otherness and the mutability of identity—in both classic and contemporary texts of empire. We'll begin with *Kim*, Kipling's rollicking novel of imperial identity; other texts will include E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, an uncertain critique of British assumptions of racial superiority; Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, whose main character Saleem, born at the "precise instant of India's arrival at independence," serves as both counterpart and challenge to Kim; and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, in which Britain's imperial chickens come home noisily to roost, re-making forever after what it means to be British.