



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

Department
of English

2020-2021
English Department
Course Catalog



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AUTUMN 2020

BA Courses

Autumn 2020

Romantic Natures | ENGL 20212

Timothy Campbell

Our survey of British Romantic literary culture will combine canonical texts (especially the major poetry) with consideration of the practices and institutions underwriting Romantic engagement with the natural world. We will also address foundational and recent critical-theoretical approaches to the many “natures” of Romanticism. Our contextual materials will engage the art of landscape, an influx of exotic and dangerously erotic flora, practices of collection and display, the emergent localism of the naturalist Gilbert White, the emergence of geological “deep time,” and the (literal) fruits of empire and vegetarianism. **(Poetry, 1650-1830)**

Irish Literature and Cinema | ENGL 18250

Jim Chandler

Irish literature in English from Swift to Anna Burns (Milkman), including Thomas Moore, Maria Edgeworth, Bram Stoker, Yeats, Synge, Joyce, O’Casey, Brian Friel and Seamus Heaney); Irish Cinema including films by John Ford, Neil Jordan, John Huston, Ken Loach, Lenny Abramson, Jim Sheridan, Kirsten Sheridan, John Crowley. **(Fiction, Poetry, Drama, 1650-1830, 1830-1940)**

Black in Colonial America: Three Women | ENGL 21785

Sarah Johnson

Through a survey of texts by and about Sally Hemings, Phillis Wheatley and Tituba, “the Indian,” we will consider the lives of three black women in colonial America. In this period of expansion and contraction of the concepts of race and bondage, what kind of “tellings” were possible for these women? By reading texts written as early as 1692 and as late as 2008, we will also consider how representations of these women have changed over time. Simplified by history as a witch, a poet and a mistress, the details of the lives of Tituba, Phillis and Sally resists these epithets. This course will ask why and how they remain present in the written record today, and what this teaches us about the formation of literary and historical canons. **(Fiction, 1650-1830)**

History of the Novel | ENGL 11004

Maud Ellman

This course examines the evolution of the novel from the 18th to the 21st century, and includes an introduction to theories of narrative. **(Fiction, 1650-1830, 1830-1940, Theory)**

The World's a Stage: Performance in Politics, Culture, and Everyday Life | ENGL 18660

John Muse

This course traces the history of the double-edged notion that the world might resemble a stage from its ancient roots to its current relevance in politics, social media, and gender expression, among other areas. We will explore these questions by reading performance texts and performance theory from classical to contemporary, by attending plays and watching films, and by visiting non-theatrical events in order to consider them as occasions for performance. **(Drama, Theory)**

20th Century Short Fiction | ENGL 10703

William Veeder

This course presents America's major writers of short fiction in the 20th century. We will begin with Willa Cather's "Paul's Case" in 1905 and proceed to the masters of High Modernism, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, Porter, Welty, Ellison, Nabokov; on through the next generation, O'Connor, Pynchon, Roth, Mukherjee, Coover, Carver; and end with more recent work by Danticat, Tan, and the microfictionists. Our initial effort with each text will be close reading, from which we will move out to consider questions of ethnicity, gender, and psychology. Writing is also an important concern of the course. There will be two papers and an individual tutorial with each student. **(Fiction, 1830-1940)**

Prime Times of American Television | ENGL 20240

Steven Maye

In this course, students will learn to articulate the formal features of scripted television dramas by considering examples from the late 1980s alongside more recent programs from the 2010s. They will practice describing how the formal features of a program articulate the world its viewers and activate those viewers' fantasies. They will learn to harmonize new ways of writing about television with new ways of watching it. And they will contextualize the formal innovations of one contemporary program using earlier experiments in televisual form. Series will likely include Magnum P.I., Dynasty, Hill Street Blues, thirtysomething, Star Trek: TNG, Twin Peaks, American Horror Story, Westworld, and Mindhunter. **(Drama, Theory)**

"I, too, am America": Ethnic Minority Poetry in the US | ENGL 19920

Geronimo Sarmiento-Cruz

This course is designed as a survey of the various minority traditions excluded from canonical understandings of the history of US poetry. Centered around the twentieth century yet bookended by earlier and later poetry, the course is divided into four sections: African American, Native American, Latinx, and Asian American. Among many others, we'll read poems by Myung Mi Kim, Amiri Baraka, Simon J. Ortiz, and Claudia Rankine. **(Poetry, Theory)**

Borders, Migration, and Refugees | ENGL 20040

Brandon Truett

This course explores the complex geopolitical issues of migration and national borders through visual and literary representations of the refugee in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Artists, writers, and theorists will include Sam Selvon, Roberto Bolaño, Mounira Al Solh, Viet Thanh Nguyen, and Ocean Vuong. **(Fiction, Poetry, Theory)**

Early Modern Women Writing Trauma | ENGL 21350

Beatrice Bradley

This course examines 16th and 17th century women's writing alongside the scholarship of trauma studies, with attention to themes of childbirth suffering, loss, and geographical displacement. How did early modern authors employ a vocabulary for individual and collective encounters with death, illness, violence, and emotional disturbance prior to the modern conceptualization of trauma in the 20th century? What displaced histories are we able to access by bringing sustained focus to women's writing? We will explore how early modern women articulate questions around suffering, personhood, and macro categories of identity (such as race, gender, class, and disability) as well as how their writing might reframe and/or disrupt the category of trauma in contemporary theory. Early modern authors of focus will include, among others, Aphra Behn, Elizabeth Carey, Margaret Cavendish, and Katherine Philips; we will also read widely across genres and time periods, with a syllabus that incorporates materials ranging from early modern midwifery treatises to contemporary drama.

Orientalisms | ENGL 19856

Jacob Harris

Orientalism: in the 19th century, this word referred both to the disciplined study of Asian cultures in Western academia, and to a school of European painting characterized by its fanciful and exotic depictions of Asia (and the Middle East in particular). Since Edward Said's landmark 1978 book of the same title, *Orientalism* has come to name a complex and historically varied Western tendency to relate to Asia on the terms of stereotyping fantasy. Surveying the development of orientalist themes from about 1890 to the present—including the craze for *japonisme* in late-19th century European art, and the mix-and-match approach to Eastern (and other) spiritualities that constitutes the “New Age”—this course unravels the tropes and conventions that have historically shaped how Asia is imagined, perceived, and represented in the modern West. Along the way, we will ask how and why orientalist tropes have historically framed the exploration of issues like gender, sexuality, cultural decline, and futurity. Starting with Said as a springboard, we'll read a series of literary and cinematic texts—Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera *The Mikado*, Wong Kar-Wai's film *In the Mood For Love*—alongside more recent theoretical accounts of orientalism by scholars such as Anne Anlin Cheng, Grace Lavery, and R John Williams. We will also look at the ways in which Asian writers and artists have adopted orientalist modes of representation for their own critical purposes. **(Pre-1650, 1650-1830, and theory)**

Introduction to Old English | ENGL 28404

Benjamin Saltzman

“Moððe word fræt.” These are the first words of a riddle that students will learn how to read in this course. As the first part of the Medieval Research Series, this course introduces students to the Old English language, the literary history of early medieval England, and current research tools and scholarship in the field of Old English. In studying the language, we will explore its diverse and exciting body of literature, including poems of heroic violence and lament, laws, medical recipes, and humorously obscene riddles. Successful completion of the course will give students a rich sense not only of the earliest period of English literary culture, but also of the structure of the English language as it is written and spoken today. **(Pre-1650)**

*This course is the first in a two quarter Medieval Research sequence. No prior experience with Old or Middle English is required. The second course in the Medieval Research sequence (Beowulf) will be offered in the Spring Quarter.

Screwing Up: Shame, Apology, and Gender Theory | ENGL 23130

Bellamy Mitchell

What does it feel like to be wrong? How do we know when we have “erred”, and who decides what’s right? How does feeling shame change how we think of ourselves and how we might behave in the future? What does the “normative” in heteronormative mean? In this class, we will use the question of normativity—senses of wrongness and rightness and how those judgments are articulated, navigated, and enforced—to explore foundational concepts in and across theories of gender and sexuality. We will also examine the social performances of apology, guilt, regret, and remorse that occur when individuals believe they have erred. We will examine ways in which gender and bodily regimes of normativity occur in and around scenes of discomfort, uncertainty, and insecurity as well as through infrastructures of legality and policing. This course pairs our central theoretical texts from feminist, queer, critical race and disability studies with literary texts, works of poetry, and contemporary cultural objects in order to examine how these questions are enacted in a variety of lived and literary perspectives.

Queer Letters and LGBTQ+ Lifeworlds | ENGL 23127

Sarah McDaniel

This course asks after the social and aesthetic possibilities of queer literatures, with a particular interest in such life-writing forms as the personal letter and epistolary (or electronic) correspondence. What, we will ask, can attending to specifically LGBTQ+ correspondences and life-writings teach us about minoritarian lifeworlds and literary canons? And, vice versa, how does an attention to the sub- or counter-cultural spaces of queer literary production change the way we read even canonical literary texts? We will visit a variety of LGBTQ+ literary lifeworlds across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – between London, Paris, New York, San Francisco – and engage a wide range of texts and media that represent and encode queer social circuits: collected correspondences, coterie literatures, auto/biographies, memoirs, poetry, and film. In so doing, we will develop a backdrop of queer theoretical scholarship devoted to questions of community-

making, subcultural space and belonging, and queer time, including the work of José Esteban Muñoz, Juana María Rodríguez, Elizabeth Freeman, and Jack Halberstam. In addition to a self-designed archival, analytical, or creative final project, we will also hone archival research strategies through two excursions to local archives and experiment with creative and collaborative strategies for reading and writing as we challenge ourselves to think from the position of correspondents.

Empire and the Novel | ENGL 21690

Rebeca Velasquez

This course investigates how the rise of the nineteenth-century British novel is intimately linked to the expansion of the British Empire. Many understand that this empire was based on unfair trade relations, indigenous genocide, and the exploitative labor of millions, but it can be difficult at times to see how this atrocious history fits into the domestic and metropolitan realism of the novel. How does the practice of imperialism impact the conventions of domestic fiction? How are the novel's constructions of gender, race, and class related to the political status of colonized peoples? Our focus will be to connect narrative form with the realities of imperialism and colonial rule, but we will also draw on other genres of nineteenth-century cultural production such as print journalism, visual art, and political essays in order to help us trace the sociopolitical conditions that made empire possible. Fictional readings may include work by Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, Olive Schreiner, and others. We will utilize our access to colonial archives in London with possible field trips to the British Library and the Victoria & Albert Museum, among other outings throughout the city. Assignments include weekly Canvas posts, a close-reading exercise, a 4-5-page reflection paper on an archival object, and a 6-7-page final paper. **(Fiction, 1830-1940, Theory)**

MA Courses

Autumn 2020

Introduction to Old English | ENGL 38404

Benjamin Saltzman

“Moððe word fræt.” These are the first words of a riddle that students will learn how to read in this course. As the first part of the Medieval Research Series, this course introduces students to the Old English language, the literary history of early medieval England, and current research tools and scholarship in the field of Old English. In studying the language, we will explore its diverse and exciting body of literature, including poems of heroic violence and lament, laws, medical recipes, and humorously obscene riddles. Successful completion of the course will give students a rich sense not only of the earliest period of English literary culture, but also of the structure of the English language as it is written and spoken today. **(Med/Ren)**

*This course is the first in a two quarter Medieval Research sequence. No prior experience with Old or Middle English is required. The second course in the Medieval Research sequence (Beowulf) will be offered in the Spring Quarter.

Hymns | ENGL 32104

Frances Ferguson

The course will track hymns from the early modern period through the late eighteenth century. We'll examine the evolution of the hymn as a literary form, focusing on obsolescence and adaptation in literary transmission. We'll start with the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible, and analyze psalters (such as the one produced by Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, and her brother, Sir Philip Sidney) and the metrical psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins that were used in Anglican services. We'll then take up the development of congregational hymns, hymns sung by everyone in a congregation, to track the way that literary adaptation among Dissenters became both common and controversial. We'll look at Isaac Watts's multiple hymns for each of the Psalms, his later Hymns and Spiritual Songs, and his Divine Songs for children to get at the importance he and other Dissenters (such as Anna Letitia Barbauld) attached to supplying words to all who could sing or say them. We'll end with a discussion of “Amazing Grace” and its use in the British abolition movement, and with a discussion of the movement of the literary hymn away from religion altogether in literary hymns, Shelley's and Keats's odes. **(18th/19th)**

Hemispheric Studies | ENGL 42103

Rachel Galvin

This course examines Hemispheric Studies approaches to the literatures and cultures of the Americas, which combines a commitment to comparatism with attention to the specificities of local contexts ranging from the Southern Cone to the Caribbean to North America. Theories drawn from American Studies, Canadian Studies, Caribbean Studies, Latin American Studies, Poetry and Poetics, Postcolonial Studies, and U.S. Latinx Studies will be explored in relation to literature written

primarily but not exclusively in the 20th and 21st centuries by writers residing throughout the Americas. We'll examine recent, innovative studies being published by contemporary scholars working with Hemispheric methods across several fields. We'll also consider the politics of academic field formation, debating the theories and uses of a method that takes the American hemisphere as its primary frame yet does not take the U.S. as the default point of departure; and the conceptual and political limitations of such an approach. No knowledge of Spanish, French, or Portuguese is required. **(20th/21st)**

Toni Morrison, beloved and a mercy | ENGL 31285

Sarah Johnson

"How lovely it is, this thing we have done - together."

Beginning with Morrison's 1993 Nobel Prize Lecture, this class will read (for many reread) two of Toni Morrison's novels that pose the house and household as a "site of memory" in which to dramatize gendered histories of race in North America. Our class will annotate together *Beloved* and *A Mercy* with the essays, films, poetry of various scholars, in addition to some of Morrison's literary critical and historical writings. Our in-depth reading of these two works will provide a foundation for engaging in ongoing debates about race and writing in literary studies, black feminists critiques of the classroom, and histories of race-based slavery in North America. If, as Morrison contends, "language" teaches us "how to see without pictures" and that "language alone protects us from the scariness of things with no names," we will aim to hold language close as we consider "what moves at the margin. What it is to have no home in this place. To be set adrift from the one you knew. What it is to live at the edge of towns that cannot bear your company." **(20th/21st)**

Poetics | ENGL 34800

John Wilkinson

In this course, we will study poetry 'in the abstract'. We will study various efforts on the part of philosophers, literary critics, and poets themselves to formulate theories of poetic discourse. We will examine a range of historical attempts to conceptualize poetry as a particular kind of language practice, from German Romanticism to ecopoetics and beyond. **(18th/19th, 20th/21st)**

Imagining the City | ENGL 35605

Lawrence Rothfield

The rise of the modern city makes possible new modes of experience, new kinds of people and personality, and new kinds of stories. Texts include Gaskell, *North and South*; Dickens, *Hard Times*; Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; Conan Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*; Wilde, *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*; Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*.

PhD Courses

Autumn 2020

Edgeworth, Austen, Scott | ENGL 52620

Jim Chandler

Three novelists—one Irish, one English, one Scottish—who were formative for several crucial developments in subsequent fiction: various strands of realism, the relationship between fiction and ethnography, the emergence of the national tale and the historical novel, techniques of narrative such as FID, and fictional treatment of education, science, political economy, and empire.

Edgeworth, the least familiar name, is a remarkable writer and intellect, an innovator long neglected in Britain because she's Irish and in Ireland because she's Protestant. She produced a body work that was crucial for both Austen and Scott, different as they were between themselves, not to mention for later writers as different as Emily Bronte and Kasuo Ishiguro. Her rehabilitation, like Scott's, is under way but has a long way to go. There is work to be done there. Students will also have the opportunity to work on later novelists whose work was importantly shaped by any writer in this influential trio: domestic fiction after Austen, historical fiction after Scott, and so on. Belinda McKeon's *Solace*, for example, centers on an Irish graduate student whose dissertation is about Edgeworth. **(18th/19th)**

Breathing Matters: Poetics and Politics of Air | ENGL 50430

Jen Scappettone

This seminar will re-examine the notion of “inspiration” in its aesthetic and historical senses, revisiting textual and arts practices based on tropes of channeling, revelation, and possession as well as those based on embodied, performative and eco-conscious notions of circulation, interconnection, transformation, and receptivity. We will delve into the workings of air as an animating element that bridges and binds individuals to both internal and external forces. We will explore the long history of engagement with this element as it has been used to signify and enhance the circulation and interception of signs, dreams, and voices in literature, performance, audiovisual and electronic media, sculptural and architectural sites. We will examine the modern and contemporary politicization of air as a commons, and apply ourselves to the analysis and critique of industrial and post-industrial landscapes. A wide range of readings and viewings will include work by Hesiod, Coleridge, John Ruskin, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Frank O'Hara, Charles Olson, Ant Farm, Meredith Monk, Adriana Cavarero, Mladen Dolar, Nathaniel Mackey, Jorge Otero-Pailos, Latasha N. Nevada-Diggs, and many others. **(20th/21st)**

WINTER 2021

BA Courses

Winter 2021

Black Speculative Fiction | ENGL 21223

Sophia Azeb

This course familiarizes students with Black literary speculative fiction, sci-fi, and fantasy. The objective of this course is to read Black speculative fiction alongside the historical contexts the assigned works speak to, as well as orient students to the radical re/imaginings of Black pasts, presents, and futures in the novels and short films at the center of the course. This class will pay particular attention to Black diasporic/international contributions to the genre. **(Fiction, Theory)**

Romanticism | ENGL 25260

Jim Chandler

In depth study of the period literature across poetry and fiction. Poetry: not just the canonical “big six” but also selections from the expanded horizon that includes once neglected women poets, as well as Robert Burns, Thomas Moore, John Clare. Fiction might include works by Godwin, Austen, Mary Shelley, and Walter Scott. Some attention will be paid as well to Romanticism as a fertile source for criticism and theory over the decades. **(1650-1830, Theory)**

Introduction to Latinx Literature | ENGL 11008

Rachel Galvin

From the activist literature of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement to contemporary fiction and poetry, this course explores the forms, aesthetics, and political engagements of U.S. Latinx literature in the 20th and 21st centuries. Theoretical readings are drawn from Chicana Studies, Latinx Studies, American Studies, Latin American Studies, Hemispheric Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Postcolonial Studies, as we explore Latinx literature in the context of current debates about globalization, neoliberalism, and U.S. foreign policy; Latinx literature’s response to technological and socio-political changes and its engagement with race, gender, sexuality, class, and labor; and its dialogues with indigenous, Latin American, North American, and European literatures. **(Poetry, 1830-1940, Theory)**

Coming of Age: Autobiography, Bildungsroman, and Memoir in Victorian Britain and its Empire | ENGL 20266

Elaine Hadley

In this course, we will consider the broad generic category of “coming of age” stories that characterized the literary writing of the nineteenth century. Across several different kinds of writing, a focus on the growth and development of the child into adulthood became an obsessive focus. We will read autobiographies by Mill and Martineau, Bildungsroman by Bronte and Eliot, memoirs by Dickens but also lesser known figures: working class autodidacts, women in childbirth, colonial

subjects. We will, along the way, learn more about Victorian childhood, the emergence of developmental psychology, psychoanalysis, and the socio-psychological “invention” of adolescence. **(1830-1940)**

Brecht and Beyond | ENGL 24400

Loren Kruger

Brecht is indisputably the most influential playwright in the 20th century, but his influence on film theory and practice and on cultural theory generally is also considerable. In this course we will explore the range and variety of Brecht's own theatre, from the anarchic plays of the 1920's to the agitprop Lehrstück and film esp *Kühle Wampe*) to the classical parable plays, as well as the work of his heirs in German theatre (Heiner Müller, Peter Weiss) and film (RW Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge), in French film (Jean-Luc Godard) and cultural theory (the Situationists and May 68), film and theatre in Britain (Mike Leigh and Lucy Prebble), and theatre and film in Africa, from South Africa to Senegal. **(Drama, 1830-1940)**

*NOTE: This is *not* a basic intro course: background in one or more of the following areas is essential: Intro to film/international cinema AND/OR TAPS AND/OR German or French.

*This course also includes a weekly screening session.

Shakespeare I: Histories and Comedies | ENGL 16500

Ellen MacKay

An exploration of some of Shakespeare's major plays from the first half of his professional career when the genres in which he primarily worked were comedies and (English) histories. Plays to be studied include *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Richard III*, *Richard II*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, and *Henry V*. A shorter and a longer paper will be required. **(Pre-1650, Drama)**

Some Versions of Apocalypse | ENGL 15107

Mark Miller

From prophetic texts of the ancient world to today's fascination with zombie plagues, environmental disaster, and nuclear winter, the genre of apocalypse has given extraordinarily fertile expression to religious, moral, political, and economic beliefs and anxieties. In this course we will explore what is both fearful and alluring about catastrophe on an unimaginable scale, as we read and view apocalyptic works across a wide historical range. (Fiction)

Fundamentals of Literary Criticism | ENGL 11200

Sianne Ngai

An introduction to the practice of literary and cultural criticism over the centuries, with a particular emphasis on theoretical debates about meaning and interpretation in the late 20th century and present. Critics and theorists will include Sigmund Freud, Roland Barthes, Barbara Johnson, Raymond Williams, Saidya Hartman, Eve Sedgwick, René Girard, Jacques Derrida, Fredric Jameson, Lauren Berlant, Catherine Gallagher and others. **(Genre Fundamentals, Theory)**

Literature, Medicine, and Embodiment | ENGL 10620

Julie Orlemanski

This class explores the connections between imaginative writing and embodiment, especially as bodies have been understood, cared for, and experienced in the framework of medicine. We'll read texts that address sickness, healing, diagnosis, disability, and expertise. The class also introduces a number of related theoretical approaches, including the medical humanities, disability studies, narrative medicine, the history of the body, and the history of science. **(Pre-1650, 1830-1940, Theory)**

Gender and Sexuality in a Transnational World | ENGL 25262

Kaneesha Parsard

This course, through attention to critical theory and expressive cultures, surveys gender and sexuality across time and place. Students will learn about theories of sex, gender, and sexuality; colonialisms and nationalisms; social movements; and war, migration, and technology. **(Fiction, Theory)**

Genre Fundamentals: Drama | ENGL 10606

Tina Post

This course explores the unique challenges of experiencing performance through the page. Students will read plays and performances closely, taking into account not only form, character, plot, and genre, but also theatrical considerations like staging, acting, spectatorship, and historical conventions. We will also consider how various agents—playwrights, readers, directors, actors, and audiences—generate plays and give them meaning. While the course is not intended as a survey of dramatic literature or theater history, students will be introduced to a variety of plays from across the dramatic tradition. **(Genre Fundamentals, Drama)**

The Declaration of Independence | ENGL 17950

Eric Slauter

This course offers an extended investigation of the origins, meanings, and legacies of one of the most consequential documents in world history: the Declaration of Independence. Primary and secondary readings provide a series of philosophical, political, economic, social, religious, literary,

and legal perspectives on the text's sources and meanings; its drafting, circulation, and early reception in the age of the American Revolution; and its changing place in American culture and world politics over nearly 250 years. **(1650-1830, 1830-1940)**

Religious Poetry from Donne to Eliot | ENGL 17516

Richard Strier

This course will study some of the greatest religious poems in our language, focusing on major poets in the 17th century (Donne & Herbert), in the 19th century (Dickinson & Hopkins), and in the 20th century, where we will study T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets in its entirety. Mid-term exercise and final paper required. **(Poetry, Pre-1650, 1830-1940)**

*Prerequisite: Must have completed HumCore & 1 other poetry course

Battle of the Genres in Long Eighteenth-Century British Literature | ENGL 27340

Lauren Schachter

This course investigates a battle of genres—primarily of poem versus prose—that twists and turns through much eighteenth- and early nineteenth century writing. Around 1700, the traditional poetic forms such as verse satire and the ode reigned; there were no novels per se, only genre-defying prose fictions by the likes of Eliza Haywood and Aphra Behn. Yet by 1800, not only was the novel a household name but poetry was undergoing an identity crisis of its own, also known as Romanticism: the expressive "I" of the lyric developed in tension with the narrative of epic, not to mention the narrative form of prose. Together, we will ask: How did the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century contend with the classical authority of poetry? How did poems and their reception change in relation to the novel's development and standardization? How did various literary genres differently revive old forms, like the gothic? We'll read works by authors including Dryden, Pope, Haywood, and Behn, as well as Richardson, Macpherson, Radcliffe, Cowper, Smith, Blake, Coleridge, and William and Dorothy Wordsworth. We'll draw critical readings from Aristotle's Poetics, Jean-Jacque Rousseau, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Mikhail Bakhtin, Gérard Genette, Jacques Derrida, and Gabrielle Starr, among others. **(Poetry, Fiction, 1650-1830)**

Forms of Autobiography in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries | ENGL 24526

Christine Fourinaies

This course examines the innovative, creative forms autobiography has taken in the last one hundred years in literature. We will study closely works written between 1933 and 2013 that are exceptional for the way they challenge, subvert and invigorate the autobiographical genre. From unpublished sketches to magazine essays and full-length books, we will see autobiography take many forms and engage with multiple genres and media. These include biography, memoir, fiction, literary criticism, travel literature, the graphic novel and photography. Producing various mutations of the autobiographical genre, these works address some of the same concerns: the self, truth, memory, authenticity, agency and testimony. We will complement discussions of these universal issues with material and historical considerations, examining how the works first appeared and were received. Autobiography will prove a privileged site for probing constructions of family narratives, identity politics and public personas. The main authors studied are Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, James Baldwin, Vladimir Nabokov, Roland Barthes, Paul Auster, Doris Lessing, Marjane Satrapi and W.G. Sebald.

Old English Riddles (Med. Research Sequence II) | ENGL 28405

Ben Saltzman

In this course, we will read and translate all of the Exeter Book Riddles from Old English, attending closely to issues of language, paleography, textual cruxes, and—of course—interpretation. In an effort to understand these riddles within a broader early medieval tradition of enigmatic poetry, we will also read several Old English charms as well as Anglo-Latin riddles in translation. Emphasis will also be placed on the history of scholarship on early medieval riddles, and over the course of the term, each student will produce a piece original scholarly research that engages with a riddle or set of riddles and the critical tradition. **(Pre-1650, Poetry)**

Writing of the Working Class | ENGL 15260

Kevin King

From prophetic texts of the ancient world to today's fascination with zombie plagues, environmental disaster, and nuclear winter, the genre of apocalypse has given extraordinarily fertile expression to religious, moral, political, and economic beliefs and anxieties. In this course we will explore what is both fearful and alluring about catastrophe on an unimaginable scale, as we read and view apocalyptic works across a wide historical range. **(Fiction)**

Text as Data: Interpretation in the Digital Humanities | ENGL 19570

Jordan Pruett

In recent years, the digitization of large text archives has enabled new ways of researching culture and history at scale. This course gives students a conceptual, beginner-level introduction to these methods, which are sometimes referred to as the “digital humanities.” How does literary and cultural history look different when seen from the point of view of an entire nation

or society rather than from the point of view of an individual reader? What can we learn about, for instance, the history of tabloids, the rise of the novel, or the political struggles of nineteenth century Black organizers? The course itself presumes no technical expertise whatsoever. Rather, we will explore tools and archives designed for beginners and non-specialists. Our focus will be on the philosophical and interpretive aspects of quantitative research in the humanities rather than on techniques. **(Fiction, 1830-1940, Theory)**

Protest Puppetry: Materializing American Publicness | ENGL 16004

Marissa Fenley

This course will explore the structural dynamics of protests through a close examination of giant puppets. We will engage with both practices and theories of protest puppetry. You will learn how to craft insurgent objects out papier maché and other found materials. We will think through this practice alongside theories of the public sphere and ethnographies of protests, uprisings and social movements (on the left and the right) from the 1960s to the present day. Rather than maintain the division between theory and practice, we will investigate the ways in which social movements mobilize theory as liberatory practice and how the practice of “puppetganda” generates theories of publicity from the mechanical and technical demands it makes on its puppeteers, participants and spectators. We will study specific protest events, from pioneers of the artform like Bread and Puppet in the 1960s to the height of protest puppetry during the environmental and global justice movements in the 1980s-2000s. We will ask why protest puppets were especially popular during the rise of neoliberalism and ultimately examine their usefulness in today’s political climate in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement and Black uprising as well as the alt-right “rally.” **(Drama, Theory)**

Women of the Avant-Garde | ENGL 12106

Rivky Mondal

This course provides an introduction to the written materials of women artists who belonged to various twentieth-century avant-garde movements and circles. The institutions of “woman art” and “the avant-garde” will come under scrutiny as we consider the literary and archival miscellany of pan- & non-sexual, cross-generational, inter-aesthetic, multilingual, and transnational works by such makers as Gertrude Stein, Gwendolyn Brooks, Clarice Lispector, Frida Kahlo, and Yoko Ono. How do these artists conceive of their work and process as interventions into social, political, and historical realities? How does their subjective view of those realities provide an account of the identificatory powers of their gender and sexuality? We will examine the ways in which abstraction in writing becomes useful for commenting on issues raised by feminist and queer theory, periodization, canonization, and institution.

Taking to the Regenstein’s Special Collections Research Center, we will also open up the criticism, diaries, and letters of these artists to gain a new perspective on their creative processes. In addition to learning how to constellate these materials with the course readings, students will acquire hands-on experience in archival research, annotation, and curation as they make an archival project of their own. Students’ final projects will serve as the basis for a prospective library exhibition in concert with Special Collections.

Our biopolitics, ourselves: feminist science fiction | ENGL 21310

Hilary Strang

1970s feminist theory made a significant conceptual move in provisionally bracketing off biological sex from the historical/cultural work of gender. Feminist science fiction (in contrast), in its brief flourishing in the 70s and early 80s, finds its utopian moments in the biological, in genetic manipulation, reproductive technology, ecological forms of being and new bodies of a variety of kinds. This class will read science fiction, feminist theory and current critical work that concerns itself with biopolitics in order to ask questions about the divide between nature and culture, what's entailed in imagining the future, what gender and genre might have to do with each other, and just what science fiction is and does anyway. Authors include: Le Guin, Russ, Butler, Piercy, Haraway, Rubin, Firestone.

MA Courses

Winter 2021

Forms of Autobiography in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries | ENGL 34526 Christine Fournaies

This course examines the innovative, creative forms autobiography has taken in the last one hundred years in literature. We will study closely works written between 1933 and 2013 that are exceptional for the way they challenge, subvert and invigorate the autobiographical genre. From unpublished sketches to magazine essays and full-length books, we will see autobiography take many forms and engage with multiple genres and media. These include biography, memoir, fiction, literary criticism, travel literature, the graphic novel and photography. Producing various mutations of the autobiographical genre, these works address some of the same concerns: the self, truth, memory, authenticity, agency and testimony. We will complement discussions of these universal issues with material and historical considerations, examining how the works first appeared and were received. Autobiography will prove a privileged site for probing constructions of family narratives, identity politics and public personas. The main authors studied are Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, James Baldwin, Vladimir Nabokov, Roland Barthes, Paul Auster, Doris Lessing, Marjane Satrapi and W.G. Sebald.

Old English Riddles (Med. Research Sequence II) | ENGL 38405 Ben Saltzman

In this course, we will read and translate all of the Exeter Book Riddles from Old English, attending closely to issues of language, paleography, textual cruxes, and—of course—interpretation. In an effort to understand these riddles within a broader early medieval tradition of enigmatic poetry, we will also read several Old English charms as well as Anglo-Latin riddles in translation. Emphasis will also be placed on the history of scholarship on early medieval riddles, and over the course of the term, each student will produce a piece original scholarly research that engages with a riddle or set of riddles and the critical tradition. **(Pre-1650, Poetry)**

Readings in Exile | ENGL 34240 Sophia Azeb

This course will read across “subaltern” autobiographical and literary narratives of exile in order to interrogate the condition of exile in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. How is the exile discursively distinguished from the refugee, the migrant, the immigrant? How do the various origins and forms of exile – emergent from colonialism, war, racism, xenophobia, political dissidence, and dispossession – inform our understanding of these broader global machinations? Readings will include works by Edward Said, Kathleen Neal Cleaver, Stuart Hall, and Mahmoud Darwish, among others. **(20th/21st)**

Richer and Poorer: Income Inequality | ENGL 36251

Elaine Hadley

Current political and recent academic debate have centered on income or wealth inequality. Data suggests a rapidly growing divergence between those earners at the bottom and those at the top. This course seeks to place that current concern in conversation with a range of moments in nineteenth and twentieth century history when literature and economics converged on questions of economic inequality. In keeping with recent political economic scholarship by Thomas Piketty, we will be adopting a long historic view and a somewhat wide geographic scale as we explore how economic inequality is represented, measured, assessed and addressed. **(18th/19th, 20th/21st)**

Women and the Enlightenment | ENGL 36017

Heather Keenleyside

This course will study women's relation to the intellectual and political culture of Enlightenment, as both subjects and objects of enquiry. We will examine how writers of this period imagined sexual difference and the category of "woman"; envisioned women's education and the life of the mind; came to understand women as consumers and creators of culture, as well as agents of sociability, civilization and historical change. Throughout, we will consider the relationship between gender and key Enlightenment ideals of rationality, autonomy, civility, progress, and political liberty. **(18th/19th)**

Virtual Theaters | ENGL 32312

John Muse

This course probes the nature and limits of theater by exploring a range of theatrical texts from various centuries whose relation to performance is either partially or fully virtual, including philosophical dialogues, closet dramas, novel chapters in dramatic form, drama on social media, digital theater, algorithmic theater, mixed reality performance, and transmedia games. **(20th/21st)**

Figura, Persona, Vox: Prosopopoeia in the Middle Ages | ENGL 35418

Julie Orlemanski

This course considers fictional persons, tropes of anthropomorphism and vivification, and personificational allegory as these operate in the theory and practice of medieval imaginative writing. In addition, it places practices of prosopopoeia within ongoing scholarly conversations about lyric voice, literary character, affect, the ontology of fiction, and the relation of speech to writing. **(Med/Ren)**

Jamaica Kincaid and Naipaul | ENGL 36233

Kaneesha Parsard

This course focuses on the works of Jamaica Kincaid, V.S. Naipaul (whom cultural critic Shalini Puri once called a “postcolonial skeptic”), and their interlocutors. We will read fiction and non-fiction alike to investigate history, debt, and violence and the act of writing about the postcolony from the Global North. **(20th/21st)**

Exploratory Translation | ENGL 42260

Jen Scappettone

Translation is one of the central mechanisms of literary creativity across the world. This course will offer opportunities to think through both the theory and practice of this art form and means of cultural transmission, focusing on the problems of translation of and by poets in a variety of languages: it will emphasize precisely the genre most easily “lost in translation,” as the truism goes. Topics to be discussed will include semantic and grammatical interference, loss and gain, the production of difference, pidgin, translationese, bilingualism, self-translation, code-switching, translation as metaphor, foreignization vs. nativization, and distinct histories of translation. The workshop will offer students a chance to try their hands at a range of tactics of translation. **(20th/21st)**

Our biopolitics, ourselves: feminist science fiction | ENGL 41310 (MAPH 41310)

Hilary Strang

1970s feminist theory made a significant conceptual move in provisionally bracketing off biological sex from the historical/cultural work of gender. Feminist science fiction (in contrast), in its brief flourishing in the 70s and early 80s, finds its utopian moments in the biological, in genetic manipulation, reproductive technology, ecological forms of being and new bodies of a variety of kinds. This class will read science fiction, feminist theory and current critical work that concerns itself with biopolitics in order to ask questions about the divide between nature and culture, what's entailed in imagining the future, what gender and genre might have to do with each other, and just what science fiction is and does anyway. Authors include: Le Guin, Russ, Butler, Piercy, Haraway, Rubin, Firestone.

PhD Courses

Winter 2021

The Arts of Life | ENGL 52404

Tim Campbell

By foregrounding significant Enlightenment and Romantic configurations of the problem of the “arts of life,” this course examines the mobile border between aesthetics and necessity in the long eighteenth century moment and in our own. In *The Arts of Life* (1802), John Aikin surveys the means of provision of food, clothing, and shelter in the Romantic age by means of a watchword distinction between those arts either “absolutely necessary for life’s preservation” or “conducive to comfort and convenience,” as against those “ministering to luxury and pleasure.” The same idea memorably animates the aesthetic counter-tradition running from William Blake’s “arts of life and death” to William Morris’s “lesser arts of life.”

In contextualizing the problem of the “arts of life,” we will resurrect productive historical thinking about an aesthetics that inextricably inheres within practices “necessary for the preservation of life.” We will explore the enduring vitality of such a notion in our own moment of ecological crisis and of casualized cultural arts (marked by eclipsed autonomy for art’s producers, consumers, and critics alike), with particular focus on new directions in design theory and the affordances of form; on literature’s evolving location among the “arts of life”; and on the present reinvigoration of craft and design in popular visions of the aesthetic. **(18th/19th, 20th/21st)**

Renaissance Quanta and Renaissance Drama | ENGL 50240

Ellen MacKay

One effect of early English capitalism is its raising of the question, what constitutes a lot? and its practical correlate, how is abundance to be measured? This course reads early modern drama and popular print alongside inventories, bills of mortality, and other evidence of social and object quantification to study the separation of things from stuff and commoners from the commonity. **(Med/Ren)**

SPRING 2021

BA Courses

Spring 2021

Black in the City | ENGL 27008

Adrienne Brown

Moving from literature written during the early Jim Crow era to contemporary hip hop, this course will look at the ways black artists have staged encounters with urban space. We will pay close attention to not just how black artists have represented the city but the methodologies they have experimented with in studying and surviving it. From the juxtaposition of Southern and Northern cities in pre and post-Great Migration literature, to Gwendolyn Brooks' mid-century experiments in urban seeing, Spike Lee's staged urban explosions and Kendrick Lamar's Compton soundscapes, this course complicates both the dreams and the despairs yoked to being black in the city. **(Fiction, 1830-1940, Theory)**

Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley | ENGL 19500

Alexis Chema

This course examines the major works—novels, political treatises, letters, travel essays—of two of Romanticism's most influential women writers. We will attend to historical, intellectual, and cultural contexts as well as matters of literary concern, such as their pioneering development of modes like gothic and science/speculative fiction, Wollstonecraft's stylistic theories, and Shelley's scenes of imaginative sympathy. **(Fiction, 1650-1830)**

Inventing Consciousness: Literature, Philosophy, Psychology | ENGL 12720

Timothy Harrison

What is consciousness? What is it like to be conscious? This course answers these questions by examining the emergence and development of consciousness as a concept. As a phenomenon, consciousness probably came into being deep in evolutionary time. Yet as a concept consciousness is relatively new: the European notion of consciousness emerges in the late seventeenth century. This course draws on literature, history, philosophy, and psychology to examine how the concept of consciousness came to possess its explanatory dominance. We will start by acquiring a sense of what consciousness now means in philosophy, biology, neuroscience, and fiction, paying particular attention to how the concept differs from similar ideas in ancient Indian philosophy. We will then turn to two important historical moments. First, we will examine the interplay between philosophy and literature in the late seventeenth century, reading texts by René Descartes, John Milton, Thomas Traherne, and John Locke. Second, we will focus on how, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the psychology of William James relates to the “stream of consciousness” techniques in the work of Virginia Woolf. This course stresses historical contingency—consciousness has a birthdate—in order to explore a consequence that follows from this fact: the extent to which current uses of this concept are still shaped by the historical circumstances that conditioned its emergence. **(Pre-1650, 1650-1830)**

The Future | ENGL 13512

Bill Brown

This course focuses on the future as imagined by American science fiction of the 20th century. On the one hand, we will pay attention to the scientific, political, and cultural contexts from which particular visions of the future emerged; on the other, we will work to develop an overarching sense of science fiction as a genre. We will deploy different analytical paradigms (Formalist, Marxist, Feminist, &c.) to apprehend the stakes and the strategies for imagining future worlds. After some initial attention to the magazine and pulp culture that helped to establish the genre, we will spotlight major SF movements (Afro Futurism, Cyberpunk, Biopunk, etc.) and major authors (including Robert Heinlein, Philip K. Dick, Ursula K. Le Guin, Samuel R. Delaney, William Gibson, and Octavia Butler). Finally, we will use this 20th-century history to think about 21st-century SF work in different media (e.g., film, radio, graphic narrative). **(Fiction, Theory)**

Girlhood | ENGL 22048

Heather Keenleyside

This course focuses on narratives in which the category of “girl” or “girlhood” is under construction, or called into question. We’ll begin with a number of works from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (novels by Frances Burney, Jane Austen, Mary Wollstonecraft, Charlotte Bronte), and will move into novels, films, comics, and memoirs from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that draw on or depart from some of those earlier texts. Throughout, the course will draw on work from fields like sociology, history, and feminist and queer theory to consider changing conceptions of childhood, adolescence, and development, as well as the way that intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability shape categories and narratives of “girlhood.” **(Fiction, 1650-1830)**

Shrews! Unladylike Conduct on Stage and Page in Early Modern England | ENGL 20360

Ellen MacKay

This course will move between three sites of inquiry to investigate the social and material history of an evergreen trope: the domestication of a refractory servant or wife. From rare book libraries and museum collections, we will track the common features of popular entertainments that traffic in this scenario. We will then bring our findings to bear in a theatre lab environment, where we will assay scenes from *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tamer Tamed*, and *the City Madam*. **(Drama, Pre-1650)**

The Rise of Free Speech: Aesthetics, Politics and Censorship, 1857-2020 | ENGL 24545

Zach Samlin

This course will consider a variety of historical debates and controversies surrounding the concept of freedom of speech and expression, from 19th century obscenity law through instances of 20th century political and economic repression and on to the concept’s cooptation by right-wing free

market discourse and debates about hate speech in the present. Case studies from 19C-21C literature in English and English-translation. **(Fiction, Poetry, 1830-1940, Theory)**

Milton | ENGL 17501

Joshua Scodel

The course studies Milton's major poetry with an emphasis upon his sense of history—poetic, national, and cosmic. **(Poetry, Pre-1650, 1650-1830)**

Human Rights Witness | ENGL 28612

Sonali Thakkar

This course examines contemporary narratives about human rights and their violation, focusing in particular on “witnessing” and “testimony” as political and aesthetic forms. We will consider novels, memoirs, legal and political documents, films, and reportage and activist writings in order to consider how these works register the experience of witnessing human rights violations, whether from a position of complicity (active or passive), engaged opposition, or as the victim/survivor of such violence. **(1830-1940)**

How to Read Difficult Poems | ENGL 26703

John Wilkinson

Different kinds of difficulty will be identified in English-language poems of different periods, and appropriate reading strategies developed. The aim is an education in the pleasures and rigors of difficulty, and subsequently in the art of making difficulties out of apparent simplicity and in attuning to the “possibles of joy” beyond difficulty. **(Poetry, 1650-1830, 1830-1940, Theory)**

Genre Fundamentals: Fiction | ENGL 10709

Sianne Ngai

This course explores the various strategies and techniques that authors have used to tell stories that claim in one way or another to be realistic. As we take up how storytellers “make it real” we will address key elements of narrative, including point of view, characterization, voice, tone, diction, syntax, setting, symbolism, pacing, modes of mediation, intertextuality, motifs, and figuration. We will focus primarily on novels and short stories, with a nod to the graphic novel at the conclusion of the course. **(Fiction, Genre Fundamentals)**

Black Shakespeare | ENGL 18860

Noémie Ndiaye

This course explores the role played by the Shakespearean canon in the shaping of Western ideas about blackness, in processes of racial formation, and racial struggle from the early modern period

to the present. Students will read Shakespearean plays portraying black characters (Othello, Titus Andronicus, The Tempest, Antony and Cleopatra) in conversation with African-American and post-colonial rewritings of those plays (by Toni Morrison, Amiri Baraka, Keith Hamilton Cobb, and Aimé Césaire, among others). **(Drama, Pre-1650)**

Cinema in Africa | ENGL 27600

Loren Kruger

This course examines Africa in film as well as films produced in Africa. It places cinema in Sub Saharan Africa in its social, cultural, and aesthetic contexts ranging from neocolonial to postcolonial, Western to Southern Africa, documentary to fiction, art cinema to TV, and includes films that reflect on the impact of global trends in Africa and local responses, as well as changing racial and gender identifications. We will begin with *La Noire de...* (1966), by the “father” of African cinema, Ousmane Sembene, contrasted w/ a South African film, *African Jim* (1960) that more closely resembles African American musical film, and anti-colonial and anti-apartheid films from Lionel Rogosin’s *Come Back Africa* (1959) to Sarah Maldoror’s *Sambizanga*, Sembene’s *Camp de Thiaroye* (1984), and Jean Marie Teno’s *Afrique, Je te Plumerai* (1995). The rest of the course will examine 20th and 21st century films such as *I am a not a Witch* and *The wound* (both 2017), which show tensions between urban and rural, traditional and modern life, and the implications of these tensions for women and men, Western and Southern Africa, in fiction, documentary and fiction film. **(Drama, 1830-1940)**

*Prerequisite: One or more of the following: Intro to Film/ International Cinema AND/OR Intro to African Studies or equivalent.

*This course also includes a weekly screening

Biography, History, Art: Documenting Blakelock | ENGL 26522

Lawrence Rothfield; Ric Burns

This Gray Center-sponsored research practicum is tied to a film project with documentary maker and Mellon Collaborative Fellow Ric Burns about outsider artist Ralph Blakelock. America’s Van Gogh, Blakelock created art far ahead of his time, went mad, and spent nearly 20 years in an asylum before emerging into the glare of flashbulbs as the most sought-after painter of the 1910s, only to end his life as victim of a con game. In between, he sojourned with the Sioux, hobnobbed with Gilded Age millionaires, channeled Longfellow and Mendelssohn in his art, struggled in the emergent New York “art world”, played vaudeville piano, and became one of the first major figures in modern celebrity-driven mass media. How best to capture this kaleidoscopic life and Blakelock’s dizzying art in a documentary is the creative challenge of the seminar. Our focus will be on Blakelock’s “Ghost Dance/The Vision of Life.” Art Institute conservators, assisted by Chemistry Department Professor Steven Sibener, will use scientific imaging to see inside the painting, whose provenance and context of production and reception need to be researched.

*Instructor consent required. Open to students at all levels, undergraduate and graduate. Email a letter of interest to Professor Rothfield: lary@uchicago.edu.

*Participants will be assigned to specific topics based on area of expertise. The course should be of particular interest to students in DOVA, Art History, History, English, Psychology, Chemistry, Cinema Studies, and Anthropology.

Film Noir | ENGL 20620

Joseph Bitney

This course examines the phenomenon known as film noir, a style or genre—created retrospectively by critics—that continues to exert widespread influence and appeal. Spanning noir’s progenitors in the early 20th century to the canonical films of the 1940s and 50s to more recent neo-noir, the course introduces students to the principles of film analysis while also looking at the crucial role that noir has played in discussions of film style and aesthetics, gender and sexuality, and the relations between modernism and popular culture. **(Fiction)**

Nineties Feminisms | ENGL 18950

Caroline Heller

This course will survey feminist literatures of the 1790s, 1890s, and 1990s. We will cover works by authors like Mary Wollstonecraft, Sarah Grand, and Greta Gaard as well as feminist movements from New Woman ideal in the 1890s to ecofeminism and material feminisms in the 1990s. **(1650-1830, 1830-1940, Theory)**

History That Never Was: The Counterfactual Novel | ENGL 27330

Lauren Schachter

In this course, we will consider counterfactuality in fiction from the 19th century to the 21st. Following critic Catherine Gallagher, we will ask, what if things had happened otherwise? and wonder—along with a range of authors—about the literary, generic, historical, and ethical stakes of the answers. Readings will focus on the counterfactual from the scale of the sentence to the scale of the (alternate) world. Readings will be drawn from Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, L. Sprague de Camp, Philip Roth, Kim Stanley Robinson, Ursula K. Le Guin, Octavia Butler, Kingsley Amis, and Abdourahman A. Waberi, among others. **(Fiction)**

Unrequited Love in Fiction and Film | ENGL 15220

Madison Chapman

Unrequited love stories are some of the most beloved romances in literature and film. Why do readers and audiences find unique pleasure in the agonizing tragedy of feelings not returned? And what does “unrequited” really mean anyway? This class focuses on unrequited love from the perspective of mostly British women fiction writers and film writer/directors, toggling between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature and contemporary romances on screen. From Jane Austen to Céline Sciamma, Eliza Haywood to Sofia Coppola, we will consider how women tell stories of attractions plagued by lack of reciprocity, misunderstandings, persistent longing and social obstacles. Moving across centuries, genre and media, we will consider what changes and what

remains consistent in how these women illustrate yearning and dissatisfaction. We will read theories of desire in literature and film by Lauren Berlant, Laura Mulvey, Renata Salecl and others in order to work towards a definition of “unrequited love.” Our class will examine unrequitedness across registers, including as a source of dark humor in *The Favourite* and Austen, and as an occasion for psychological and real violence in Mary Wollstonecraft and *The Riot Club*. Throughout the course, we will ask ourselves as readers and viewers to interrogate our own investment in the resolution (or, more importantly, the lack thereof) of unrequitedness. **(Fiction, 1650-1830, 1830-1940)**

Medieval Death | ENGL 15240

Jack Dragu

This course will examine late medieval representations of death and dying, considering it in terms of both a conceptual problematic and a practice, especially as it appears in the literature and art of fourteenth and fifteenth century England. In addition to reading poetic, theological, and philosophical texts from the medieval period, students will examine visual art, architecture, and other media to the end of asking questions about how people and cultures understand and prepare themselves for death. **(Pre-1650)**

Ladies Nite: Women Beatniks in Literary Counterculture | ENGL 19860

Carrie Taylor

"Three writers do not a generation make." Often relegated to status of wife or muse in the writings and history of the Beat Generation, women's literary contributions to this experimental zeitgeist remain largely unknown and unread. This course explores the dynamic body of work produced by female Beatniks from the 1950s-1970s. We first trace the Beat Generation's aesthetic roots within the experimental poetics of Romanticism and American Transcendentalism and then shift our focus to post-war Greenwich Village, Mexico, and the American West. We will delve into works from authors like Elise Cowen, Diane diPrima, Denise Levertov and Lucia Berlin, to investigate how women's authorship across place and form--chapbooks, poetry, memoirs, travel journals and films--gave voice to a vibrant, complex feminism awash with psychedelic drugs, sexual liberation and the metaphysical exploration deeply inherent to Beat counterculture. **(Fiction, Poetry, 1830-1940)**

Ectogenes and others: science fiction, feminism, reproduction | ENGL 21770

Hilary Strang

Recent work in feminist theory and feminist studies of science and technology has reopened and reconfigured questions around reproduction, embodiment, and social relations. Sophie Lewis's account of “uterine geographies” and Michelle Murphy's work on chemical latency and “distributed reproduction” stand as examples of this kind of work, which asks us to think about embodied life beyond the individual (and the human) and to see ‘biological reproduction’ as far more than simply biological. Social reproduction theory might be an example in a different key. This kind of investigation has a long (though sometimes quickly passed over) history in feminist thought (Shulamith Firestone's call for ectogenic reproduction is a famous example), and in the radical

reimaginings of personhood, human/nature relations, and sexing and gendering of feminist science fiction. This class will ask students to think between feminist science and technology studies, theoretical approaches to questions around social and biological reproduction, and the opening up of reproductive possibility found in feminist science fiction.

MA Courses

Spring 2021

Black Shakespeare | ENGL 38860

Noémie Ndiaye

This course explores the role played by the Shakespearean canon in the shaping of Western ideas about blackness, in processes of racial formation, and racial struggle from the early modern period to the present. Students will read Shakespearean plays portraying black characters (*Othello*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Tempest*, *Antony and Cleopatra*) in conversation with African-American and post-colonial rewritings of those plays (by Toni Morrison, Amiri Baraka, Keith Hamilton Cobb, and Aimé Césaire, among others). **(Med/Ren)**

Cinema in Africa | ENGL 47600

Loren Kruger

This course examines Africa in film as well as films produced in Africa. It places cinema in Sub Saharan Africa in its social, cultural, and aesthetic contexts ranging from neocolonial to postcolonial, Western to Southern Africa, documentary to fiction, art cinema to TV, and includes films that reflect on the impact of global trends in Africa and local responses, as well as changing racial and gender identifications. We will begin with *La Noire de...* (1966), by the “father” of African cinema, Ousmane Sembene, contrasted w/ a South African film, *African Jim* (1960) that more closely resembles African American musical film, and anti-colonial and anti-apartheid films from Lionel Rogosin’s *Come Back Africa* (1959) to Sarah Maldoror’s *Sambizanga*, Sembene’s *Camp de Thiaroye* (1984), and Jean Marie Teno’s *Afrique, Je te Plumerai* (1995). The rest of the course will examine 20th and 21st century films such as *I am a not a Witch* and *The wound* (both 2017), which show tensions between urban and rural, traditional and modern life, and the implications of these tensions for women and men, Western and Southern Africa, in fiction, documentary and fiction film. **(20th/21st)**

*Prerequisite: One or more of the following: Intro to Film/ International Cinema AND/OR Intro to African Studies or equivalent.

*This course also includes a weekly screening

Biography, History, Art: Documenting Blakelock | ENGL 36522

Lawrence Rothfield; Ric Burns

This Gray Center-sponsored research practicum is tied to a film project with documentary maker and Mellon Collaborative Fellow Ric Burns about outsider artist Ralph Blakelock. America’s Van Gogh, Blakelock created art far ahead of his time, went mad, and spent nearly 20 years in an asylum before emerging into the glare of flashbulbs as the most sought-after painter of the 1910s, only to end his life as victim of a con game. In between, he sojourned with the Sioux, hobnobbed with Gilded Age millionaires, channeled Longfellow and Mendelssohn in his art, struggled in the

emergent New York “art world”, played vaudeville piano, and became one of the first major figures in modern celebrity-driven mass media. How best to capture this kaleidoscopic life and Blakelock’s dizzying art in a documentary is the creative challenge of the seminar. Our focus will be on Blakelock’s “Ghost Dance/The Vision of Life.” Art Institute conservators, assisted by Chemistry Department Professor Steven Sibener, will use scientific imaging to see inside the painting, whose provenance and context of production and reception need to be researched.

*Instructor consent required. Open to students at all levels, undergraduate and graduate. Email a letter of interest to Professor Rothfield: lary@uchicago.edu.

*Participants will be assigned to specific topics based on area of expertise. The course should be of particular interest to students in DOVA, Art History, History, English, Psychology, Chemistry, Cinema Studies, and Anthropology.

Uneasy Intimacies: Interracial Modernism | ENGL 35451

Adrienne Brown

This course explores the way Modernist writers theorized interracial encounter and intimacies. Considering both the direct and indirect conversations taking place between writers across the color line during the early 20th century, we will examine the shared and divergent concerns, styles, and forms emerging from writers grappling with the desires, failures and fantasies of interracial encounter. Potential authors include Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Nella Larsen, William Faulkner, Zora Neale Hurston, and Claude McKay. **(20th-21st)**

The Print Revolution and New Readers: Women, Workers, Children | ENGL 30905

Alexis Chema

In this course we will examine the explosive proliferation of print—books, newspapers, journals, magazines, pamphlets, illustrations—during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One of the most striking effects of this “Print Revolution” was the extension of reading material to new groups of readers. We will pay particular attention to the changing ways in which women, workers, and children accessed and interacted with printed texts. With the help of literary, historical, and sociological scholarship, we will aim to understand the Print Revolution in relation to the political revolutions, intellectual paradigms, and social upheavals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This course will meet regularly in the Special Collections Research Center in Regenstein Library where we will have the opportunity to work with primary source materials first hand. **(18th/19th)**

Early Science Fiction | ENGL 32650

Noémie Ndiaye

This course will explore the cultural anxieties surrounding—chiefly—class, race, gender, and colonization expressed in early modern European works of speculative fiction. The syllabus will include fiction by Thomas More, Tommaso Campanella, Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, Johannes

Kepler, Francis Godwin, Cyrano de Bergerac, Henry Neville, and Margaret Cavendish, using speculative fiction to look at early modernity through the lens of critical theory. **(Med/Ren)**

The Victorian Unconscious | ENGL 41102

Zach Samalin

The goal of this course is to analyze the emergence of psychoanalysis within its historical context, and to explore the ways in which psychoanalytic theory functions at once as an artifact of 19th century culture and as an interpretive system that can afford us a particular set of insights into that culture. Readings will include 19th century novels and poetry by Emily Brontë, H. Rider Haggard and Thomas Hardy, among others, as well as anthropological, sexological, sociological and psychiatric texts that represent the backdrop to the development of psychoanalytic theory. **(18th/19th, 20th/21st)**

Global Intimacies | ENGL 46706

Sonali Thakkar

This course investigates the intimate dimensions of contemporary transnational experience. We will focus on representations of familial bonds and on transformations of love relations under conditions of diaspora and migration, and we will consider whether migration and other forms of transnational experience might entail rethinking the contours of terms like family and intimacy. Authors may include Gordimer, Gunesekera, Hartman, Ishiguro, Kincaid, Lahiri, Mootoo, Shamsie, with films by Cronenberg, Liem, and key theoretical texts. **(20th/21st)**

Ectogenes and others: science fiction, feminism, reproduction | ENGL 41770 (MAPH 41770)

Hilary Strang

Recent work in feminist theory and feminist studies of science and technology has reopened and reconfigured questions around reproduction, embodiment, and social relations. Sophie Lewis's account of "uterine geographies" and Michelle Murphy's work on chemical latency and "distributed reproduction" stand as examples of this kind of work, which asks us to think about embodied life beyond the individual (and the human) and to see 'biological reproduction' as far more than simply biological. Social reproduction theory might be an example in a different key. This kind of investigation has a long (though sometimes quickly passed over) history in feminist thought (Shulamith Firestone's call for ectogenic reproduction is a famous example), and in the radical reimaginings of personhood, human/nature relations, and sexing and gendering of feminist science fiction. This class will ask students to think between feminist science and technology studies, theoretical approaches to questions around social and biological reproduction, and the opening up of reproductive possibility found in feminist science fiction.

PhD Courses

Spring 2021

Medieval Longing: Affect, Aesthetics, Desire | ENGL 51502

Mark Miller

A course on medieval aesthetics, in the sense both of the formal work of literary art and of the forms of sensation and affect produced by that work. We'll be examining especially the two great medieval discourses of longing, sexual and religious, as they figure relations of desire to impossible objects. Texts will be drawn from theology, courtly love poetry, allegory, romance, and mystical literature. **(Med/Ren)**

Volume 1 of Marx's Capital: A Critique of Political Economy | ENGL 62400

Sianne Ngai

Capital is frequently described as a generically difficult-to-categorize text: part satire, part history, part theory. Yet for all this hybridity or ambiguity, there is a sense in which the subtitle makes its generic affiliation quite clear: it is a "critique of political economy." What exactly is "critique" and how, in light of recent debates in literary studies, might reading Capital sharpen our sense of what it can and cannot do? The bulk of our work in this seminar will be on Marx's text in its entirety, supplemented by essays by Fredric Jameson, Anna Kornbluh, George Caffentzis, David Harvey, Beverly Best, Barbara Johnson, Gayatri Spivak, and Moishe Postone. **(18th/19th, 20th/21st)**