

**Department of English and Comparative Literature:  
Graduate Course Offerings, Fall 2018**

**CMPL 450 (Eric Downing): Major Works of Twentieth-Century Literary Theory  
Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes**

*This course is designed to explore some of the many tantalizing intersections between the work of two of the twentieth-century's most important critics. Among the topics that will concern us are theories of language, photography, mythology, autobiography, and fashion, and both Benjamin's and Barthes' writings on Proust. Works to be read include Benjamin's essays "On Language as Such," "Brief History of Photography" and "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility," "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," "The Image of Proust," his autobiographical *Berlin Childhood* and several sections of *The Arcades Project*. For Barthes, we will read *Writing Degree Zero*, *Camera Lucida* and "The Photographic Message," *Mythologies*, *The Fashion System*, *Roland Barthes* and *The Pleasure of the Text*. Readings and discussion will all be in English.*

**English 825 (Reid Barbour): Renaissance Literature in Context M 12:20**

*In this seminar we explore a wide range of texts that in one way or another claim to represent history from the late Tudor period through the English civil wars. Mirrors for magistrates; historical poetry and history plays; histories didactic and antiquarian, national and local, those written by men and by women; histories aimed at teaching lessons via fiction and fancy and those aimed at antiquarian rigor and objectivity; and histories alternatively natural, ecclesiastical, literary and civil.*

*Authors include Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton, John Selden, Francis Bacon, Lucy Hutchinson, Thomas Browne, William Camden, John Milton, and many more.*

**English 847 (Florence Dore) The Everyday, the Ordinary, and the Banal: Realism in the Contemporary Moment T 3:30**

*In readings by Flannery O'Connor, Thomas Pynchon, Joan Didion, Dana Spiotta, Rivka Galchen, David Foster Wallace, Colson Whitehead, Lorrie Moore, and in poetry by Larry Eigner, Frank O'Hara, Amiri Baraka, and Jorie Graham, we will seek to explain the return to realism in the contemporary moment. Readings in Bruno Latour, Roland Barthes, Bill Brown, Ian Watt, Sianne Ngai, Laruen Berlant, Mark McGurl, Fredric Jameson, Gyorgy Lukacs, Theodor Adorno, Henri Bergson, Sigmund Freud, Walter Benjamin, Karl Marx, and others will help us both to understand the emphasis on the everyday, the ordinary, and the banal in realism, and to theorize these as modes of understanding historical development.*

**English 838 (Kim Stern): Philosophies of the Nineteenth-Century Novel W 12:20**

*In this course, we will excavate the philosophical investments of nineteenth-century prose by pairing works by some of the most important writers of the nineteenth century (George Eliot, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, and more) alongside some of the major philosophical thinkers of the period (including Thomas Carlyle, G.H. Lewes, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Arthur Schopenhauer, Peter Kropotkin, and more). Tracking the vital intersections between fiction and philosophy, we will consider how Victorian writers responded to radical new approaches to materialism, agency, aesthetics, time, epistemology, and more. In the end, by placing these novelists in their proper intellectual context, we put ourselves in a strong position for engaging some of the hermeneutic problems essential to working within the field of nineteenth-century literature today, from surface reading and hypertext to the recent reappraisals of network theory and literary forms.*

### **English 861 (Matt Taylor) Varieties of Posthumanism R 3:30**

*Although the posthuman is frequently associated with current or near-future technologies, the idea that we might benefit from expanding the boundaries of our bodies is both centuries-old and inclusive of a range of traditionally technophobic discourses, from aesthetic romanticism and transcendentalism to deep ecology, affect theory, and the new materialisms. With this broad definition in mind, our course will survey major statements in posthumanist literature, film, digital media, and philosophy from the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries; touch on posthumanism's relation to such fields as animal studies, biopolitics, critical race theory, STS, Anthropocene studies, postcolonialism, and the environmental humanities; reflect on posthumanism's political and ethical implications; and ask what futures, if any, the posthuman might have.*

*Readings likely will include selections from: Jane Bennett; Mel Chen; Jacques Derrida; Emily Dickinson; William Gibson; Donna Haraway; Werner Herzog; bell hooks; Spike Jonze; Franz Kafka; Stanley Kubrick; H. P. Lovecraft; Richard Powers; STELLARC; H. G. Wells; Alexander Weheliye; and Cary Wolfe, among others.*

### **English 763 (GerShun Avilez): Race, Sex, & Medical Humanities T 3:30**

*This interdisciplinary graduate seminar will explore how questions of race and sexuality impact issues of health, medicine, and illness in 20th century U.S. literature and popular culture. The goal of the course is to offer students tools to analyze literature, make them more familiar with histories of medical experimentation and exploitation, and provide them with the tools to think critically about pressing social issues. Students will also gain a vocabulary and develop for skills working across disciplines. Specific areas covered will include suffering & pain, death, the family and society, reproduction, mental illness, aging, human subject experimentation, the doctor-patient relationship, and humor in medicine. In exploring the topics, we will focus on questions of race and ethnicity, and we will concern ourselves primarily, but not exclusively, with African American and Latina/o writings. We will also pay close attention to how questions of gender and sexuality emerge prominently in the intersection of race, health, and art. In the process, students will have the opportunity to develop independent research projects that seek to bring together these distinct fields.*

### **English 786 (Heidi Kim) Introduction to Graduate Study M 9:05**

#### **English 844 (Eliza Richards): Seminar in American Literature 1860-1900 M 3:35**

*Studies of nineteenth-century American literature often focus on fiction and non-fiction prose at the expense of poetry, even when poetry was one of the main literary forces of the period. Or, more recently, as the study of the period's poetry has gained in prominence, poetry is studied to the exclusion of fiction. This is so even though the forms intermingled in the period, and even though many prominent writers—Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Elizabeth Stoddard, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Stephen Crane, for example—wrote both poetry and prose. This course will offer an occasion to compare literary forms and analyze their interactions while locating them within broader literary fields; we will pay attention to the conditions of production and reception that helped give meaning and purpose to literary texts. We will read critical and theoretical work on literary fields and media networks. The class will be organized around a series of case studies centered on different literary fields and drawing on the most recent trends in criticism. These studies may include the following:*

1. Edgar Allan Poe's *New York City*
2. Dickinson, Emerson, Thoreau and "Nature"
3. Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and abolitionism
4. Literature of the Civil War

5. *The Atlantic Monthly, the rise of "high art" and the turn to realism (Harriet Prescott Spofford, Henry James, W.D. Howells, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Paul Laurence Dunbar).*

### **English 814 (Patrick O'Neill) History of the English Language TR 2:00**

#### **English 831 (Tom Reinert): Jane Austen and 18th-Century Women Novelists**

*This course will set Jane Austen's fiction in relation to that of the 18th-century women novelists who preceded her. We will start out with a few examples of fiction from early in the century, then turn for much of the term to the 1780s and 90s and the novels Austen was reading as she was beginning to write. The last third of the term will focus on Austen herself. We will emphasize close reading, but along the way we will discuss historical and literary contexts, theories of the novel, issues of gender and class, and in general the place of women writers in the 18th-century British literary scene. This course is open to all graduate students in literature, and should be of particular use to students interested in the history of the novel. One research paper. Texts will include the following: Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina*, *Three Novellas*, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*; Frances Burney, *Evelina*; Ann Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance*; Elizabeth Inchbald, *A Simple Story*; Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda*; Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria*; and Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Emma*.*

#### **English 875 (Jennifer Ho): Critical Race Theory**

*The subject of race continues to be one of the most enduringly divisive and controversial subjects in the United States. And even at the turn into the 21st century, despite the historic election of our first mixed-race African American president and the two terms he served, as a nation we have not developed an adequate and comfortable common ground or common language to discuss, honestly and openly, our concerns, misconceptions, questions, interests, and hopes in terms of race. This seminar will provide a theoretical, historical, and social knowledge on the subject and various discourses on race. We will additionally explore various narratives that reflect the way that Americans represent race in the U.S., especially the concept of racial hybridity, intersectionality, color blind racism, and multiracial identities. Additionally, this seminar will provide practical experience for graduate students in terms of creating lesson plans/discussions about teaching and pedagogy and writing a final research paper for a journal (and hence for potential publication).*

#### **English 580 (Martin Johnson): Independent Cinema and the American South**

*From *Gone With the Wind* (1939) to *Forrest Gump* (1994), Hollywood representations of the American South paint the region with the broadest of brushes, relying on stereotypes and mythologies of the region and its people. In this class, we will explore fiction films and documentaries made outside of Hollywood that seek to represent the diversity and complexity of the South. Although our focus will be on contemporary films, we will contextualize recent developments by considering the long history of educational, amateur, independent, avant garde, and documentary film production in the South (George Stoney, Madeline Anderson, Michael Roemer, Jan Millsapps, Elizabeth Barret, Kevin Jerome Everson). We will be particularly interested in films that explore intersectional identities in the contemporary South. Films to be screened or discussed include *Mudbound* (Rees, 2017); *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (Zeitlin, 2012); *Mississippi Masala* (Nair, 1991); *Mystery Train* (Jarmusch, 1989); *Goodbye Solo* (Bahrani, 2008); *George Washington* (Green, 2000); *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* (Jones, 2005); *Daughters of the Dust* (Dash, 1991); *Bright Leaves* (McElwee, 2003); *Ruby in Paradise* (Nunzio, 1993); *Southern Comfort* (Davis, 2001); *Family Name* (Alston, 1997); *Daughter From Danang* (Dolgin & Franco, 2002) and *Loggerheads* (Kirman, 2005).*

*Assignments include three short response papers, a final research paper, and a class presentation. Graduate students welcome.*

**CMPL 890 (Alicia Rivero): Seminar, Nation and the Transnational: Borders, (Im)Migration, Race, Ethnicity, and Gender**

*How have key concepts of nation and Latin(a) American identity been defined and continue to be reworked in the cultural imaginary, as well as represented textually since the 19th Century? Why have borders and immigration become such controversial issues? In order to understand how such notions evolved, we will explore not only some of the background surrounding such controversies and their impacts, but also intersections of race, ethnicity and gender with nation and the transnational. We'll use historical and current events, multimedia, lectures, presentations, discussions, debates, theory, as well as selected 19th and 20th century literary works as sources to see how these polemics have been defined within and without Latin America. We'll also discuss such ideas as postcolonialism, borders/ borderlands, (im)migration, diaspora, slavery, hybridity, transculturation, stereotypes, etc. Required texts (some may change due to their availability): Martí, "Nuestra América"/ "Our America" (essay, coursepack); Manzano, *Autobiografía de un esclavo/ Autobiography of a Slave* (slave narrative, ed. Schulman); Matto de Turner, *Aves sin nido/ Birds without a Nest* (novel); Gómez de Avellaneda, *Sab/ Sab* (novel); Castillo, *So Far from God* (novel); Fuentes, *La frontera de cristal/ The Crystal Frontier* (selected short stories, coursepack); García, *Dreaming in Cuban* (novel); Menchú, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú/ I, Rigoberta Menchú* (testimonial narrative); Alvarez, *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* (novel); Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ La frontera* (essay, selection, coursepack). Work for the course: participation, presentation (40% of grade), and research paper (60%).*

**CMPL 477. Vladimir Nabokov: Life and Art. 3 Credits.**

*Exploration of Vladimir Nabokov's prose fiction written in Germany and America. Emphasis placed on the primary texts, but some secondary readings included. Movies based on Nabokov's novels will be viewed as well. Readings in Russian for majors, in English for nonmajors.*

**English 620 (Ted Leinbaugh): History of the English Language MWF 3:35PM**

**English 659 (Chris Armitage): War in Twentieth Century Literature TR 3:30**