

VCU
Department of
English

Course Descriptions

Summer 2012

Department of English

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Credit Distribution

Writing..... 304, 305

Linguistics..... 449, 450

Criticism..... 350

Literature Prior to 1700..... 361, 423

Literature 1700-1900..... 322, 371, 372

Diversity..... 386, 391

****Note:** Upper level classes not listed above count as English elective credit.

These distributions are current as of 3/29/12. If instructor or class times change, check with your advisor to make sure the distribution has not changed.

Summer 2012 Classes

UNIV 111 and 112 or the equivalent is a prerequisite for all 200-level literature courses; a maximum of three credits of 200-level literature may count toward the 36 credits for the major.

ENGL 215-001 Textual Analysis

This course will explore the literature of the fantastic in recent short fiction and independent film. Along the way, we'll examine the nature and purpose of fiction, genre, and textual analysis. Written work includes short response papers to the readings, quizzes, a critical review of a film, and a final exam. This is primarily a discussion class. Texts (subject to change): Jeffrey Ford, *The Empire of Ice Cream*; Kelly Link, *Pretty Monsters*; Maureen McHugh, *After the Apocalypse*; Karen Joy Fowler, *What I Didn't See & Other Stories*. Films (subject to change): *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Another Earth*, *Children of Men*, and *Pan's Labyrinth*.

Danvers May 21-June 8 MTWRF 9:00am-12:00pm Call #: 31827

ENGL 215-002 Textual Analysis

Please contact the instructor for course details at fopricha@vcu.edu.

Prichard July 23- Aug 10 MTWRF 9:00-11:50am Call #: 31826

ENGL 215-901 Textual Analysis

ENGL 215 is a course aimed at engendering critical thinking and close reading skills. This course will work on identifying, analyzing and exploring the various literary devices authors deploy and investigate how such devices impact a text, a reader and literature as a whole. To conduct such analysis, we need a group of texts to study. This section of 215 will focus on classic American narratives and novels - with a few poems as well - that are concerned with issues of property. The US is, in many ways, a nation founded on ideas of private property and ownership, and this course will explore how authors as varied as Douglass, Hawthorne, Fitzgerald and others grappled with such notions through their fiction.

Glenn May 21-July 11 MW 3:00-5:40pm Call #: 32049

ENGL 215-902 Textual Analysis

In this course we will examine what it means to come of age in America during the latter half of the twentieth century. We will begin with a discussion of the *bildungsroman*, a sub-genre of the novel that dates back to Germany in the second

half of the eighteenth century, and then examine more recent examples (and perhaps non-examples) of this type of narrative in order to understand the form as it appears in a more recent American context. We will begin with Jeffrey Eugenides's *The Virgin Suicides* (originally published in 1993); and then, for the most part, we will work backward towards Carson McCuller's *The Member of the Wedding* (originally published in 1946). We will end the course with a discussion of Jerry Gabriel's *Drowned Boy* (published in 2010), a short story cycle that shares many of the qualities associated with the novel-of-growth. In the course of our discussion we will examine the similarities and differences in the works in relation to gender, race, and class.

Comba **May 22-July 12** **TR 1:00-3:00pm** **Call #: 33603**

ENGL 295-901

The Reading and Writing of Fiction & Poetry

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An introduction to the basic elements of writing poetry and fiction, using published examples of contemporary fiction and verse as guides in the study of literary form and the production of original creative writing. Students will be offered a practitioner's perspective on genre conventions and the process of revision. Please contact instructor for course details.

Boswell **May 22-July 12** **TR 6:00-8:40pm** **Call #: 31822**

ENGL 304-901

Advanced Writing

This course will be advanced composition focusing on visual rhetoric and electronic texts. The first part of the course will explore sensory details and narrative, as well as visual language. Readings for this section will include Roland Barthes, Mark Doty, John Berger, and others. We will then move to a short historical overview of electronic literature that uses links and lexias as means to convey ideas, characterization, and connections before introducing new media poetry and literature that employs movement and image to express meaning and metaphor. Authors such as Michael Joyce and theorists such as Marshall McLuhan will provide contextual support for analyses of electronic literature as well as foundation for final writing projects using various technologies. Other papers and projects include an ekphrastic essay (art narrative), visual group assignment, literature analysis, and reading response assignments.

White **June 12-Aug 2** **TR 3:00-5:40pm** **Call #: 31116**

ENGL 305-002

Creative Writing: Fiction

Prerequisites: UNIV 111 and 112, UNIV 200, and three credits in a 200-level literature course (or equivalent).

A workshop primarily for students who have not produced a portfolio of finished creative work. Students will present a collection of their work at the end of the course. This course may not be used to satisfy the literature requirement of the College of Humanities and Sciences.

Lodge June 25- July 26 MTWR 1:00-3:15 pm Call #: 31952

ENGL 305-003 Screenwriting

This is a workshop course involving the writing of a complete 90-page screenplay, including the pitch, the outline, the treatment, and the first draft.

McCown May 21-June 21 MTWR 1:00-3:15pm Call #: 33600

ENGL 305-903 Creative Writing: Fiction

In this course, we will explore what a story is, how to discover and develop the stories you want to tell, and the narrative techniques used to create and shape them and make them wonderful. You will read and discuss published stories as models, write exercises designed to develop your narrative skills, as well as write original stories to be workshopped by the class.

Danvers June 12- Aug 2 TR 6:00-8:40pm Call #: 31535

ENGL 305-904 Creative Writing: Fiction

Eudora Welty writes how "If you haven't surprised yourself, you haven't written," while Cecil Day Lewis declares that "I do not sit down at my desk to put into verse something that is already clear in my mind. If it were clear in my mind, I should have no incentive or need to think about it.... We do not write in order to be understood; we write in order to understand." Echoing Welty's and Day Lewis's insights, this course is rooted in the idea that the story chooses the writer, and that stories develop through the manipulation of narrative elements. In order to "surprise" ourselves and, hence, write a story, we will examine the fundamental elements of narrative fiction as well as the process-oriented techniques that will allow us to develop our own work.

Comba May 21-July 7 MW 3:00-5:40pm Call# 10698

ENGL 316-001 Modern Poetry

Prerequisite: Three credits in a 200-level literature course (or equivalent).

This course will survey the era of modernism in American and British poetry. We will begin in the nineteenth century with figures such as Whitman, Dickinson, Hopkins and Hardy, and conclude with the poetry of the mid-twentieth century. We will examine the work of the major figures--Eliot, Pound, Stevens, Williams, Crane, Moore, etc.--as well as the various schools which are linked to modernism, among them Imagism, Futurism, Dada, and the Harlem Renaissance. Students will write two brief essays and a take-home final exam.

Text: The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry, Volume 1

Wojahn May 21-June 8 MTWRF 9:00am-12:00pm Call #: 32792

ENGL 322-001**Victorian Poetry**

Who were the Victorians? Technically, this refers to individuals who lived in Great Britain during the reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837-1901. Stereotypically, we say that people act "Victorian" when they are overly prudish or conventional. Yet both of these definitions only scratch the surface of the Victorian Age: one of uncertainty, thrilling discovery, and ideas that challenged the core beliefs and practices of society. In this course, we will examine works by many of the major poets of the era, and consider the ways in which they addressed and participated in the many complexities of their world. Class assignments will include short papers, a final exam, and at least one presentation.

Pallo**June 11-July19****MTWR 10:30am-12:10pm****Call #: 33759****ENGL 324-001****Later 20th Century British Literature**

"To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," Theodor Adorno declared in his apparent disallowance of aesthetics following the Second World War. Poets, playwrights, and novelists continued to explore how they might compose legitimate works (or anti-works), just as Adorno (who'd planned to devote his final volume on aesthetics to Samuel Beckett) later insisted his claim implied they must. This class will explore how postwar British authors confronted the atrocities executed during that war and Britain's postcolonial position in a world now dominated by cold war politics and American hegemony.

Wells**May 21-June 21****MTWR 1:00-3:15pm****Call #: 33760****ENGL 350-001****Approaches to Literature**

ENGL 350 offers a review of current critical approaches to literary texts (reader-oriented, formalist, structural, psychoanalytic, archetypal, feminist, deconstructionist, new historicist, multicultural, and postcolonial). These approaches will be studied in terms of their ability to address major issues and components of the literary process (text, author, reader, history, culture). We will also test them on selected literary texts and sections from William Shakespeare, Andrew Marvell, John Milton, William Blake, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson, William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, W. C. Williams, Ernest Hemingway, Gwendolyn Brooks, John Cheever, and Alice Walker. This class will encourage us to function as a dynamic interpretive community, exploring each successive step in the critical process through carefully designed assignments. The periodic use of BLACKBOARD during the various stages of critical analysis will allow us to achieve a form of interaction difficult to accomplish in an ordinary classroom structure.

Cornis-Pope**July 12-Aug 10****MTWRF 10:30am-12:20pm****Call #:33625**

ENGL 351-001 Children's Literature I

This course is housed in the School of Education. Please contact the School of Education for course details at 828-3382.

Deicas May 21-June 8 MTWRF 9:00am-12:00pm Call#: 10701

ENGL 361-001 The Bible as Literature

In this course students will gain understanding of the historical development of the Bible, as well as different genres of Biblical literature. Attention will be paid to the differences between reading the Bible as a sacred text versus a literary text, the significant influence Biblical literature has had (and continues to have) on non-Biblical literature, and the types of literary criticism scholars often apply to Biblical texts. Through class lectures and discussions, the reading of Biblical, non-Biblical, and critical literature, and the writing of papers, students will become familiar not only with key Biblical texts and themes, but also possible interpretations of them.

Smith June 25-July 26 MTWR 10:30am-12:45pm Call #: 33604

ENGL 371-901 American Literature: Colonial & Federal

English 371 will examine American literature in English from the United States and its colonial predecessors, starting in the early seventeenth century and ending by the 1830s. Although these periods have often been neglected, they are of immense historical importance and contain many undiscovered gems. We shall look at works by a variety of authors in terms of their formal and thematic characteristics, their cultural significance, and their influence on subsequent works. Along with the traditional genres of fiction, poetry, and drama, we shall also consider forms such as the sermon and the letter.

Corner June 12-Aug 2 TR 6:00-8:40pm Call #: 32949

ENGL 372-001 American Literature: Romanticism

Prerequisites: Three credits in a 200-level literature course (or equivalent).

This course will examine the works of authors commonly grouped under the rubric of American Romanticism (Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Stowe, Fern, Whitman) in the context of the rise of mass culture in the United States during the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

Harrison May 21-June 8 MTWRF 9:00-12:00pm Call #: 31912

ENGL 386-001 Introduction to Folklore

Prerequisite: three credits in a 200-level literature course (or equivalent).

This course begins with some basic forms of folklore--fairy tales, jokes, and urban legends--and examines both original texts and their re-invention in modern literature. We will begin with Maria Tatar's collection of classic fairy tales and their assorted versions, plus a reader of other source materials. Authors to be examined will include Angela Carter, Kelly Link, Lorrie Moore, Gregory Maguire, and Hans Christian Andersen, along with several others; films may include (in part or in whole) *The Company of Wolves*, one of the many live-action versions of *Snow White*, and *National Lampoon's Family Vacation*. Students will write analytical papers and compile a collection of current folklore versions via fieldwork (interviewing others). Cross-listed with Anthropology.

Cokal June 11-July 11 MTWRF 1:00-2:50pm Call #: 33626

ENGL 391-002 Topics: American Literature of the 1990's

As is every decade, the 1990s was an era of enormous social, technological and political upheaval in the United States. MLB canceled a season, The Simpsons premiered, and Milli Vanilli and the Spice Girls ruled the radio. The Hubble Telescope launched, Dolly the Sheep was cloned and the space shuttle docked with MIR. The Cold War had ended, Bill Clinton was elected, the First Gulf War was fought, Oklahoma City was bombed, and LA suffered both the Rodney King riots and the O.J. Simpson murder trial. This course will investigate how literature (and film) in the 90s reflected, grappled with, and responded to such varied social pressures.

Glenn June 11-July 11 MTWRF 10:30am-12:30pm Call #: 32795

ENGL 391-003 Topics: U.S. Ethnic Literatures

This course will explore ways in which ethnic identity, literature, and visual culture in the United States intersect by looking at a variety of works by writers and directors of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Besides introducing you to major works by writers of various ethnicities in the United States in the last few decades, this course will also explore—comparatively—significant historical and cultural moments that have shaped and influenced their works. Addressing questions about ethnicity, race, or indigeneity, this course will also introduce you to contemporary critical conversations about multiculturalism, canon formation, and the variety of ethnic experiences, communities, and representations in the United States. Primary texts may include fictional works by: Toni Morrison, Louise Erdrich, Gish Jen, Sandra Cisneros, John Edgar Wideman, Moustafa Bayoumi, as well as a good selection of contemporary ethnic poetry. Secondary texts may include selections from works by Paul Lauter, Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, Robert Stepto, Paulo Freire, and others. Students will also watch feature films

and documentaries (in part and in full), which will help generate culturally-informed critical analyses of multi-ethnic literary and visual representations. You are expected to participate actively in class discussions, in-class writing activities, and on the class blog. Evaluation will consist of a final exam, weekly blog posts, one class presentation (opening discussion), occasional quizzes, and a final project.

Stanciu **July 23-Aug 10** **MTWRF 9:00-11:50am** **Call #: 33761**

ENGL 423-002 **English Drama: 900-1642- Redefining Tragedy**

The term "tragedy" suffers from the abuse of overuse. As a result, its core concept is misunderstood completely and its descriptive, defining power is greatly diminished. We will examine several great tragedies in written form to examine their true focus and import, (including - but not limited to) *Oedipus Rex* (the granddaddy of all tragedies); *Antigone*; Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*; John Milton's *Samson Agonistes*; William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*; Miller's *Death of A Salesman*. We will examine comparative scenes from available versions (TV, film, recorded stage productions) to understand how this form is conveyed in other media, and from which we may gain some of our (misguided) interpretations. The end result will be a new understanding of why this term should not be bandied about so loosely. There will be two tests and a final exam; three short response papers; possible – only possible – reading quizzes. There is a lot of reading, but realize these are plays requiring 1 1/2 - 2 hours to read thoroughly - a big difference from reading novels.

Kustesky **June 11-July 19** **MTWR 1:00-2:40pm** **Call#: 32950**

ENGL/LING 449-001 **Introduction to Linguistics**

This course is a general introduction to the field of linguistics, the scientific study of language. It will introduce you to the biological, cognitive and social basis for human language and communication with an emphasis on basic, formal methods of linguistic description. Basic areas covered under formal linguistics includes phonetics (the properties of speech sounds), phonology (the systematic sound patterns of language), morphology (the grammatical structure of words), syntax (the structure of phrases and sentences), and semantics/pragmatics (the meaning and use of words and sentences). This course will also cover areas such as historical linguistics (language change and language relationships), language acquisition (how languages are acquired in children vs. adults) and physiological basis of language (language and the brain). This course is designed to give you a brief but broad overview of the methods used in linguistic description and analysis and to familiarize you with the main areas of inquiry within the field of

linguistics.

Griffin

June 25-July 26 MTWR 1:00-3:15pm

Call #: 10717

ENGL/LING 450-901 Modern Grammar

This course is an introduction to the study of grammar, focusing on the nature and structure of human language (syntax) from the perspective of the Minimalist Program, the current version of the Principles and Parameters approach within Generative linguistic theory. This course will focus primarily on the grammar of Standard American English but other dialects of English and other languages will also be examined. This course is designed to give you a brief but broad overview of the issues and analytical methods in current grammatical theory and a comprehensive understanding of the basic structure of English and human languages more generally. No prior coursework in linguistics is required.

Griffin

June 11- Aug 1 MW 6:00-8:40pm

Call #: 10718

HUMS 250-001 Reading Film

This course aims to introduce you to some of the formal elements of film—the building blocks of motion pictures—that are necessary to understand for a close or detailed analysis of cinema. As such the course aims to increase your “visual” literacy and make you more savvy consumers of visual images more generally. You should also gain a more well-developed technical and critical vocabulary with which to talk and write about the films and other visual media you watch. We will watch and analyze scenes (and a few full-length films) drawn from both the American and world cinemas. Overall, this course should help you think, talk and write more effectively about your viewing and make you a more confident and knowledgeable “consumer” of the moving image in all its forms and media. The class itself will present you with a lot of information about these film elements, and given the short term in summer session, attendance is really necessary. Although most of the time we will be analyzing short clips from films, we will watch at least three feature-length films (including one or more of the following: *Citizen Kane*, *The Godfather*, *Amélie*, *Chinatown*, *Grand Illusion*).

There will be 20-30 pages of reading most nights, six short written tests, and a final exam that will include a take-home essay.

Fine

May 21-June 8

MTWRF 9:00am-12:00pm

Call# 31306