

VCU
Department of
English

Course Descriptions

Summer 2014

Department of English

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Credit Distribution

Writing.....305, 307

Linguistics.....390, 450

Criticism..... N/A

Literature Prior to 1700.....361

Literature 1700-1945.....343, 372

Diversity.....353

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

These distributions are current as of 2/26/14. If instructor or class times change, check with your advisor to make sure the distribution has not changed.

Summer 2014 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 206-001

American Literature II

American Literature II is a broad survey of American works and genres, and as such, will take a broad approach to the period, studying a wide variety of literary works produced at the close of the Civil War (or shortly before) to the present.

Additionally, study of literary works is grounded in the historical/political/cultural/ social context(s) of those works in order to gain a sense of the ways in which American history informs its literature, and vice versa; this will include examination of literary movements into which these works fall, and, at times, biographical examination of authors, as well as close examination of particular issues/trends in American history. Our collective study, therefore, is geared toward developing an informed and inclusive sense of the character and substance of what we call American Literature, and, indeed, how we define what is American in a broad, cultural sense.

Ashworth May 19-July 10 TR 6:00-8:40pm

CRN #: 35441

ENGL 215-001

Textual Analysis: "The Old Brag of My Heart":

Coming of Age in the U.S. in the Latter Half of the Twentieth Century

In this course we will examine what it means to come of age in the United States during the latter half of the twentieth century. We will begin with a discussion 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 and local context. Our first text will be Jeffrey Eugenides's *The Virgin Suicides* (originally published in 1993), from which we will work backward towards William Maxwell's *The Folded Leaf* (originally published in 1945). We will end the course with a discussion of Justin Torres's *We the Animals* (published in 2012). In the course of our discussion we will examine the similarities and differences in the works with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, region, sexual orientation and/or an intersection of these social identities.

Comba May 19-June 6 MTWRF 9:00am-12:00pm

CRN #: 31827

ENGL 215-002

Textual Analysis

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

Prichard **July 21- Aug 8** **MTWRF 9:00-11:50am** **CRN #: 31826**

ENGL 215-901 **Textual Analysis**

This **online** ENGL 215 (textual analysis) will serve as an introduction to poetry that audiences access through visual means. No prior expertise or familiarity with poetry is expected or required; we will use technology and social media apps to ease ourselves into a better rapport with poetic genres. We will study poems written especially for visual effect, poems that rely heavily on imagery for their effects, poems that respond to other visual arts like painting and sculpture, and poems that manipulate the relationships between form, meaning, and space. This is a skills course that requires daily participation and collaboration in an online environment. Working in groups, we will illustrate and annotate poems as a way of sponsoring critical thinking about the genre. The final project is an online multimedia presentation about the visual aspects of one or more syllabus texts.

Coats **May 19-July 9** **Blackboard (Online)** **CRN #: 32049**

ENGL 305-001 **Writing Poetry**

English 305 is a creative writing workshop; students will write drafts of poems--some in response to assignments--and will bring copies for discussion and critique. The class also includes a thorough reading component of mostly contemporary poems, as well as essays about poetry. The final grade is based on a portfolio of revised poems, as well as studio work such as freewrites, written critiques, imitations, image lists, notebook entries and possibly one short essay. Required texts: *The Poet's Companion* by Addonizo and Laux and *The Open Door: 100 Poems, 100 Years of Poetry Magazine*, edited by Share and Wiman.

Shiel **May 19-June 19** **MTWR 10:30-12:45pm** **CRN #: 34715**

ENGL 307-001 **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 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. Much of the class will be conducted as a workshop. This means that you provide the audience for each other's work, reading and commenting in class and in written critiques.

Danvers **May 19- July 9** **MW 6:00-8:40pm** **CRN #: 34718**

ENGL 307-002 **Writing Fiction**

Writing Fiction is an introduction to the techniques of fiction writing, both traditional and contemporary. We will view fiction from a writer's perspective rather than from a reader's, discussing such topics as setting, point of view, character, dialogue, plot, and conflict, and we will put what we discuss into practice as each student begins to create a portfolio of new work.

Lodge June 9- July 30 MW 3:00-5:40pm CRN #: 34846

ENGL 341-001 British Literature & Culture After 1945

"To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," Theodor Adorno declared in his apparent disallowance of literature 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 19- June 19 MTWR 1:00-3:15pm CRN #: 35359

ENGL/AMST 343-901 Modern Poetry

In or around 1912, the nature of poetry in English changed forever. This course shows you how and why, surveying poetry written in English during the first half of the twentieth century. The emphasis will be on depth rather than coverage. We will read intensively in the poetry of a dozen or so poets. These poets will act as a window onto the major movements and artistic ideas of the period, its defining conflict between tradition and innovation, and the impact of world war and other forms of social upheaval on poetry's content, form, and purpose. Poets will include W.B Yeats, William Carlos Williams, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, H.D., Langston Hughes, and others. Course requirements will include regular critical exercises, three short essays, and a final exam. Our sole course text will be the 3rd edition of *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry, Vol. 1: Modern Poetry*, ed. Ramazani, Ellmann, and O'Clair. Please arrange to have a copy by the second class meeting.

Fedors June 10- July 31 TR 6:00-8:40pm CRN #: 35198

ENGL/GSWS 353-002 Women Writers

This course traces the ways fictional minds were portrayed in novels, narratives, and essays written by women between 1840 and 1940 in England and the United States. Although it is common knowledge that women's mental capacities were seriously doubted during this period, we will find significant challenges generated by our authors, who used fiction to weigh in on contemporary

questions about gender and cognition. Were women's minds fundamentally different from men's? Did women and men learn in separate ways? What were they supposed to read, and which reading materials were discouraged? Why and how were women encouraged to feel more than think? If their feeling dominated their thinking, how could they be trusted with voting? How were working-class women's minds considered different from those of middle- and upper-class women, and grown women's minds different from those of young girls? In answering these questions, this course will combine brief lectures with lively — yes, lively at 8 a.m. — discussions of works by authors as dissimilar as Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Virginia Woolf, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Rebecca West. For more details, see the ENGL 353 tab at ksnash.wordpress.com.

Nash **May 19- June 19** **MTWR 8:00-10:15am** **CRN #: 35201**

ENGL/RELS 361-002 The Bible as Literature

In this course, students will gain an understanding of different genres of Biblical literature as well as a sense of the literature's historical development and context. 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 on non-Biblical literature (both secular and religious), and the types of literary criticism that non-religious scholars and theologians apply to Biblical texts. Through class lectures and discussions, the reading of Biblical, non-Biblical, and critical literature, and the writing of papers in which literary criticism will be applied to Biblical texts, students will become familiar not only with key Biblical texts and themes, but possible interpretations and understandings of them.

Smith **June 9- July 17** **MTWR 10:30am-12:10pm** **CRN #: 35199**

ENGL 372-001 U.S. Literature: 1820-1865

This upper-division course will focus on American authors writing in the decades prior to the Civil War (roughly 1820 – 1860). Throughout the course, an emphasis will be placed on examining how the authors under consideration responded to the changing economic, cultural, and political marketplaces of the antebellum period. Authors covered may include Poe, Emerson, Thoreau, Stowe, Whitman, Hawthorne, and Melville as well as a selection of antebellum periodical writings. Assignments to include daily commonplace book / journal entries, 2 exams, and a final paper.

Harrison **May 19- June 6** **MTWRF 9:00-12:00pm** **CRN #: 31912**

ENGL/LING 390-001 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.

Topics and issues covered include:

- The biological basis and evolutionary origins of human language
- Relations of language to cognition, communication, and social organization
- Sounds, forms and meanings of words, phrases, and sentences
- The reconstruction of linguistic history and the "family tree" of languages
- Dialect variation and language standardization
- Language learning by children and adults
- Brain structures and language functions

Griffin June 23- July 24 MTWR 1:00-3:15pm

CRN #: 34463

ENGL 391-001

Topics: Richmond Literature

This 8 week class explores Richmond Literature. Richmond will be our classroom; the landscape its own text. A unique feature of this class is that it does not meet in a classroom, but out and about in the city of Richmond in places relevant to the creation of Richmond Literature. Discussion will occur while walking out in the city; assignments will occur online. Richmond Literature will be put into conversation with corresponding trends in American Literature and national cultural and social movements in order to investigate how this area – Richmond - has shaped production and reception of literature.

Richardson May 19- July 9 TR 3:00-5:40pm

CRN #: 35480

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 9- July 30 MW 6:00-8:40pm CRN #: 10718

ENGL 491-001 Topics: Fashion Writing

This intensive writing course targets fashion majors, who will receive specific instruction for writing about visual design where textile, garment construction, color composition, collective aesthetic, process and design trends are concerned. Students will engage in a workshop setting, where they will consider and write about individual design elements and individual ensemble, as well as whole collections. They will also write about their own design processes, and aesthetic style, to include what artistic trends, movements and specific designers influence their work. Emphasis on industry terminology, writings by current and leading experts in the field, and development of tone, style, expressive syntax and vocabulary and solid composition. The course is designed to equip upper level fashion students with writing strategies and approaches specific to their industry, and thus, provide them with useful, real-world skills.

Ashworth May 20-July 10 TR 3:00-5:40pm CRN #: 35344

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. 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 19-June 6** **MTWRF 9:00am-12:00pm** **CRN # 31306**

HUMS 250-002 **Reading Film**

This course aims to develop students' visual literacy by exploring and analyzing the various elements of narrative film (mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing) in particular. We will also dedicate some time to the aesthetics of documentary and avant-garde filmmaking practices. Examples will be drawn from both the U.S. and world cinema and from all eras of filmmaking. By the end of the semester, students will be exposed to the fundamental vocabulary for discussing both the content and formal aspects of the medium.

Aykol **July 21- Aug 8** **MTWRF 9:00-11:50am** **CRN #: 32794**