

**VCU DEPARTMENT
OF ENGLISH**

**GRADUATE
COURSE
DESCRIPTIONS**

Spring 2017

ENGL 500-003**Practicum: Teaching College English**

A course for graduate teaching assistants only. The course provides training, instructional support and professional development for graduate teaching assistants. It includes practical teaching strategies, curricula development, and managerial skills for the classroom. Does not count toward graduate degrees.

Shimomura**TBA****CRN #: 12265****ENGL 500-004****Practicum: Teaching College English**

Semester course; 1-6 credits. May be repeated for credit. May not be applied toward degrees in English. Prerequisite: permission of director of graduate studies. Student participation in planned educational experience under the supervision of the University College (for those working UNIV200).

Strong**TBA****CRN #: 28476****ENGL 550-901****Studies in Linguistics: Theories of Language**

Despite its centrality of language to every part of human life, and too many parts of academic research, there is and has always been very little agreement among scholars and other thinkers about just what "language" is. This class surveys major works from a number of traditions that attempt to address that question, primarily including philosophy of language, linguistics, and literary theory. We'll read work by and about figures including Plato, Locke, Humboldt, Chomsky, Saussure, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Kripke, and Taylor. Students will write two medium-length or one longer paper, and offer one brief presentation in class. The class will be taught mostly by discussion with some lecture. Students will benefit from having had some prior exposure to one or more of the approaches, disciplines, or lines of thought to be covered in the class.

Columbia**MW 4:00-5:15pm****CRN #: 34702****ENGL 606-901****Literary Criticism**

A comparative study of critical approaches to literary texts (reader-oriented, formalist, psychoanalytic, archetypal, structuralist, poststructuralist, feminist and gender-oriented, new historicist, multicultural, and postcolonial). These approaches, and the theories behind them, will be evaluated in terms of their capacity to address major components of the literary process (author, text, reader, history, culture). They will also be tested on selected literary texts by Blake, Hawthorne, Charlotte Gilman, Kate Chopin, William Carlos Williams, Adrienne Rich and Thomas Pynchon. The objective of this course is twofold: (1) to expand our repertory of critical methods, grounding our interpretive practice in a more coherent theory of literary signification; (2) to encourage us to examine the rhetorical strategies that literary texts employ to generate emotional and

intellectual reactions, and our own interpretive moves in response to their prompts. The structure of this course follows the basic thematic-historical development of criticism over the past century, from reader-oriented, through text and discourse-focused, to culture-oriented criticism; also the natural progression of critical writing from response to critical analysis and interpretive negotiation.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Barnes and Noble at VCU Bookstore):

K. M. Newton, ed. *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory: A Reader*. 2nd edition. Houndsmill, Great Britain, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997.

Wilfred L. Guerin and others. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. 6th edition. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011.

Pynchon, Thomas. *The Crying of Lot 49*. 1966. New York: Harper & Row, Perennial Fiction Library Edition, 1986; reissued 2006.

Cornis-Pope

TR 4:00-5:15pm

CRN #: 34029

ENGL 620-901

Intertextuality: Castaways

PREAMBLE: SEM·I·NAR: SE-MƏ-NÄR: *NOUN*: A GROUP OF ADVANCED STUDENTS STUDYING UNDER A PROFESSOR, EACH DOING ORIGINAL RESEARCH AND EXCHANGING RESULTS THROUGH REPORTS AND DISCUSSIONS

CAVEAT/FULL DISCLOSURE: This seminar will be a lot of work and a lot of fun – not unlike (in the best of circumstances!) being stranded on a desert island.

DESCRIPTION: *Stranded on a desert island*: this is an image intrinsic to our cultural fabric, thanks to Daniel Defoe's wildly popular 1719 novel of shipwreck and endurance; the image of the resourceful survivor (remaking reality by subordinating the world around him) surfaces in modern novels such as J.G. Ballard's *Concrete Island* and Jane Gardam's *Crusoe's daughter*, in poems and plays (by Elizabeth Bishop and Derek Walcott, for instance), in films such as *Castaway* and *Moon*, and in a large range of material items (from toys to video games to product advertisements) known broadly as *Crusoeiana*; it surfaces in our shared Google-consciousness when we type the words "What three things would..." into the search field and the first two Auto-Fill options are "What three things would you bring to an island?" and "what three things would you take to a deserted island?"

Nearing the 2019 tercentennial of the original publication of *Robinson Crusoe*, in this seminar we will approach the "INTERTEXTUAL" topic of "CASTAWAYS" by dipping into a transhistorical range of texts in addition to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ones – from early modern antecedents to inheritors – that are related to the "castaway" genre, or, as it is properly termed, the *Robinsonade micro-genre*. This micro-genre is as *meta-fictional* as it is enduring and pervasive. That is to say, if *Crusoe* is a novel about shipwreck, survival, and colonial

mastery, it is also a supposed "true story" about a writer who worries a lot about how to shape his alleged life-story – it is a fiction about what it means to write fiction. Thus: we will pay attention to the metafictional elements of our texts this term (the Robinsonades that come after *Crusoe* tend to follow *Crusoe's* lead in engaging explicitly with the question of how to compose a story, a narrative); and many but not all of those texts will be novels; and we will also take into account the trans-historical evolution of the genre and also the non-literary world of Crusoeiana.

Course requirements, aside from energy, curiosity, and initiative: a lot of reading and great discussion; weekly writing on the Blackboard; several formal presentations and assignments involving original research; a major final paper.

Swenson

MW 7:00-8:15pm

CRN #: 34696

ENGL 624-902

Texts & Contexts: *The New Yorker*

The *New Yorker* short story probably "causes more debate, and results in more distemper, than anything else about the magazine," observes Dale Kramer in *Ross and The New Yorker*. One of the major reasons for this debate is the denial by many (among them *New Yorker* editors and staff members through the years) of the existence of "a *New Yorker* story." In this seminar we will read and discuss stories and poems by writers from each of these categories: (1) those whose work has appeared regularly in the magazine and who are by reputation *New Yorker* writers, (2) those who have published stories or poems in *The New Yorker* but who are not known as *New Yorker* writers, and (3) writers who publish regularly in the magazine but whose stories or poems seem at first glance odd choices for the magazine given its audience. Against these three groups we will place the fiction writers and poets whose work happens to appear in the current issues of *The New Yorker* during the semester. One major objective will be to determine if there is such a thing as "a *New Yorker* story" (or poem) and if it makes sense (particularly in light of recent and obvious changes in the magazine) to talk about *The New Yorker* school of fiction; in much the same way, we will also examine whether there is a *New Yorker* school of poetry, reading and discussing poems published in the magazine from 1925 to the present. In the course of the semester we will also be examining historical details about the magazine, including the editorial principles upon which Harold Ross founded it in 1925 and the degree to which William Shawn carried Ross's vision from 1952 into the 1980's. Our historical study will focus largely on the "old" *New Yorker* (1925-1987), but we will also consider changes that have been made as the magazine has evolved through the editorships of Robert Gottlieb (1987-1992), Tina Brown (1992-1998), and David Remnick (1998-present).

Mangum

TR 5:30-6:45pm

CRN #: 34703

ENGL 630-901

Form & Theory of Fiction

Will address a number of key issues concerning the structure, conventions and function of narrative discourse and will seek to give readers and writers of fiction an opportunity to study a broad range of narrative forms, as well as to explore genre conventions and their thematic and rhetorical significance. Students will read stories and novels from various historical periods, with some focus on the contemporary, and apply to them the insights offered by major theorists of narrative. They also may write imitations, parodies and responses examining and demonstrating the aesthetics of fiction.

Pylvainen

M 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 35122

ENGL 661-901

Themes in Interdisciplinary Studies

The field of "adaptation studies," which chiefly explores the translation of literary works into film, has enjoyed something of a renewal of interest in the past few years, with new books and journals devoted to adaptation appearing with some frequency. This has been prompted, at least in part, by the growth of new media and new forms of re-mediation of texts. Thus we will spend some time exploring the theoretical concepts most relevant to adaptation studies (intertextuality, medium specificity, authorship, and the like), as well as assess the major approaches to the study of adaptation that have developed over the past few decades. Our focus in this course will be on one form of adaptation—that of prose (and primarily fiction) into film. We will read selected texts, viewing filmed adaptations of those texts, and discussing what issues of adaptation surface in these examples. We may also examine at least one example of a text that has been adapted to another medium than film (video game, internet site, hypertext, and the like). Don't hold me to this list, but among the texts (and films) we may examine are Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Remains of the Day*, Colm Tóibín's *Brooklyn*, Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, Annie Proulx's "Brokeback Mountain," Christopher Nolan's *Memento*, Susan Orlean's nonfiction *The Orchid Thief* (and Spike Jonze's film *Adaptation* based on it), and Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, among others. There will be options for written work, including a 15-20 page seminar paper or a creative (screenwriting) project, frequent short response papers, and perhaps a small group project.

Fine

T 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 34694

ENGL 666-901

Creative Writing: Short Fiction

You already know what a workshop is ... It's a place to present your best work

for comment; it's also a place to experiment with new styles and genres. Any mode of writing is acceptable, from flash to fantasy to gritty realism; the group should be conversant enough with all these modes (or willing to become conversant) to give them a vigorous reading and chat.

I hope that everyone will take a stab, whether slight or substantial, at experimental writing, the nature of which we'll discuss together and through readings I assemble in a coursepack.

This semester you'll bring in three stories of your own for discussion, and you will comment graciously and constructively on each other's work. We'll read work by visiting authors; attendance at their events is considered part of the course.

We might usually begin with twenty to thirty minutes discussing professionalization—not as stodgy as the word sounds—the questions you may have about launching your careers. In the past, topics have run from how to identify markets for your fiction, how to read aloud effectively, the evils of the dangling modifier, vernacular dialect, and so on. You're welcome to suggest topics for discussion.

As a final project, you'll revise a story, ideally one from this semester.

Cokal

T 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 21108

ENGL 666-902

Creative Writing: Fiction (Novel)

This will be a workshop course in novel writing. This is a year-long course, and students will be expected to make significant progress on writing a novel, as well as to critique the work of others in the class.

De Haven

M 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 34832

ENGL 667-901

Creative Writing: Poetry

This is a graduate level poetry workshop. The class is designed to enable students to continue to hone their reading and writing skills while at the same time experimenting with new strategies. The class encourages students to engage in an ongoing conscious reckoning of their aesthetic values and choices. Each week students are required to produce new drafts, comment both orally and in writing on the drafts of their peers, and to read and respond to published poetry collections.

Graber

W 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 33801

ENGL 672-901

Writing Nonfiction Workshop

Literary nonfiction focuses on writing real world experiences with personality and style. The goal of this workshop is to explore and deepen your understanding of the opportunities and limitations unique to the nonfiction

genre. As such, you'll read published work, write creative nonfiction pieces, respond critically to the work of others, and present on a contemporary essay. We'll focus on the qualities that distinguish literary nonfiction from other forms of nonfiction writing. As such, we'll discuss the tools available to creative writers, as well as contemporary forms ranging from literary journalism to lyric essays and flash nonfiction.

Livingston

M 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 20496

MATX 603-901

Mass Media

Introduces leading theories, concepts, research methods, and scholarship within the field of mass media.

Cheng

T 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 17501

MATX 604-901

Interdisciplinary Workshop

In this course students will gain an understanding of current interdisciplinary theory and practice across media, art, and text. Discussion of readings and examination of real-world examples will provide a foundation for academic and professional careers in today's interdisciplinary digital environment.

Workshopping of preliminary dissertation ideas, conference abstracts, teaching portfolios, and professional websites will develop content and skills needed for the MATX e-portfolio.

Garberson

R 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 17499

MATX 690-902

Seminar in Media, Art, & Text

This discussion-intensive graduate readings seminar will interrogate the complex representations, experiences, and critiques of what STS scholars have called 'technoculture' and how these representations mediate – and in turn, are mediated by – representation and embodiments of gender and race. Our conversations will investigate historical intersections of gender and race in modern Western science and technology (from 1850 onward), and explore how these intersections have shaped the development and use of particular technologies in diverse sites, from the household to the workplace, as well as their implications for broader institutional relationships of power and knowledge. Together we will also examine some existing visions of alternate framings for technoscientific presents and futures.

Readings will be drawn from extensive STS scholarship (history, sociology, theory), as well as from historical primary sources in the development of science and technology, including the history of industrial standardization, medical texts and practices, and computing and the internet. We will also read work from

communications, sociology, gender and ethnic studies scholars, as well as fiction, to provide multiple disciplinary angles on these themes.

This is a new class, so **TOPICS** are still being finalized, but will include (though not be limited to):

- >Definitions: what IS 'technology'? who gets to say?
- >Domestic Technologies: Then and Now
- >History of Computing: Gender and Race in Representation and Practice
- >Technologies of Health, Medicine, and Sexuality
- >Communication, Video Games, and the Internet
- >Globalization and Militarization: Transnational and Cyborg Cartographies of Technoculture

Course Mechanics: Students will be required to do extensive reading, participate in discussion, and complete one major course project:

Project Proposal 10 points

Project Presentation 25 points

Mandatory class participation 40 points

Final Project Paper 30 points ===== Total 100 points

Rader

M 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 34722