

**VCU DEPARTMENT  
OF ENGLISH**

**GRADUATE  
COURSE  
DESCRIPTIONS**

**Fall 2015**

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

A course for graduate teaching assistants who are assigned to the Writing Center, assist large lectures classes, and/or work as a research assistant. The course provides training, instructional and research support and professional development for graduate teaching assistants. It includes practical teaching strategies, curricula development, and managerial skills for the classroom and research activities. Does not count toward graduate degrees.

**TBA****MWF 1:00-1:50pm****CRN: 12446****ENGL 500-004****Practicum: Teaching College English**

A course for graduate teaching assistants assigned to teach or shadow UNIV200. The course provides training, instructional support and professional development for graduate teaching assistants working with University College. Does not count toward graduate degrees.

**Strong****TBA****CRN: 29428****ENGL 501-901****Introduction to Graduate Studies in English**

This course offers a practical introduction to graduate studies in English by analyzing the under-discussed academic genres central to MA students' success: the conference paper and presentation; the MA thesis; and the curriculum vitae. Just as they must eventually do in the MA program, students choose (for their final project of the course) either to make a presentation in class or to write a thesis proposal. The course thus offers a rehearsal of the rest of the degree program, preparing students for what lies ahead.

**Harrison****M 7:00-9:40pm****CRN: 12447****ENGL 560-001****Topics: The Dystopian Vision of JG Ballard**

The British fiction writer J. G. Ballard, who died in 2009, has been called “the most original English writer of the last century” and “the ideal chronicler of our disturbed modernity.” Often mistakenly understood as science-fiction, his self-described “myths of the near future” depict a world, at once familiar and strange, in which present-day cultural traits and obsessions are accelerated to a shocking, often violent but mesmerizing extreme. He has been called a visionary, particularly for his capacity to render the visual sublimity of an often-dysfunctional world just ahead of our own. But Ballard’s landscapes – informed partly by surrealism and Freudian psychology – are also landscapes of the mind, and he is as concerned with the psychology of the present as much as with dystopia’s detailed visual rendering.

In this class we will read roughly six of Ballard’s novels, along with many of his exquisitely crafted short stories. Assignments will include formal essays, weekly

or biweekly informal written “responses,” pop quizzes, a final and a mid-term. NB: **This class entails a serious commitment to a single contemporary writer** who can be challenging at times. **Do not sign-up without first doing some elementary research on Ballard**, to be sure that he sounds like someone for you.  
**Frankel** TR 12:30-1:45pm CRN: 33002

**ENGL 560-002**                      **Special Topics in British Literature: Shakespeare**  
In this course, we will consider the development of Shakespeare’s poetic and dramatic techniques over the course of his 20+ year career. We will begin by reading in his sonnets and earlier “lyrical” plays (*MND, R&J, Rich II*). Then we will consider some of the mid-career plays (*AYLL, Ham, 12th N. Oth, Macb, T&C, Cor*). Finally, we will turn to the late romance (*Temp*) which seems almost religious in its impulse toward using verse drama as a mode of exploring transcendence. Assignments will include two short analytical essays, a group presentation, and a longer researched paper.  
**Sharp** MWF 12:00-12:50pm CRN: 28807

**ENGL 570-001**  
**Topics in American Literature: A Book History of Church Hill**  
The course features selections from over 400 years of rare books and manuscripts that illustrate the racial segregation and integration of the churches and schools in and around the Church Hill neighborhood of Richmond, Virginia. These texts range from the 17th-century records of Henricus Parish and College (including the writings of John Smith); to 18th-century accounts of St. John's Church, which came to incorporate Henricus Parish (including Patrick Henry's speech on liberty); to 19th-century texts on St. John's (segregated) Good Shepherd Mission School for African-American Children, as well as contemporary accounts of Leigh Street Baptist Church's sponsorship of (separate) African-American congregations (including readings from Poe's *Southern Literary Messenger*); to 20th-century documents on massive resistance to the integration of public schools; to the forthcoming books about current Church Hill residents that University of Richmond students will be making on their newly refurbished hand press. The class will occasionally meet with these UR students, taught by Laura Browder and Patricia Herrera. It will also meet with Jamie Mahoney's introduction to letterpress class, here at VCU, in order to reprint the first Virginia Company sermon. The hands-on book production that students do with these local partners will provide the working knowledge of printing that they need to analyse the other physical artifacts that the course features, some of which are housed at VCU Special Collections, the Library of Virginia, and the Virginia Historical Society. The course thus draws on the city's rich historical resources

and neighboring institutions, and connects some of its current problems and proposed solutions to their long histories.

**Eckhardt**

**W 1:00-3:40pm**

**CRN: 32824**

**ENGL 570-901**

**Topics in American Literature: Joan Didion**

Joan Didion's Literary Nonfiction: This course will offer us an opportunity for close study of Joan Didion's nonfiction with attention to prose stylistics, narrative structure, rhetoric and social and journalistic relevance. We will read her work chronologically for the most part, starting with *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1968), *The White Album* (1979), and *Salvador* (1983), then moving to *After Henry* (1992), *Political Fictions* (2001), *Where I Was From* (2003), *Fixed Ideas* (2003), *The Year of Magical Thinking* (2005), and *Blue Nights*. Assignments will include stylistic and rhetorical analysis, critical response, and a final project on some aspect of Didion's work of your own choice. Scholarly criticism of Didion's writing has been, to date, limited; thus there are many possibilities here for publication. Joan Didion is one of the most important writers of literary nonfiction, personal and journalistic, of the 20th and 21st Centuries. This course promises to be an interesting, perhaps eye-opening experience of the nonfiction genre and an author well known for her personal essays and sociocultural criticism.

**Hodges**

**TR 4:00-5:15pm**

**CRN: 32918**

**ENED/ENGL 601-901**

**Young Adult Literature**

Examination of literature written for young adults, literature appropriate for young people in middle schools and high schools. Focuses on the content, characteristics and teaching of such literature.

**Collin**

**R 4:00-6:40pm**

**CRN: 19437**

**ENGL 605-901**

**Introduction to Scholarship in English Studies**

This course introduces students to the philosophy, method, and materials for research in literary and some media studies as well as to fundamentals of textual studies. It emphasizes techniques of conducting original research and of assessing the quality of others' research; it stresses both analytic and synthetic aspects of research-based argumentation. Students acquire knowledge of and expertise in using a wide variety of research tools (electronic and print), broadening their imaginations in employing research materials and methods in the development of their own scholarship. In the final project, students prepare a critical edition of a literary work. Several papers are required, from 2 to 15 pages in length.

**Oggel**

**TR 5:30-6:45pm**

**CRN: 27881**

**ENGL 611-901****Authors: Charles Dickens**

This seminar will consider Dickens's self-invention as "Boz" in the 1830s, and then leap to the later novels, beginning with *David Copperfield* (1849) and concluding with *Our Mutual Friend* (1865). Attention will be paid to both the Victorian social context, Dickens's importance as a periodical editor (*Household Words, All the Year Round*), and his craftsmanship as the author of complex, multi-plot, serialized fictions. We will also keep our eye on both adaptations of his work into other media, and neo-Victorian novels dependent upon it (such as Ronald Frame's recent *Havisham*, or Peter Carey's *Jack Magg*). Students should expect the usual -- seminar reports and a substantial essay.

**Latané****R 7:00-9:40pm****CRN: 32829****ENGL 614-902****Cultural Discourses: 6 Modern Poets**

Fundamentally, this course aims to increase the enjoyment and confidence of students as readers of poetry—specifically by investigating the poems, poetics, and some of the prose of the most influential and widely canonized Modernist poets, supplemented by an overview of the era's history and the often interwoven biographies of these writers, as well as insights provided by a selection of significant literary critics and theorists, which will offer a general understanding of Modernism as an arts movement as well as a targeted comprehension of many famous poems written during the first half of the twentieth century. It will feature the poetry of William Butler Yeats, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, H.D., Marianne Moore, and Wallace Stevens, with some attention to work by W.H. Auden, William Carlos Williams, and Rainer Maria Rilke. We will examine the dominant characteristics of poetry of this period, including the dominant mode of irony, the extensive use of personae, a heightened awareness of poetic tradition and cultural history, the borrowing of techniques from painting (such as collage and other forms of juxtaposition), the exploration of new poetic materials, an extensive use of allusion, an increased precision of imagery—as well as articulating a number of theories and manifestoes to support all of these innovations and expansions of poetic technique and subject matter. We will examine these characteristics at work through close readings of individual poems. The structure of the course will depend somewhat on the size of its enrollment, but the current plan is for students to give one online presentation, and one in-class seminar presentation that (ideally) will form the foundation for a substantial researched critical essay (20 pages or more) focused on one of the poets.

**Donovan****T 7:00-9:40pm****CRN: 32915****ENGL 631-901****Form & Theory of Creative Nonfiction**

One of the most distinctive features of creative nonfiction is its perpetual identity crisis. Whether it's James Frey on the hot seat or Lee Gutkind at the lectern, writers of creative nonfiction seem forever wrestling with such questions as: What is fact? What is fiction? What is truth? What is reality? And it is precisely this willingness to assess, reassess and reboot that makes CNF among the most dynamic genres in publishing. In this writing and reading workshop, we will endeavor not so much to define its parameters as explore its possibilities. We will study a wide range of styles and forms such as personal essay, memoir, lyric essay and other hybrids; applying our insights to the major theories of the genre, delving into the ethical considerations of writing from life, and most of all, playing the edges.

**Fletcher**

**M 4:00-6:40pm**

**CRN: 32826**

**ENGL 666-902**

**Creative Writing: Short Fiction**

Study of the art of fiction writing, with the goal of producing professionally acceptable and publishable fiction. Workshop members shall produce a substantial amount of written short stories, and in addition shall be able to evaluate and articulate the strengths of their own work.

**McCown**

**T 4:00-6:40pm**

**CRN: 31750**

**ENGL 667-901**

**Creative Writing: Poetry**

This is a graduate workshop in poetry writing, admission limited to students in the MFA program. Each student is expected to write and revise between ten and twelve poems, and to submit these poems for discussion in workshop. At semester's end, students will submit a portfolio of revisions of the semester's work. Students will also be asked to submit four short response papers to books on our reading list, and to meet with me at least twice during the semester for individual conferences. A student's final grade is determined primarily by the content of the portfolio, but I will also take into consideration the quality of the student's short essays and contribution to workshop discussions. Probable texts include Paige Ackerson-Kiely's *My Love is a Dead Arctic Explorer* (Ashata), Osip Mandelstam's *Stolen Air: Selected Poems of Osip Mandelstam* (Ecco), Matthew Dickman's *Mayakovsky's Revolver: Poems* (Norton), Jorie Graham's *Place*, and the winner of 2014 Larry Levis reading Prize, TBA.

**Wojahn**

**M 7:00-9:40pm**

**CRN: 12461**

**ENGL 671-901**

**Film & Television Scripts**

Study of the theory and practice of producing shooting scripts for television and motion pictures. Emphasis will be placed on the various kinds of scripts most commonly used by directors and cinematographers (e.g., silent, narrated and

dramatized). Attention will also be paid to the ways in which script writers adapt material to audiences, and the ways in which strict time frames are imposed on scripts. Students will write scripts of various kinds and lengths. Further course details TBA.

**De Haven**

**W 7:00-9:40pm**

**CRN: 32919**

**ENGL 673-001**

**Teaching Creative Writing**

A course for graduate teaching assistants in the MFA Program who are assigned to teach or shadow ENGL 295 or ENGL 291. The course provides training, instructional support and professional development for graduate teaching assistants who are actively teaching ENGL 295/291 and/or are in preparations to do so. A comparative analysis of different approaches to the teaching of creative writing. Attention will be paid to the different ways in which elements such as dialogue, sound pattern, scene development, line break, meter, voice and distance can be taught. Please coordinate enrollment with the MFA Program Director and Graduate Programs Advisor. May count as elective credit towards the MFA in Creative Writing degree.

**Graber**

**MW 2:00-3:15pm**

**CRN: 12464**

**MATX 601-901**

**Texts & Textuality**

This course, a core requirement for the interdisciplinary PhD in Media, Art and Text, explores theories of texts and textuality as they relate to the study of various media and fields (English, arts, mass communications). Co-taught by Dr. Marcel Cornis-Pope (Department of English), Dr. Noreen Barnes (School of the Arts) and Dr. Hong Cheng (Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture), this course will engage theoretically and analytically a range of texts in various media (poems, fictions, word sculptures, paintings, illustrations, films, video and sound-works), asking questions such as: (1) What is a text? (2) What features are common to all texts, irrespective of their medium, what features distinguish texts in particular media? (3) How are the meanings of texts produced and negotiated? (4) How do texts translate from medium to medium? We will combine several disciplinary perspectives (English and cultural studies, art history and aesthetics, and studies in media and culture) and utilize multimedia computer technology to understand past and contemporary textual forms as they engage our senses as well as our interpretive minds.

**Cornis-Pope**

**R 4:00-6:40pm**

**CRN: 17827**

**MATX 602-901**

**History of Media, Art, & Text**

This course will examine the history of communication technologies in their social and cultural contexts, with an emphasis on the development of

contemporary digital technology and new media. Our sites of inquiry will encompass histories of orality, photography, cinema, the computer, and digital technologies, all the while emphasizing these technologies' relationships to memory and the archive. We will also examine how these technologies engage with topics including criminality, modernity, race, surveillance, and labor. Drawing on discourses in media studies, communication studies, science studies, history of science, and science and technology studies, students will examine how these interactions between communication practices and technologies are related to institutions, identity formation, cultural values, social practices and economic conditions.

**Rhee**

**T 4:00-6:40pm**

**CRN: 31947**