

**VCU DEPARTMENT  
OF ENGLISH**

**GRADUATE  
COURSE  
DESCRIPTIONS**

**Fall 2014**

**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, the Writing Center, and the Computer Center. Does not count toward graduate degrees.

**Latane****MWF 1:00-1:50pm****Call#: 12446****ENGL 500-004****Practicum: Teaching College English**

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**Strong****TBA****Call#: 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.

**Eckhardt****M 7:00-9:40pm****CRN: 12447****ENGL 560-001****Topics: Oscar Wilde & His Circle**

The writings of Oscar Wilde, like his life, fly in the face of the traditional pieties, challenging us to rethink our understanding of some of the things we hold dearest. But even as he brings his wit and critical intelligence to bear on complex questions of language and culture, sexuality and social relations, Wilde deflates our attempts to define him. A master of paradox and a self-professed teller of lies, Wilde tells us that "all art is quite useless" and that "in matters of grave importance, style not sincerity is the vital thing." So how do we grapple with Wilde's legacy, still poorly understood one hundred years after his death, without becoming one of the serious people he so famously mocked in *The Importance of Being Earnest*?

In this course, we will read Wilde's writings in the context of the decade – the 1890s – he helped to shape. In the first half of the semester, we will read Wilde's best-known literary works, as well as one or two that are not so well-

known. Our readings will extend across the whole range of Wilde's writing, taking in poetry, fiction, drama and criticism. In the second half of the semester, we will broaden our focus to include plays, poetry and fiction by other writers of the 1890s, many of whom Wilde helped to inspire: Shaw, Stoker, James (perhaps), Ibsen (perhaps) and a number of so-called New Woman writers whose careers make an interesting parallel with Wilde's. If there is time, we'll also be studying developments in the visual arts – particularly work by Aubrey Beardsley and James McNeill Whistler – with which Wilde was closely involved. In the last week of the semester, we will return to Wilde, whose prison writings, written just before his death in 1900, serve as a poignant capstone to both his own career and the decade he dominated.

Assignments will include a short critical paper, book reports, researched presentations, and a major researched paper.

**Frankel**

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

**CRN: 28783**

**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 early non-dramatic works (sonnets, *Venus and Adonis*) and three earlier "lyrical" plays (*MoV*, *MND*, *R&J*). Then we will consider some of the mid-career plays (*1HIV*, *AYLI*, *Ham*, *MforM*, *Oth*, *Macb*). Finally, we will turn to some of the later work (*WT*, *Temp*) which seems almost religious in its impulse toward using verse drama as a mode of exploring transcendence. There will be two short (6-8 pp.) essays and a longer (12-15 pp.) "research" essay.

**Sharp**

**MWF 12:00-12:50pm**

**CRN: 28807**

**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 614-901**

#### **Cultural Discussion: European Modernism & Beyond**

Modernism was a truly international movement, one that various scholars date differently; for the purposes of this class, we will consider modernism to span from the 1890s to 1939. Proponents broke away from realism by declaring that human experience is impossible to depict according to realism's basic tenets (with which we will familiarize ourselves), but they did think it possible to capture the workings of the human psyche and how it processes reality. To do so, they shattered readerly expectations of narrative and psychology and changed how "high culture" perceived time, thought, and of course—reality.

This class will thus examine some of the greatest international hits of the twentieth century—from psychoanalysis (which we'll view as a strategy for narrative form rather than content) through high modernism, proto-postmodernism, magic realism, and other hard-to-define text types. Along with primary texts, we will read some theoretical work, but emphasis will be on the literature rather than the theory. Close readings will be crucial to understanding the modernist aesthetic.

Expectations include two short papers and one long argumentative seminar paper, plus a presentation.

#### **Tentative Reading List**

*Nota bene: Most of these works (Woolf's and Nabokov's being the only exceptions) were written in languages other than English. It is crucial that we all work from the same translation. Please buy only the editions ordered through VBC or the VCU store.*

Sigmund Freud, *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love* (selections)

Sigmund Freud, *Dora: Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*

Andre Gide, *The Immoralist*

Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way* (Lydia Davis translation only!)

Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts*

Franz Kafka, *Complete Stories*

Franz Kafka, *The Castle*

Vladimir Nabokov, *Ada, or Ardor ... or Pale Fire*

Gabriel García Márquez, *Love and Other Demons*

Jorge Borges, *Selected Fictions*

Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*  
Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* (selections)

Course Reader, available at Uptown Copy (Main St.)

**Cokal**

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

**CRN: 31772**

**ENGL 624-901**

**Texts & Contexts: *Slavery in the African American Literary Imagination***

*"[T]he very choice of history as subject is determined by authors' experience of the recent past and the present. But the connection is primarily indirect and metaphoric."* Keith Byerman, *Remembering The Past*

This course will attempt to grapple with the problem of representing slavery in literary texts by exploring the genres of the slave narrative and the historical novel. Our study of the slave narrative will include emphasis on its generic structure as well as issues of authentication and archival research. We will visit both print and electronic texts and discuss the impact of this material on literary study.

The majority of the course will focus on twentieth and twenty-first century revisions of the slave narrative form as post-modern writers reinterpret the meaning of slavery in contemporary times. Questions we will consider: Why has slavery been such an enduring subject for African American fiction writers? How might these writers be writing "in the gaps" of nineteenth-century narratives? How are they using slavery as a cultural discourse to comment on contemporary times? Novels will include Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987) and *A Mercy* (2008); Sherley Anne Williams, *Dessa Rose* (1987); Edward P. Jones, *The Known World* (2003); and James McBride, *Song Yet Sung* (2008).

**Bassard**

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

**CRN: 30146**

**ENGL 630-901**

**Form & Theory of Fiction**

Just as narrative theory approaches narratives as a synthesis of a what (story) and a how (discourse), this course will approach narrative theory by emphasizing both its what and its how. This course will equip MA, MFA, and PhD students with a sophisticated understanding of narratology's major principles and paradigms, and it will provide a sense of narratology's development over time. We will apply narrative theory to published fiction, finding ways theory can illuminate narrative and narrative can change theory.

Assignments will include a substantial reading load, two short formal essays (5 pages each) applying theory to a narrative on the syllabus, a final formal essay

(10-12 pages) applying theory to a published narrative of one's choice, and daily engagement in discussion.

**Nash**

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

**CRN: 31853**

**ENGL 636-901**

**Teaching Composition**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Examines theories and practices of teaching writing, with emphasis on the connections between theory and practice. For further course details, please contact the instructor.

**Coogan**

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

**CRN: 29964**

**ENGL 666-901**

**Creative Writing: Short Fiction**

Prerequisite: graduate standing in M.F.A. program or permission of the Creative Writing Committee. All students seeking to enroll must contact the creative writing M.F.A. director. 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 writing, short stories or a portion of a novel, and in addition shall be able to evaluate and articulate the strengths of their own work. Graded as pass/fail.

**De Haven**

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

**CRN: 16882**

**ENGL 666-902**

**Creative Writing: Short Fiction**

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.

**McCown**

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

**CRN: 31750**

**ENGL 667-901**

**Creative Writing: Poetry**

Further course details to be announced.

**Wojahn**

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

**CRN: 12461**

**ENGL 672-901**

**Writing Nonfiction**

The last four decades have seen the re-emergence of nonfiction prose in this country. This workshop focuses on the craft of writing literary or creative nonfiction. We will read extensively in the genre, examining its many forms and uses both in book-length works and essays. Our readings will be drawn primarily from American writers after 1950, but we will work to place those writers in a historical context. Workshop participants will write extensively, working on the craft of nonfiction through drafting and significant revision, and responding carefully to each other's works in progress. May be repeated for

credit.

**Hodges**

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

**CRN: 31870**

**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) with Dr. Noreen Barnes (School of the Arts) and Will Sims (School of Mass Communications), this course will engage theoretically and analytically a range of texts in various media (poems, fictions, word sculptures, paintings, illustrations, films, TV, 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 theories of communication) to study textual forms in their complex dynamic, as they move across historical periods and media or stretch the boundaries of a particular genre. We will 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**

Examines the history of communication technologies in their social and cultural contexts, with an emphasis on the development of contemporary digital technology and new media. Students will explore how the interactions between communication practices and technologies are related to institutions, identity formation, cultural values, social practices and economic conditions.

**Rhee**

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

**CRN: 31947**