

**VCU DEPARTMENT
OF ENGLISH**

**GRADUATE
COURSE
DESCRIPTIONS**

Spring 2015

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. Please contact instructor for course details at dlatane@vcu.edu.

Latane**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 560-001****Special Topics in British Literature: Charles Dickens**

This will be the best of courses, it will be the worst of courses, we will read books of wisdom, we will read some foolishness, it will be a semester of belief, it will be a semester of incredulity . . .

Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812-1870) wrote thirteen novels (plus one unfinished at his death), five Christmas books, several volumes of short stories, and millions of words of journalism in the magazines that he edited. He is a universe unto himself, and arguably the most widely read and influential novelist in the English language. We will examine Dickens's life, times, and literary productions (especially, of course, the novels). This course will function as a seminar, and students will be expected invariably to attend class, discuss, give presentations, and conduct research. Some attention may be given to the rich subject of Dickens on film. [This course will be taught in conjunction with the undergraduate course ENGL 480-901.]

Latane**TR 5:30-6:45pm****CRN #: 32150****ENGL 570-901****Special Topics: Atwood & Biopolitics**

Biopolitics can be described as the exercise of power over life and death, the power to manage biological processes – to manage life itself on the scale of populations and species. In the age of biotechnologies, biomedicine, and biometric surveillance technologies, this class will closely examine the concept of biopolitics, reading key texts by Michel Foucault, Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, and other theorists. We'll bring these theoretical texts into conversation with Margaret Atwood's tour de force *MaddAddam* trilogy, which details a post-

apocalyptic world in which humans are virtually extinct, destroyed by biomedical sabotage and replaced by new genetically engineered species.

Rhee

R 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 31849

ENGL 606-901

Literary Criticism

This course offers a comparative study of current critical approaches to literary texts (reader-oriented, formalist, psychoanalytic, archetypal, structuralist, post-structuralist, 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, among others, William Shakespeare, William Blake, Mary Shelley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson, James Joyce, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, and Adrienne Rich. 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 responses, and our own interpretive moves in response to their prompts. The examination of various theoretical positions in contemporary criticism will be accompanied by practical applications that will put to test the interpretive frames and sets of expectations brought by each critical theory to a particular text.

Cornis-Pope

MW 5:30-6:45pm

CRN #: 25095

ENGL 614-901

Topics: Travel & African-American Imagination

This course examines the social and cultural phenomenon of travel and imagination in African-American cultural history, arts and letters. Farah Griffin and Cheryl Fish's volume of first-hand accounts *A Stranger in the Village: Two Centuries of African-American Travel Writing* serves as our primary point of entry into the emerging discourse on African-American and black traveler. Griffin and Fish's concept of the "stranger in the village," derived from James Baldwin's 1955 essay, will orient our initial foray into African-American travel writing, narratives and fiction. However, we will move well beyond this concept in our exploration of recurrent tropes, figurations and themes in the cultural history and representation of African American travel. Though the bulk of course readings come from this volume, focusing particularly on the 1940s forward, we will also consider written and multimedia texts that fall outside the hybrid genre of travel writing as well as visual works, such as film and graphic art. Further, we will explore related works which fall into the broader and related tradition of African Diaspora and the Black Atlantic. Emphasis will be placed on written and visual literacy, developing a critical and culturally-informed practice of reading,

writing and analysis and mastery of course content. Themes guiding our journey are as follows: the ways in which African Americans encounter sites/sights and people and the ways in which African Americans find themselves also encountered; representations of travel experiences and their social, cultural and historical implications; the relationship of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and nationality to mobility.

Hall

W 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 31850

ENGL 627-901

Genres: 18th Century Gothic

This seminar is concerned with the rise of the Gothic novel in the later 1700s and early 1800s. At the center of the course are the selection of so-called “horrid novels” – i.e., horrifying novels – that Catherine Morland and Isabella Thorpe propose to read together in Jane Austen’s quasi-satiric Gothic novel *Northanger Abbey* (1819): titles from the 1790s like *The Necromancer*, *The Midnight Bell*, *Wolfenbach Castle*, *The Orphan of the Rhine*, *The Mysterious Warning*; pages full of bandits, dungeons, ruins, persecuted maidens, sorcerers, kidnapers, forests, diabolical uncles, villainous monks, ghosts. The course readings will also include selections from contextual and background material (e.g., sources from literature, aesthetics, politics, philosophy, such as Horace Walpole, Edmund Burke, Mary Wollstonecraft, Thomas Paine, Olaudah Equiano), and will encompass historical topics such as Gothic architecture, abolition, art, landscape gardening, the French Revolution. Requirements: weekly short writings, weekly contributions to class discussion, two formal presentations, and a 15-page paper.

Swenson

R 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 31851

ENGL 629-901

Form & Theory of Poetry

This course aims to provide you with a thorough introduction to poetic meter and form – and to the intricacies of metrical analysis. In addition to analyzing others’ poems throughout the semester, you will practice and workshop various meters and forms. The theory behind the course is that you will learn more about prosody by writing in forms than by analysis alone.

You will work all semester toward building a final portfolio of practice pieces.

These practice forms will include:

- Blank verse
- Couplets
- Tercets
- Quatrains
- Sonnet

- One form of your choice

For your practice pieces, you will also choose different kinds of poems:

- Elegy
- Pastoral
- Ekphrasis
- Epistle
- Ode
- Apostrophe

Three times during the semester, in addition to the required reading and practice with forms, you will bring in a poem for discussion. You may choose your poem from any anthology, journal, or website (for example, Poetry Daily: www.poems.com), but choose carefully. The poem needs to illustrate some compelling pattern—metrical, rhythmical, or auditory. You should come prepared to lead the class in a discussion of the functional patterns and what their effects are. The poem should be in English, from any period, but it should employ some kind of recurrent pattern. Prose poems, found poems, or poems that use lines as substitute for punctuation are types of poems that do not make much use of patterned sound. These brief presentations can serve as building blocks for a “craft talk” you will give toward the end of the semester.

Emerson

M 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 30130

ENGL 666-901

Creative Writing: Short Fiction

A workshop for students in the MFA program and sophisticated others who want to work on their short fiction, in a collegial setting and lively discussion of strengths and areas of improvement for each piece. Each student will also bring in an “inspiration text,” a published work that has influenced his or her aesthetic. We will discuss one inspiration text and workshop two stories per session. Three new stories are required; depending on class size, it is likely that each person will have two workshops, with the third story discussed one-on-one with the instructor. One major revision will be part of the final portfolio.

Cokal

T 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 21108

ENGL 666-902

Creative Writing: The 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.

McCown

T 4:00-6:40pm

CRN: 31708

ENGL 667-901**Creative Writing: Poetry**

This course is a graduate workshop in writing poetry, admission limited to students in the MFA program (or by instructor's permission). Students will write and revise seven poems (or more) which will be submitted for workshop discussion. At the end of the semester, all poems produced during the course will be submitted in a final portfolio of revised works. Students also engage in energetic online discussions covering the assigned readings and related issues in poetics and aesthetics. Students are invited to meet with me at least twice during the semester for individual conferences. Final grades are determined primarily by achievements in the poems of the final portfolio, but consideration is also afforded to the quality of both online and in-class discussion participation. Texts will include those by visitors—*Lines of Defense* by Stephen Dunn and *The Needle* by Jennifer Grotz—as well as *Caribou* by Charles Wright, *Trances of the Blast* by Mary Ruefle, *Scratching the Ghost* by Dexter Booth, and *Bone Map: Poems* by Sara Eliza Johnson.

Donovan**T 7:00-9:40pm****CRN #: 17544****ENGL 670-901****Literary Editing & Publishing**

Print is dead...but literature is not. We are living through an era where:

- Reading on the screen has become commonplace. All traditional literary print journals and publishing house maintain an online presence...and even some have shifted their production to a completely digital format;
 - Big biz bookstores like B&N battled and nearly defeated independent bookstores...but now see their own business chain model destroyed by Amazon;
 - The Big 6 publishing houses have fallen into worse financial straits, first battling the concept of the e-book only later to embrace it, then only to realize the implications of production and delivery and its ongoing war with Amazon;
 - Amazon wins the e-reader war only to face a new battle with Apple and a presumed preferences for tablets;
 - Meanwhile, in China, millions spend their days reading cellphone novels;
 - Online magazines become ye olde in the face of newer technology.
- Publishers race to find the next big thing. While a select few return to the art of the physical book, most publishers embrace all e-formats (epub, mobi, etc.) and industry innovators consider the pub potential of social media (tweet a novel lately?)

- The existence and role of the book publisher comes into question – with the grey haired editors in the big houses wondering what lessons can be learned from the music industry – and the rest of us to wonder just where it is all going?

This graduate course is specifically designed for those interested in possible careers in publishing – the art and business of editing and publishing. Yes, we will do some editing and learn some traditional tricks of the trade (the way it used to be done), but the major emphasis of this course will be to examine the publishing industry, its history, current status, and possible future e-formats. The course will not only provide a review of current industry landscape, but also expose students to the editorial process, practices and ethics – as well as provoke in-depth discussions concerning the future and fate of the book. All enrolled MA/MFA students will be provided with tablets/e-readers as well as an extensive electronic course reading pack (thus, be warned, all reading will be conducted via screen). And while some students may choose to pursue final projects based upon current publishing ventures, others will be encouraged to edit a text in the hopes to see it come to fruition on the screen.

Didato

W 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 31707

ENGL 672-901

Writing Nonfiction Workshop

This writing and reading course is conducted mainly in workshop format and will deepen your exploration of literary nonfiction, including new journalism, personal essay, memoir and lyric essay, with a particular emphasis on flash nonfiction in the second half of the semester. We will read extensively, both short-form and book-length works with an eye toward style, approach and position of the narrative “I” toward its subject. Our readings will be drawn primarily from contemporary writers, but we will work to place those writers in a historical context. Workshop participants are expected to write extensively, revise extensively, and respond thoughtfully and respectfully to submitted work. May be repeated for credit.

Fletcher

M 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 20496

ENGL 673-001

Teaching Creative Writing

A course for graduate teaching assistants in the MFA Program who are assigned to teach or shadow ENGL295 or ENGL291. The course provides training, instructional support and professional development for graduate teaching assistants who are actively teaching ENGL295/291 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

R 11:00-12:15pm

CRN #: 12280

MATX 603-901

History of Multimedia and Interdisciplinarity

Doctoral Students only. The first part of the course will be devoted to the history of disciplines and interdisciplinarity as well as ongoing debates about the viability of interdisciplinary endeavors. The second part of the course will look at the history of media, with particular attention to medium specificity, leading into a consideration of selected multimedia forms. Throughout, emphasis will fall on the implications for scholarly and creative practice of crossing boundaries between disciplines and media. The course will be taught as an advanced graduate seminar, with discussion of weekly readings and a major research project resulting in a formal twenty-minute class presentation and a twenty-page paper.

Garberson

R 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 17501

MATX 604-901

Workshop

This course, exclusively for first-year MATX PhD students, provides opportunities for students to focus in on the research methods they intend to learn in greater detail for their doctoral work, and for students to work individually and in groups to develop the specific topics about which they plan to write their dissertations. We pay significant attention to preparing and planning for the completion of the major milestones in the MATX PhD program. Projects and individual work. Graded on a pass/fail basis.

Golumbia

T 4:00-6:40pm

CRN #: 17499