

English Graduate Studies
Spring 2024 Courses & Descriptions

ENGL 611: Approaches to College Composition

Jessica Enoch

A seminar emphasizing rhetorical and linguistic foundations for the handling of a course in freshman composition.

ENGL 621: Readings in Renaissance English Literature; Child Actors and Trans-Performance in Shakespearean Drama and Adaptation

Scott Trudell

This course is about the transgendered, transhistorical, trans-theatrical, and transhuman child performers of the Shakespearean commercial theater and their adaptation in theater, film, and television history. We will study roles played by children in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, with a particular focus on representations and dramatizations of childhood. We will ask how childhood is situated in histories of labor, service, gender, performance, succession, sexuality, and race—including where childhood was understood to begin and end, how child performers were instrumentalized and abused, how children have been afforded and refused political rights and representation, and how literary depictions of children and childhood “innocence” have underwritten capitalism and white supremacy. We will also ask how child performance histories connect to trans and nonbinary histories, especially “coming out” and childhood. To that end, we will read scholarship in trans studies by Simone Chess, Colby Gordon, Jack Halberstam, Greta LaFleur, and others. We will also read scholarship on the history and theory of childhood by authors including Rachel Bernstein, Lee Edelman, Thomas A. King, and James Kincaid. Primary texts will include Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *The Winter’s Tale*; Dekker and Middleton’s *The Roaring Girl*, and Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*.

ENGL 626: Readings in American Literature before 1865

Martha Nell Smith

ENGL 648: Contemporary American Literature

Lee Konstantinou

This course will investigate the relationship between neoliberalism and the contemporary American novel. Examining connections between economic history and cultural production, we will consider dominant and emerging novelistic genres and modes, from 1970 to the present, including literary genre fiction, autofiction, the thriller, the YA novel, and other prominent forms.

We will read these novels alongside recent scholarship in the sociology of literature as well as canonical works of neoliberal thought.

ENGL 658D: Readings in Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the Americas: Caribbean Critical Theory

John Drabinski

This course introduces the student to key figures, concepts, and debates in the Caribbean critical tradition. We will begin with mid-century surrealism and the poetics of the Négritude movement, examining how racial and cultural critique produces a sense of expressive culture connected to place, as well as emerging ideas of diaspora and identity. From this foundation, we will explore the critical response to these movements in the hypermodernism of thinkers like Wynter and Condé and the postmodernism of Glissant, Benítez-Rojo, and others. Across our readings, we will track how the Caribbean experience – and the experience of the black Americas more broadly – inform the very foundations of critical theory and produce debates in literary and cultural politics in the post-independence era.

Our reflections will focus on the following writers: Suzanne Césaire, René Ménil, Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, Sylvia Wynter, Antonio Benítez-Rojo, Kamau Brathwaite, Maryse Condé, and the creolist movement.

ENGL 688: Poetry Workshop

Joshua Weiner

ENGL 689: Fiction Workshop

Rion Amilcar Scott

ENGL 708E: Seminar in Rhetoric

Cecilia Shelton

ENGL 759D: Seminar in Literature and Other Arts; Booklab: History and Futures of the Book

Matthew Kirschenbaum

The bite of hard metal type into handmade paper where ink pools in the recesses pressed by the weight of the letters; a literal subtext on the page surfaced through acts of erasure; the hot liquid polymers of 3D-printed objects, deposited in tiny incremental layers to make shapes; a book that is also a toy box; a book that becomes what the poet and printer William Blake once called an “unnam’d form.” Taught with the resources and facilities available in BookLab (Tawes 3248), this course will be a historical, imaginative, and experiential introduction to the

multitudinous forms of what is not the oldest but is surely among the most enduring of human technologies, the codex book.

Our work will be organized around practical and in-depth explorations of different elements of the codex: papermaking, letterpress printing with traditional lead and wood (movable) type, bookbinding, 3-D printing, altered and treated books, and so on. The historical perspective will be predominantly but not exclusively Western. Class-time will be a mix of discussion and hands-on activity. Using BookLab's rich collections we will look at the work of contemporary book artists and printers as well as predecessors; we will try out various experiments with books at the interface between print and the digital, including examples of books as portals for augmented and virtual reality; we'll read a mixed media novel, probably Mark Danielewski's *House of Leaves*; and we will discuss throughout the politics of books as some of the most powerful instruments ever made for consolidating and exercising social hegemony as well as books as tactical platforms for resistance. In addition, we will enjoy visits and workshops from critics and artists, as well as excursions to the nearby studios of Pyramid Atlantic (one of the preeminent book arts studios in the country) and hopefully the Folger or Library of Congress.

ENGL 788: Studies in Poetic Form

Lillian-Yvonne Bertram

Poetry of witness, as defined by Carolyn Forché, is a poetry that inhabits the social sphere, a space between the personal and the political. Poet Mark Nowak acknowledges that documentary poetry is not so much a movement as a modality within poetry with a range along a continuum from the first person auto-ethnographic to the objective third person tendency. As such, it isn't limited to any particular time period or school, but intersects with what we understand as modernist, post-modernist, contemporary, and experimental poetry. Many books of poetry from the past twenty years or more could be described as documentary in the way they powerfully engage the social from personal locations, work with the materiality of the archive, and adopt experimental practices.

In this course we will look at several such projects with an eye towards developing our own documentary poetic work, definitions of documentary poetry, and discuss the question of what responsibility poets and poetry have to the social sphere, if any. The readings will also serve as opportunities to talk in depth about poetic forms.

Potential readings: *Olio* by Tyehimba Jess, *West: A Translation* by Paisley Rekdal, *Blue Front* by Martha Collins, *The Book of the Dead* by Muriel Rukeyser, *Habeas Corpus* by Jill McDonough, *Yellow Rain* by Mai Der Vang, *borderland apocrypha* by Anthony Cody, *The Ferguson Report: An Erasure* by Nicole Sealey.

ENGL 789: Form and Theory in Fiction
Emily Mitchell

ENGL 798B: Critical Theory Colloquium
John Drabinski

ENGL 888: Practicum in English Studies
Sara Wilder