CORNELL UNIVERSITY
Department of English
Graduate Courses
Fall 2014
6000 Colloquium for Entering Students
2 credits.
An introduction to practical and theoretical aspects of graduate English studies, conducted with the help of weekly visitors from the English department. There will be regular short readings and brief presentations, but no formal papers. The colloquium is required for all entering PhD students; MFA students are welcome to attend any sessions that interest them.

6001 Advanced Pedagogy Workshop
1 credit.
This workshop is designed to help graduate instructors build their teaching portfolios. We will be drafting statements of teaching philosophy, designing and workshopping sample courses, and developing a professional pedagogical profile. The workshop is required for all PhD and MFA students during their first semester of teaching. The class will meet twice a month, September through November.

6110 Old English
4 credits. (Also ENGL 3110, MEDVL 3110, MEDVL 6110)
In this course, we will read and discuss some of the earliest surviving English poetry and prose. Attention will be paid to (1) learning to read the language in which this literature is written, (2) evaluating the poetry as poetry: its form, structure, style, and varieties of meaning, and (3) seeing what can be learned about the culture of Anglo-Saxon England and about the early Germanic world in general, from an examination of the Old English literary records. We will begin by reading some easy prose and will go on to consider some more challenging heroic, elegiac, and devotional poetry, including an excerpt from the masterpiece Beowulf. The course may also be used as preparation for the sequence ENGL 3120/ENGL 6120.

6155 Theory and Analysis of Narrative
4 credits.
Study of short stories and a novel that self-consciously foreground questions of narrative form and technique and the process of reading. Authors to be read include Balzac, Borges, Barth, Calvino, Cortazar, Kafka, and others selected by the students themselves. We will also read theoretical essays on the analysis of narrative by Barthes, Bakhtin, Booth, Genette, Fludernik, Pratt, Altman, Shklovsky, and others, focusing on questions about relations between plot and narrative discourse, the discrimination of narrators, the role of gender, and interpretive frameworks for thinking about narrative. Short exercises, an oral report and a longer paper.

6180 The Imaginary Jew: Roots of Antisemitism in Medieval England
4 credits. (Also ENGL 4180, MEDVL 4180/6180, JWST 4180/6180)
When did anti-Semitism begin? The medieval period invented shocking fictions about Jews—that they killed and ate Christian babies; that they desecrated the Host; that they were the murderers of Christ. In manuscripts Jews were visually compared to beasts, devils, and perverts. By law, Jews were forced to live in ghettos, wear distinctive dress, abstain from certain professions, and suffer exile. Beginning with Shakespeare’s Shylock, we will work our way back through visual and literary treatments of Jews in the Middle Ages, reading texts by Chaucer, chronicles, miracle stories, crusader romances, and mystery plays. Drawing on recent theories of the other we will also consider how medieval representations of Jews and other minorities were used to construct medieval communal, religious, and political identities.

6270 Advanced Seminar in Shakespeare
4 credits. (Also ENGL 4270)
Some of Shakespeare's most important dramas are about ancient figures and events: Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, Troilus and Cressida, among others. While Shakespeare transmits a classical cultural heritage to his early modern audience, he critically adapts it in thought-provoking and innovative ways. Many of Shakespeare's major characters in these plays act as representatives of classical authority and yet are profoundly in conflict with it. While remaining attentive to complexities and indeterminacies in these texts, what responses—resistance, identification, affirmation, accommodation—are available to an author? What is the political charge of Roman (republican) plays in the context of English monarchy? What can we say about the politics of Shakespeare's adaptive practices? What political and cultural questions, past and present, do they raise? (Details: bc21@cornell.edu)
This seminar seeks to be both a thorough and a focused introduction to the writing of two crucial English poets. Making a claim for the importance of poetry, Wordsworth asserted, “We have no knowledge but what has been built up by pleasure.” Reading closely texts of Wordsworth, Keats, and their critics, we will ask what kinds of knowledge issue from the pleasure their poetry imparts. In addition, we will reconsider Wordsworth’s and Keats’s poetry in relation to the Enlightenment idea that pleasure is an essential constituent of sociability. Their poetry reflects this idea in radically different ways, in a contrast of styles—and of relations to gender and class—that we will try to distinguish and interpret. Two ten-or-more page papers required.

A survey of 19C British cultural and literary criticism that follows the shift from a Romantic perspective centered on the author (when terms like "imagination" and "the poet" predominate) to the Victorian perspective centered on the viewer (when terms like "beauty" and "the artist" begin to predominate). Our interest will also be psychological and political, as we trace the way notions of the poet or artist imply shifting conceptions of identity and presence, and the way models of aesthetic form embody emerging conceptions of social structure and gender dynamics. We’ll end by connecting nineteenth-century writers with the revival of interest in pleasure and aesthetics in literary studies today. Authors will include Schiller, Coleridge, Marx, Ruskin, Pater, and Wilde.

I imagine this as an indispensable course for those studying late nineteenth, twentieth and contemporary century literature as well as for MFAs. We shall read major works by Joyce, Woolf, Conrad, Forster, Lawrence, Yeats, and T.S. Eliot as well as works by Proust, Kafka, and Mann. The emphasis will be on close reading of individual texts, but we shall place the authors and works within the context of literary, political, cultural, and intellectual history. The course will seek to define the development of literary modernism and relate literary modernism to other intellectual developments. We shall be especially interested in the relationship between modern literature and modern painting and sculpture. Within the course material, students will be able to select the topics on which they write essays.

The American Revolution was a war fought by European settlers against England that ended the colonial domination of these settlers in the founding of the United States. But the settlers were themselves colonizers of American Indian land and nations and African labor: founders of a legalized colonialism that while it ended formally for African Americans with the Thirteenth Amendment continues today under the force of federal Indian law for the Native peoples of what became the United States. Reading Native American, African American, and Euroamerican texts within a time frame that extends from 1492 to the end of the 18th century, the course will study the conflicts of colonial settlement that generated the United States past and present.

This course will explore the philological debates engaged by Samuel Johnson and William Wordsworth in Romantic England, and by writers such as Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong’o in colonial and post-colonial Africa. The goal is to explore contradictory responses to the fundamental question in African literature: In whose language?

This course is structured as an investigation of the roots, parameters, and characteristic features of the modern concept of the humanities. We will be reading several kinds of texts: foundational texts that establish the abiding concerns and methods of the disciplines, exemplary texts that stand as models for scholarly practice, descriptive texts that try to articulate and justify the humanities, and marginal texts that test the boundaries of the humanities. Within the humanities, we will be considering history, literary study, and art history and criticism. We will conclude by considering challenges to the humanities presented by "posthumanism," and by digital technology.

This seminar will consider a range of critical pressure points that have been central to the digital humanities and the production of new media art and theory. How have developments in digital culture and theory impacted the critical commonplaces of archive, analog, time, sound, motion, network, body, narrative? Does the destabilization of the archive by open source software and accumulative databases alter academic research, the space of artistic practice, and the place of ideology critique? How do recent trends in "media archeology" and "new materiality" relate to the virtuality of "new media" and the theoretical precedents of poststructuralism? In addition to providing participants with a hands-on workshop on digital tools important to the humanities and the opportunity to survey a broad range of new media artworks housed in Cornell’s Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art, the course will explore texts from a wide spectrum of writers who have been central to digital discourse and theories of the archive. In addition to weekly blogs, participants will have the option of writing a term paper or developing a digital humanities/arts project.
7800 MFA Seminar: Poetry
5 credits.
T 2:30 - 4:25 Mackowski, Joanie

7801 MFA Seminar: Fiction
5 credits.
T 2:30 - 4:25 Vaughn, Stephanie

7850 Reading for Writers: Women as Lovers
4 credits.
R 2:30 - 4:25 Mort, Valzhyna

Gustave Flaubert famously declared: "Madame Bovary is me." Could he actually be a madame? If a whore whose name launched a thousand ships could speak for herself, what would she say? Come dismantle the wisdom! In this seminar we'll spend our time (the main source of rhythm) on literature (the re-arranged time), each book turned into a construction site, in order to understand its build and materials. We'll talk about our love of nouns, verbs, syntax, line breaks, sound, silence, and women. Authors include Gustave Flaubert, Ingeborg Bachmann, Cesare Pavese, H.D., J.M. Coetzee, Anne Carson and others.

7960 Placement Seminar
1 credit.
W 4:00 - 6:00 Mann, Jenny

This seminar will help prepare graduate students for the academic job market. Though students will study sample materials from successful job applicants, much of the seminar will function as a workshop, providing them with in-depth feedback on multiple drafts of their job materials. Interview skills will be practiced in every seminar meeting. The seminar meetings will be supplemented with individual conferences with the placement mentor, and students should also share copies of their job materials with their dissertation committees.

Courses Originating in Other Departments

6766 Practicum in Performance Criticism and Dramaturgy
4 credits. (Also PMA 4866/6866, ENGL 4766)
M 2:30 - 4:25 Gainor, Ellen

The function of the theatre critic is well understood, but the role of the dramaturg remains mysterious in the American theatre. Yet theatre critics and dramaturgs use many of the same research, analytic, and writing skills, and need the same knowledge of history, literature, and culture to perform their duties effectively. This practicum, designed for advanced undergraduates and graduate students, allows participants to develop skills central to these complementary professions. The course includes units on writing effective performance reviews, working with student playwrights on script development, preparing materials for directors, designers and actors, writing program essays for audiences, and selecting/preparing translations for production. While our focus will be on the theatre, students with interest in applying these skills to film/television/media or dance contexts are welcome.