In recent years, *Beowulf* has received renewed attention in popular culture, thanks to the production of two recent *Beowulf* movies and riveting new translations (e.g., Seamus Heaney). The poem's appeal lies in the complex depictions of its monsters, accounts of heroic bravery, and lavish portrayals of life in the Meadhall. Through close readings we will also explore the "dark side" of the poem: its punishing depictions of loss and exile, despairing meditations on unstable kingship and dynastic failure, and harrowing depictions of heroic defeat and the vanities of existence on the Middle-Earth. Attention to the poem's literary heritage (in Latin and Norse) and its layered pagan and Christian perspectives reveals an amalgamated Christian heroic ethos. [Readings in Old or Modern English]

In this course we will focus on two major non-Chaucerian Middle English poets, the Pearl-poet and William Langland, the author of *Piers Plowman*. We will focus on close, linguistically careful reading of these poets in Middle English and graduate students will be encouraged to submit a research paper on some aspect of these texts. Some experience with Old or Middle English, such as Introductory Old English or a Chaucer course, would be helpful for students who might take the course, but students who would like to use the course as an introduction to Middle English are more than welcome. These are two of the finest poets in any era of English literature. While it is important for medievalists or potential medievalists to be familiar with them, anyone of any background who enjoys poetry will find these poets rewarding.

This course will cover Milton’s major poetry and prose, paying special attention to the forms of authority—poetic, political, and theological—that are constituted within and by these writings. From his polemical prose in defense of regicide to his poetic rewritings of scripture, Milton cleaves to a dual set of imperatives to resist illegitimate rule and to obey proper authority. Though these impulses may seem incompatible, Milton takes pains to differentiate between unsanctioned rebellion and justified dissent, between service and servility, and between action and activity. We will explore the crucial distinctions that underwrite Milton’s articulation of proper authority, while also taking account of the political and religious circumstances that informed them. And we will also look carefully at the poetic and rhetorical devices that allow Milton to distinguish paradox from contradiction.

This course explores a set of novel representations of nonhuman beings in eighteenth-century English literature, defining and tracking the relationship between animals and formal innovation in this period, and projecting that innovation into the nineteenth century. The course will engage and juxtapose various critical concepts that distinguish literary animal studies from the political critique of speciesism, and that include ecocriticism, “thing theory” and the new materialism, theories of radical interspecies politics and communication, and various reconceptualizations of alterity and the “other.” Texts include canonical prose works (Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*), late-century poetry (Christopher Smart, Ann Yearsley), materials from the periodical press (*Spectator Papers*), and selections from popular nonhuman subgenres (it-narrative, lapdog epitaphs).

I imagine the Modern Imagination: The Major Authors as an indispensable, probing, and pleasurable course for those studying nineteenth, twentieth and contemporary century literature as well as for MFA students who are most welcome. 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. We shall also be aware of critical and theoretical approaches. 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 very broad course rubric, students will be able to select the special topics on which they write essays and perhaps formulate subjects for further study.
Decolonial Poetics and Aesthetics

Exploring a genealogy of Chicana/o, Latina/o, and Indigena/o theorizations of self and collective identity, the course asks, what is the decolonial? Is it a space between the colonial and post-colonial? Is it a process, theorization, or a period? Is it a performance, intervention, or embodied experience? Positing a genealogy and trajectory through poetry, performance, installation, and visual art, the course examines decolonial modes of production in the twentieth century with attention to antecedents and twenty-first contemporary applications. By centering our study on the question of what is decolonial, we will consider several lenses and frameworks, including the textual, oral, and visual. Authors include Gloria Anzaldúa, Chela Sandoval, Luis Alfaro, Emma Pérez, José Saldívar, Rupert Garcia, Juan Felipe Herrera, James Luna, Coco Fusco, as well as scholars concerned with the primary documents of twentieth century activism.

Emily Dickinson and Her Others

Close study of Dickinson's poems and letters. Attention to current debates about the poems, letters, manuscripts, editions, and contexts in American literature. Dickinson's "others" include her first editor, Thomas Wentworth Higginson; her admired contemporary, Elizabeth Barrett Browning; the "poetess" culture Dickinson never joined; her familial roles as heretic, punster, gardener, "Uncle Emily"; and—centrally for this seminar—the lyric genres and inherited verse designs her writing sidesteps, echoes, or explodes. Dickinson's exemplary otherness will provide occasion to consider the claims of contextual and cultural approaches alongside linguistic and stylistic frameworks for making sense of this poet like no other.

Law and Literature

What can lawyers and judges learn from the study of literature? This course explores the relevance of imaginative literature (novels, drama, poetry, and film) to questions of law and social justice from a range of perspectives. We will consider debates about how literature can help to humanize legal decision-making; how storytelling has helped to give voice to oppressed populations over history; how narratives of suffering cultivate popular support for human rights; the role played by storytelling in a trial; and how literature can shed light on the limits of law and public policy.

The Global South Novel and World Literature

The driving dialectic in post-colonial studies has been the colonizer/colonized, or the Third World vs. the West. But slowly the field is letting go of this "arrested dialectic" and in its place various triangulations are emerging: e.g. transnationalism, world literature, the global novel, and global south literary studies. Starting with a walk through the emerging theoretical concepts of world/global/transnational literature, we will primarily focus on a global south reading of African literature (itself a contested term), and perennial questions around language and translation. Specifically we will look at how writers such as Sol T Plaatje, V.S. Naipul, NoViolet Bulawayo, MG Vassanji, and Aminatta Forna challenge the post-colonial discourse and how a global south reading provides an uncomfortable conversation with transnational and world literature theories and concepts.

Black Diaspora Meets Black Queer Theory

This seminar will introduce graduate students to the cutting edge scholarship situated in the crossroads of black diaspora theory and black queer theory. Glissant's Poetics of Relation will be our starting point. The overlap between his theory of relation and Dionne Brand's approach to belonging and unbelonging in A Map to the Door of No Return will set this seminar in motion. Our next moves will be Nadia Ellis’ Territories of the Soul: Queered Belonging in the Black Diaspora, Samantha Pinto's Difficult Diasporas, Dionne Brand's In Another Place, Not Here, Hortense Spillers' "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," Ama Ata Aidoo's Our Sister Killjoy, Alice Walker's By the Light of My Father's Smile, and more.

Theories of the Novel

We know it when we see it, but the novel is a notoriously difficult literary genre to define. In this course we will look at a number of attempts to do so. Our readings for the semester will range from classic accounts of the genre (by, for example, Lukács, Benjamin, Bakhtin, Watt) to more recent critical texts. Along the way we will discuss the novel's formal characteristics, its various historical origins and "rises," its place in European and World literature, and its possible futures.

Arts and Philosophies of Excess: from Aesthetic Affect to Political Action

Description will be provided at a later date.
4 credits. (Also LAW 7412)
Anker, Elizabeth

In an era of increasing interdisciplinary collaboration, the fields that comprise the humanities are engaging in new ways with law as well as with each other, and projects developed within the context of law schools themselves bear renewed relevance to the humanities. This colloquium will bring together scholars working at the forefront of legal history, law and literature, law and culture, and critical theory from the institutional vantage points of both law and the humanities. The course will begin with three weeks of seminar designed to apprise students of existing work in law and the humanities and to situate current developments within this broader frame. After the introductory sessions, the remainder of the course will be organized around a series of speakers, some drawn from Cornell and some from other universities. Students will be required to write six three- to five-page papers responding to the speakers’ pre-circulated talks.

7412 Law and Humanities Colloquium
4 credits. (Also LAW 7412)
Anker, Elizabeth

7810 MFA Seminar: Poetry
5 credits.
Mackowski, Joanie
T 2:30 - 4:25
Required course for MFA poetry students only.

7811 MFA Seminar: Fiction
5 credits.
McCoy, Maureen
T 2:30 - 4:25
Required course for MFA fiction students only.

7850 Reading for Writers: Ingmar Bergman and the Unbearable Lightness of Death
4 credits.
Quiñonez, Ernesto
R 2:30 - 4:25
Description will be provided at a later time.