

## Department of English TENTATIVE Courses for TFs

### Fall 2019

#### Common Ground

##### **English 41. Arrivals: British Literature 700-1700**

James Simpson

Across the period 700-1700 the shapes of British culture were absorbed from different centers of Western Europe. These cultural forms are conflicted among themselves, and conflicted across time. This course will delineate the principal cultural forces (e.g. religious, political, social) that shaped England in particular. We will look to the ways in which those vibrant yet opposed forces find expression in the shape, or form, of literary works.

##### **English 45. Arrivals: British Literature 700-1700**

Anna Wilson

In this course we will read some of the most significant and influential works of literature written in England before 1700. We will encounter the genres, tropes, forms, and language of medieval and early modern English literature, while exploring how these texts respond to and shape issues of their time, including war, political regimes, the emergence of national, racial, and religious identities, and changing attitudes to gender and sexuality. We will also develop a foundational range of critical writing skills and methods for approaching English literature.

##### **English 55. Poets: Fundamentals of Lyric Poetry**

Peter Sacks

An introduction to the fundamentals of Lyric poetry.

##### **English 62. Migrations: Castaways and Renegades**

John Stauffer

This course traces the extraordinary rise of American literature from the nation's founding through the early twentieth century. Focusing on the "outsider," we examine how American literature gave definition to a culture that was distinct from Europe. Along the way we explore a number of themes: the dilemma of democratic ideals co-existing with slavery and oppression; women as symbols of America; and the relationship between domestic and national fictions. Authors include Irving, Douglass, Melville, Stowe, Whitman, James, Twain, Chesnut, Wharton, others.

#### 100-Lectures

##### **English 102J. Introduction to Old English: Heroes, Heaven, and Hell**

Daniel Donoghue & Joseph Shack

Satan, cast as a defiant warchief, exults in his heavenly rebellion; Christ is presented as a triumphant hero as he assumes his place on the cross; Grendel's mere serves as the template for a vision of hell. Such examples underscore the close relationship between the heroic and biblical literary traditions of Anglo-Saxon England, which this course seeks to explore. First and foremost however, this course is an introduction to the language and literature of Old English, the vernacular language used in England from the fifth century until around 1100. Although many of its linguistic features are recognizable in Modern English, Old English must be learned as a foreign language. The semester will begin with an introduction to Old English grammar, along with translations of basic readings. Following instruction in basic grammatical features during the first half of the course, readings will grow progressively more challenging. The selection of readings brings us to the second goal of the

course: an exploration of the ways in which the heroic ethos influenced the presentation of Christian and Biblical topics in Old English prose and poetry. Daily instruction by Joseph Shack.

### **English 121cg. Shakespeare after Hamlet**

**Gordon Teskey**

Written at the midpoint of Shakespeare's career (1600-01), *Hamlet* marks the culmination of an experiment in representing the inner life with remarkable human sympathy. *Hamlet* also marks the beginning, in the comedies as much as in the famous tragedies, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, of a new and disturbing interest in the human mysteries of sadism, power, eroticism and loss.

### **English 146et. An Enlightenment for Today**

**James Engell**

Relevance of Enlightenment texts for perennial issues faced today. Aphra Behn on race and slavery; John Locke on religious (in)tolerance; Jonathan Swift on corruptions of religion, learning, and bureaucracy; Alexander Pope on pernicious influence of money and political chicanery; Samuel Johnson on marriage, choice of career, problem of evil, and arrogance of colonial power; Edmund Burke on imperial overreach, human rights, and religious oppression; Mary Wollstonecraft on gender, sex, and unjust treatment of women. Some texts paired with contemporary writing.

### **English 165. Proust, Joyce, Woolf: Aestheticism and Modernism**

**Philip Fisher**

Topics include: modernism; aesthetic experience; the life of art; the city; and novelistic form; the moment and memory within temporal experiences. Joyce, *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*; Proust, *Swann's Way*; and *Within a Budding Grove*; Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*; Kawabata, *Snow Country*. Writings of Pater, Simmel, T.S. Eliot, and sections from *The Pillow Book* of Sei Shonagon.

### **English 162bb. Broadway Bodies, or Representation on the Great White Way**

**Derek Miller**

To many of its fans, Hamilton poses a problem. How can a show that presents so many talented artists of color represent a white-washed American history? And how should we evaluate the show's impact when sky-high ticket prices make it accessible primarily to a wealthy (read: white) audience? In its aspirational embrace of a multi-ethnic America and its failure fully to realize that promise, Hamilton embodies the paradox of Broadway.

This course examines that paradox since World War II, particularly as it pertains to multiple aspects of identity including race, gender, sexuality, and disability. We will examine how shows such as *South Pacific*, with its famous anti-racist anthem, or *M. Butterfly*, which explored the intersections of Orientalism, gender, and sex, temper their inclusive representations to appeal to wide commercial audience. Broadway is a particularly fertile ground for exploring these issues because theatrical performances always call attention to the performative nature of subjectivity: that is, who you are is a product of what you do. As we shall see, though, theatrical performatives risk being "infelicitous," in the words of philosopher J.L. Austin: instead of affirming the subjects they represent, the performances can turn those subjects into mere theater.

Our starting assumption is that many Broadway stake-holders genuinely desire broader representation in and for their work, but that the structure of the industry constrains how these shows challenge the status quo. To understand those constraints we will ask what stories Broadway tells, who sees them, and how they are marketed—while always attuned to "who tells your story."

### **English 170a. High and Low in Postwar America**

**Luke Menand**

Relations between avant-garde, mainstream, and commercial culture from 1945 to 1972.

## **English 172ld. The Literature of Displacement**

**Jesse McCarthy**

A displacement can take place in our lives in the sense of moving, or being moved, from one location to another. From the nautical sense we also understand any volume, which fills or occupies a liquid space that changes to accommodate it, a useful metaphor for intellectual displacements—as we bend, shift and make room for new ideas in our minds. In psychology, a displacement is the transference of a site of trauma from one person, scenario, or object to another. Finally, there are histories of human displacement, a broad category under which to consider narratives generated by migration, emigration, exile, and enslavement. In this seminar we will read from texts that contribute in all of these ways, often interrelated, to a “literature of displacement.” We will read novels, essays, and memoirs by Joseph Conrad, Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, James Baldwin, Tayeb Salih, Valeria Luiselli, and W.G. Sebald and watch films by Les Blank, Charles Burnett, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Edward Yang among others. We will ask how these works respond to the trials and rewards of belonging to, or being alienated from, cultures and communities; how history and loss imprint us with identity but also disrupt it; what we learn from encountering other places and perspectives. Can remembering, witnessing, and storytelling create a place for ourselves in a world founded on an ongoing and massive experience of perpetual displacement?

## **English 181a. Introduction to Asian American Literature**

**Ju Yon Kim**

Aiiiiieeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers (1974) was one of the earliest attempts to collect writings that were, to quote the editors, “exclusively Asian-American.” Yet as their lengthy—and controversial—explanation of the selection process makes clear, Asian American literature defies neat categorization. This course is both a survey of Asian American literature and an introduction to ongoing debates about what constitutes Asian American literature. We will study a variety of literary genres and ask how formal and stylistic conventions, as well as shifting sociohistorical circumstances, have shaped conceptions of Asian American literature.

## **English 182. Science Fiction**

**Stephanie Burt**

Utopias, dystopias, artificial intelligence, life on new planets, and much, much more-- from the late 19th century to the present, \*mostly in novels and short stories but also in comics, poetry, games, film and TV.\* Likely readings include Mark Twain, H. G. Wells, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Robert A. Heinlein, James Tiptree, Jr. (Alice Sheldon), Octavia Butler, William Gibson, Nalo Hopkinson, Ted Chiang, \*Nnedi Okorafor, Tillie Walden\* and more.

## **English 185e. The Essay: History and Practice**

**James Wood**

Matthew Arnold famously said that poetry is, at bottom, “a criticism of life.” But if any literary form is truly a criticism of life, it is the essay. And yet despite the fact that all students write essays, most students rarely study them; bookshops and libraries categorize such work only negatively, by what it is not: “non-fiction.” At the same time, the essay is at present one of the most productive and fertile of literary forms. It is practiced as memoir, reportage, diary, criticism, and sometimes all four at once. Novels are becoming more essayistic, while essays are borrowing conventions and prestige from fiction. This class will disinter the essay from its comparative academic neglect, and examine the vibrant contemporary borderland between the reported and the invented. We will study the history of the essay, from Montaigne to the present day. Rather than study that history purely chronologically, each class will group several essays from different decades and centuries around common themes: death, detail, sentiment, race, gender, photography, the city, witness, and so on. In addition to writing about essays – writing critical essays about essays – students will also be encouraged to write their own creative essays: we will study the history of the form, and practice the form itself. Essayists likely to be studied: Plutarch, Montaigne, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Woolf, Benjamin, Orwell, Camus, Primo Levi, Barthes, Baldwin, Sontag, Dyer, Didion, Leslie Jamison, Knausgaard, Ta-Nehisi Coates.

### **English 98r. Fall Jr. Tutorial (OPEN TO ENGLISH TFS ONLY)**

Supervised small group tutorial in the study of literature in English.

This year we are asking G4+ English students who are interested in teaching a Junior Tutorial to list the tutorial among their preferences. Please note that this does not replace the application process required by the Undergraduate Office; rather, it will simply give us an indication of your interest and level of preference. If you are open to teaching ENG 98r in either term, you may list it in both Fall and Spring. For more information about the tutorial application process, please contact Lauren Bimmler at [lbimmler@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:lbimmler@fas.harvard.edu)/ 617-495-4252.

## **GENERAL EDUCATION FALL 2019**

### **GENED 1034**

#### **Texts in Transition**

*Leah Whittington and Ann Blair*

Fall

MW 3-4:15 p.m.

We live in a moment of “crisis” around regimes of preservation and loss. As our communication becomes ever more digital— and, therefore, simultaneously more ephemeral and more durable—the attitudes and tools we have for preserving our culture have come to seem less apt than they may have seemed as recently as a generation ago. This course examines how texts have been transmitted from the past to the present, and how we can plan for their survival into the future. We will examine what makes texts durable by considering especially the media by which they are transmitted, the changing cultural attitudes toward their content, and the institutions by which they are preserved. The European Renaissance will provide a central case study. During this period scholars became aware of the loss of ancient texts and strove to recover and restore them insofar as possible. These interests prompted new developments in scholarly conservation techniques which we still value today (philology, libraries, and museums) but also the creation and transmission of new errors, ranging from well-intentioned but overzealous corrections and “improvements” to outright forgeries. What can the Renaissance teach us about how to engage productively with these problems, both as the source of our current attitudes toward preservation and loss, and as a case study of another culture dealing with anxiety over preservation and loss? Ultimately, we hope that students will be able to think productively about how to preserve from the past and the present for the future, while recognizing that all preservation inherently involves some kind of transformation.

## **Spring 2020**

### **Common Ground**

#### **English 40. Arrivals: British Literature 700-1700**

**Daniel Donoghue**

An introduction to major works in English literature from Beowulf through the seventeenth century, the course will explore various ways that new literatures are created in response to cultural forces that shape poets, genres, and group identity. We will hone close reading skills, introduce rhetorical tropes, and develop techniques of critical writing.

#### **English 50x Poets:**

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Title and description TBA

#### **English 58r. Poets: Wyatt to the Romantics**

Gordon Teskey

Description TBA

### **English 60. Migrations: Fictions of America**

Lisa New

This course will treat America as it was imagined and re-imagined between the 16th-21st centuries by successive waves of Europeans, Africans and their descendants. The course explores how evolving fictions of America's purpose, changing notions of America's geography and conflicting ideas of American character inform an emerging literary tradition. Readings list likely to include non-fiction by Harriot, Rowlandson, Mather, Franklin, Jacobs; shorter fiction by Irving, Hawthorne, Melville and Stein; novels by Cather, Norris and Morrison.

### **English 66. Migrations: Narrative Settings**

David Alworth

This course is designed for the "Literary Migrations" portion of the Common Ground curriculum. Although plot, character, and theme are the elements of narrative fiction that typically receive the most attention from readers, this course invites students to examine setting. It is likely to feature works by Defoe, Flaubert, Dickens, Melville, Poe, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, Cather, and Pynchon. In addition, some relevant secondary material will be assigned, such as portions of Watt's *Rise of the Novel*, Auerbach's *Mimesis*, and recent works of environmental criticism.

### **100-Level Lectures**

#### **English 103g. Advanced Old English: Working with Manuscripts**

Daniel Donoghue

The task of translation will be supplemented by consistent attention to the manuscript contexts of Old English literature. The texts will include selections from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Genesis, the Exeter Book Riddles, Beowulf, and others. The course will guide students through basic principles of manuscript study and will culminate in a collaborative edition of an Old English text.

#### **English 110ff. Medieval Fanfiction**

Anna Wilson

Fanfiction is a surprisingly powerful tool for examining medieval literature. It sheds light on the dynamics of rereading and reception that characterize medieval texts, which in turn deepen our own understanding of creative originality. In this class we will read some twentieth- and twenty-first century fanfiction with medievalist themes alongside medieval literary texts that rewrite, reimagine, or let their authors star in pre-existing stories. This medieval 'fanfiction' will include Arthurian romances, 'sequels' to the *Aeneid* and the *Canterbury Tales*, and Christian spiritual texts in which devout men and women imagined themselves as 'Mary Sues' in scenes from the Gospels.

#### **English 131p. Milton's Paradise Lost**

Gordon Teskey

This course focuses on Milton's most famous work, *Paradise Lost*, the greatest long poem in English and the only successful classical epic in the modern world. Milton went totally blind in his forties and composed *Paradise Lost* by reciting verses to anyone available to take them down, like the blind prophets and poets of legend. Yet the questions he raised are surprisingly enduring and modern. We will consider how he generates the sublime and how he builds great scenes and characters, especially his most famous one, Satan.

#### **English 167bl. Post-1945 British Literature**

Kelly Rich

Why are we so taken by Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, Downton Abbey, James Bond, and "Keep Calm and Carry On," and the ideas of Britain they project? This course will use this recent surge of Anglophilia as a

springboard into our study of post-1945 British literature: a period whose social and political upheavals both radically redefine and conservatively re-entrench “British” as a category of analysis. Among the issues we’ll be considering are war and end of empire, new patterns of migration, emerging formations based on race, gender, and sexuality, and devolution and globalization. Our readings will range from highbrow to genre fiction; from declassified MI6 files to the latest episode of Doctor Who. Authors will most likely include Caryl Churchill, Helen Fielding, Graham Greene, Alan Hollinghurst, Kazuo Ishiguro, John Le Carré, Philip Larkin, David Mitchell, Samuel Selvon, Zadie Smith, Muriel Spark, Salman Rushdie, and Jeanette Winterson.

### **English 169cf. Contemporary Fiction**

**David Alworth**

*Description forthcoming*

### **English 176f. On the Run: Fugitives and Refugees in American Literature**

**Thomas Dichter**

Escaped slaves, refugees, outlaws, and rebels are all on the run in the pages of American literature. In a nation founded in the name of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” stories of the fugitive making a break for freedom have been both troubling and enchanting. In this course, we will examine narratives of flight by American writers from the early days of the Republic through the present. These authors explore many different kinds of fugitivity: from the story of Henry “Box” Brown, a slave who hid in a crate and mailed himself to freedom in the North, to recent fiction by Edwidge Danticat and Viet Thanh Nguyen. Along the way, we’ll consider narratives of outlaws, war refugees, undocumented immigrants, and insurrectionaries. Engaging with a diverse range of authors, our texts will include autobiography, novels, poetry, and folklore.

### **English 183ed. Poetry, Exile, and Displacement**

**Peter Sacks**

This course studies lyric poetry and its thematic as well as formal expressions of exile, the loss of home, the experience of estrangement or dispossession. Such displacements may be from the self, or from assigned “identity” (“why should I be my aunt,/or me, or anyone?”), as much as from other persons, conditions, regimes. Selected poems will certainly coincide with the urgent unease regarding questions of the body, of the passions, of gender, of background, of national or global citizenship. With some prior examples from the ancient world to the Renaissance and Romantic periods (from Sappho and Ovid, to the anonymous author of “Tom o’ Bedlam,” and from Wordsworth and Coleridge to Tennyson, Hemans and Dickinson), the course will focus primarily on Twentieth Century works by Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Bishop, James Wright, Anthony Hecht, James Merrill, Derek Walcott, Seamus Heaney, Yusef Komunyakaa, and several others.

### **English 191c. Constellations**

**Homi Bhabha**

This course consists of four “constellations” that assemble literary texts, theoretical essays and visual works in order to address a shared idea or topic — for arguments sake, Identity, Race, Migration, the Environment. Each constellation will last for three weeks and I will engage the topic from diverse formal and conceptual angles. The theoretical component of the Identity -constellation might consist of Mill *On Liberty*, Hegel’s *Lordship and Bondage*, Charles Taylor’s *The Politics of Recognition*, Freud on Identification (Group Psychology], WEB DuBois *Darkwater*, essays by Nietzsche, Sartre, Beauvoir, Lacan, Fanon, Kristeva, Donna Haraway; the literary texts could be chosen from Virginia Woolf *Between the Acts*, Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things*, Claire Messed *When The World Was Steady/The Woman Upstairs/The Burning Girl*; The visual text might be Edward Said’s and Jean Mohr’s photo-essay on quotidian lives in Palestine, *After The Last Sky*, or Isaac Julien’s film essay on the identity question in Fanon’s work, etc. The course will consider problems of personal identity and cultural identity, the individual subject and the group, ideas of identity that are communitarian, libertarian, diasporic and subaltern. Each chosen text will be accompanied by contextual and critical readings that provide frameworks of comparison and reveal common concerns; at the same time, the course will raise methodological issues of

textual interpretation and cultural translation across genres, histories and modes of address. In a word, I will encourage close reading and free thinking.

### **English 195ec. Growth, Technology, Inequality, and Education**

**James Engell & Ben Friedman**

An economist and a humanist, together with professors from the natural sciences, analyze familiar conceptual and policy-relevant issues from viewpoints of their respective disciplines. For example, how do we measure inequality, and at what point does it become problematic (and how do we know)? How then should it be addressed (e.g., tax code, minimum wage)? What are the best policies to confront job losses from technology? What does sustainable growth mean? The goal is not merely to examine four intertwined issues “growth, technology, inequality, and evolution” but also to understand the distinct concerns and methods of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

### **English 98r. Spring Jr. Tutorial (OPEN TO ENGLISH TFS ONLY)**

Supervised small group tutorial in the study of literature in English.

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## **GENERAL EDUCATION SPRING 2020**

### **GENED 1021**

#### **The Stories We Tell**

Martin Puchner and David Damrosch

Spring

MW 1:30-2:45 p.m.

*Not included as part of teaching application process.*

The Stories We Tell is based on the premise that we are story-telling animals. There have been human societies without the wheel, but none without stories. We use stories to make sense of experience, to understand where we are coming from, and to orient ourselves in the world. Today, we are asked to produce stories to get into college, to run for president, to pitch start-up companies, and to turn scientific insight into new policies. Where do these stories come from?

The course draws on our entire storytelling inheritance from around the globe. We single out different types of stories, from the hero-epics of the ancient world (Gilgamesh) and pedagogical story-collections (1001 Nights) to the invention of psychological realism by the first novelist (Murasaki Shikibu), and we supplement those with modern storytelling techniques from Asia (Eileen Cheng) to Latin America (Clarice Lispector). Since our most important stories are not confined to literature, we also include those religious and philosophical storytellers (Confucius; Socrates) as well as political stories (Declaration of Independence; Communist Manifesto) that have shaped human affairs. Along the way, we examine the technologies, from clay tablets and papyrus scrolls to print and the Internet, through which these stories have survived into the early twenty-first century and are shaping our world today.

The course includes in-class exercises, research assignments (Wikipedia entries), and a final exam.

### **GENED 1055**

**James Simpson**

## Transforming Society: Revolution or Reform

Spring

Tu/Th 10:30-11:45 a.m.

To answer this question, we will explore the relation between literary cultures and utopian Enlightenment cultures in Western history. For each moment of rapid change, from Plato to the Communist revolutions of the twentieth century, we will focus on two texts: one that promotes the enlightened and revolutionary utopian social blueprint; and one that either offers an alternative model of transformation or a dystopian account of the utopian model. You will come away from this course having a chronologically wide and intellectually deep immersion in 2500 years of European philosophical and literary history. Throughout, you are encouraged to think about what resources we use to imagine social transformation and to ask if revolution is in fact the best way to effect social transformation.

## **GENED 1133**

*John Stauffer*

Is the U.S. Civil War Still Being Fought?

Spring

MW noon-1:15 p.m.

Most of us were taught that the Civil War between the Confederacy and the Union was fought on battlefields chiefly in the American South between the years of 1861-1865. In this narrative, the North won and the South lost. But what if the issues that resulted in such devastating bloodshed were never resolved? What if the war never ended? This course demonstrates the ways in which the United States is still fighting the Civil War, arguably THE defining event in U.S. history. In each class, we connect current events to readings and themes in the course, highlighting how and why the war is still being fought. From Nat Turner's slave rebellion in 1831 to the recent riot (or battle) in Charlottesville, we trace how and why the South was in certain respects the victor, even though the Confederacy was destroyed and the Constitution amended. We explore the different kinds of war—ideological, political, cultural, military, and para-military—that placed the unfreedom of blacks—as slaves, serfs, and prisoners—at the center of larger conflicts over federal versus state and local rule, welfare, globalization, and free trade. We analyze the Civil War in literature, art, politics, photography, prints, film, music, poetry, speeches, and history, while also discovering how these cultural forms worked to shape our memory of the event itself. By the end of the course, we will be able to show how and why contemporary U.S. debates are rooted in this defining narrative, and we will better understand the dilemmas the nation faces today.

## **GENED 1135**

**Interracial Encounters in American Literature and Culture**

*Ju Yon Kim*

Spring

Tu/Th 1:30-2:45 p.m.

From depictions of exchanges in the early colonial Americas to efforts to envision alternate and imminent futures, this class will examine representations of interracial encounters in U.S. American culture. We will explore how various texts and performances have conceived, embodied, and reimagined the relationships not

only among differently racialized groups, but also between race and nation, individual and community, and art and politics. Topics addressed in this course will include narratives of indigeneity, contact, and migration; cross-racial performances and the question of cultural appropriation; political and artistic collaborations; and interracial encounters in a transnational context. Course requirements will include two exams, two papers, and individual and group creative projects.