Department of English Tentative Courses of Instruction 2018-19

Fall 2018

Common Ground

English 42. Arrivals: British Literature (700-1700)
Nicholas Watson
*description forthcoming

English 45. Arrivals: British Literature 700-1700
Anna Wilson
* description forthcoming

English 50. Ode, Elegy, Epigram, Fragment, Song
Stephanie Burt
Ways of reading and ways of hearing poetry (mostly short poems) in English from the Renaissance to the present, with a particular focus on kinds of poems: elegies, odes, meditations, epigrams, palinodes, landscapes, puzzles, and some modern kinds without names, by Shakespeare, Bishop, Dickinson, Hughes, Armantrout, Ashbery, Muldoon, Whitman, Brooks, Keats, Yeats, O'Hara, Herrera, Hayes.

English 69. Migration: American Literature to 1865
Stephen Osadetz
This course surveys American literature from the colonial period to the Civil War. We will read accounts of early contact, narratives of captivity and slavery, sermons, autobiographies, poems, and novels. Authors will include Winthrop, Rowlandson, Franklin, Douglass, Hawthorne, Melville, Stowe, Thoreau, Whitman, and Dickinson.

English 64. Migrations: American Renaissance and Irish Revival
Amanda Claybaugh
Case studies in the formation of national literatures. In the 1850s, a new generation of American authors suddenly came into its own (Dickinson, Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Thoreau, Whitman); in the early 1900s, something similar happened in Ireland (Joyce, O'Casey, Synge, Yeats). In both cases, a national literature emerged in rebellion against the literature of Britain, and, in both cases, the literature that emerged would go on to inspire other post-colonial literatures around the world.

100-Lectures

English 102. Introduction to Old English: Biblical Literature
Nicholas Watson/Joseph Shack
Large portions of the Latin Bible were translated into Old English in the centuries before 1066. Some efforts, like that of Aelfric (10th century), were cautious and painstakingly literal because of the anxiety associated with any departure from the Latin text. Others, moved with interpretative freedom, especially those that exploited the conventions of Old English poetry, so that Moses, for example, leads his people across a desert that resembles the forests of northern Europe, and Satan is a rebel warrior chieftain.

English 111. Epic from Homer to Star Wars
Leah Whittington
This course studies epic literature through six significant works in the genre: Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey, Vergil’s Aeneid, Milton’s Paradise Lost, George Eliot’s Middlemarch, and George Lucas’ Star Wars. We will examine these works in terms of their formal conventions, thematic interests, and historical contexts, as well as attending to the interactions between texts in the epic tradition, the shift from narrative poetry to novel and film, and the manifestations of epic in the modern world.

**English 146p. The Public Sphere, from its Origins to Today**  
*Stephen Osadetz*  
A course about the origins of the public sphere in the eighteenth century and its condition – and problems – today. We will be concerned centrally with the cultural foundations upon which the Enlightenment instituted public institutions, and the literary techniques that authors employed to give their ideas wide cultural currency. The aim is to explore the invention, naturalization, and erosion of some of the most fundamental institutions of the Enlightenment: the public, the private, the market, and public opinion. Authors will include Addison, Richardson, Diderot, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Orwell, Baldwin.

**English 148. Modern Monsters in Literature and Film**  
*Deidre Lynch*  
A class on the aesthetics and cultural politics of the Gothic tradition, from Frankenstein to Freaks. How has this tradition’s fascination with those who come back from the dead mediated social anxieties about the generation of life or the lifelike? We’ll consider vampire and other monster fictions by such authors as John Polidori, Mary Shelley, Sheridan Le Fanu, Bram Stoker, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Gaston Leroux. We’ll conclude the semester with an investigation of early horror cinema, exploring how the modern medium of cinema gave Gothic preoccupations with the animation of the dead a new lease on life.

**English 151. Theory and Practice of the Victorian Novel**  
*Leah Price*  
Reading-list to be determined in consultation with seminar members will include Austen, Brontë, Thackeray, Gaskell, Dickens, Collins, Trollope, read against both contemporaneous and new criticism and theory. Exercises in book reviewing, abstract-writing and conference presentation/public speaking.

**English 157. The Classic Phase of the Novel**  
*Philip Fisher*  
A set of major works of art produced at the peak of the novel's centrality as a literary form: Sense and Sensibility, Madame Bovary, Anna Karenina, Middlemarch, The Brothers Karamazov, Buddenbrooks. Society, family, generational novels and the negations of crime and adultery; consciousness and the organization of narrative experience; the novel of ideas and scientific programs; realism, naturalism, aestheticism and the interruptions of the imaginary.

**English 166. American Modernism**  
*David Alworth*  
A comparative study of American Modernism that considers literature alongside visual art, technology, media, history, politics, and intellectual culture. Emphasis will fall on novels written between 1900 and 1960, but we will also address poetry, drama, cultural criticism, and philosophy. Likely authors: T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, W.E.B. Du Bois, Willa Cather, Tennessee Williams, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, and Virginia Woolf.

**English 173i. Lyric Invention in the American Twentieth Century**  
*Helen Vendler*  
“All poetry is experimental poetry.” (Wallace Stevens) We read ten American poets, a single volume of each, asking what experiments are being conducted in, for instance, genre (the self-portrait); imitation of foreign models (Chinese poetry, Japanese visual art); abstraction (allegorical animals); identity (by race, sex or age);
rhythmic and stanzaic forms; extremes of diction, etc. The urgency of each volume and the American issues raised in each will concern us throughout the course. Volumes by Eliot, Stevens, Lowell, Plath, Ashbery, Ammons, Merrill, Graham, and Dove.

**English 181a. Introduction to Asian American Literature: What is Asian American Literature**  
*Ju Yon Kim*

Aiiiieee! 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. The course is both a survey of Asian American literature and an introduction to ongoing debates about what constitutes 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 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 disintegrate 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 188gf. Global Fictions**  
*Kelly Rich*

This course serves as an introduction to the global novel in English, as well as a survey of approaches to transnational literature. It considers issues of migration, colonialism, cosmopolitanism and globalization, religion and fundamentalism, environmental concerns, the global and divided city, racial and sexual politics, and international kinship. Authors include Teju Cole, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Junot Diaz, Mohsin Hamid, Jamaica Kincaid, David Mitchell, Michael Ondaatje, Ruth Ozeki, Arundhati Roy, and Ken Saro-Wiwa.

**English 190we. David Foster Wallace**  
*Andrew Warren*

This course looks at the scene of contemporary American fiction via the work of someone whom many—perhaps controversially—have called the writer of his generation: David Foster Wallace. This year we will pay particular attention to Wallace's creative methods and to his complex engagements with questions of gender, race, sexuality and disability.

**English 1xx. African American Literature Course**  
*Jesse McCarthy*

**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/ 617-495-4252.

**General Education**

**AI. 55 Shakespeare, The Early Plays**
Marjorie Garber

**ER 37. Adam and Eve**
Stephen Greenblatt

**AI 15. Elements of Rhetoric**
James Engell

**Hum 10a. A Humanities Colloquium: From Homer to Garcia Marquez**

**Graduate Seminars**

**English 224t. Texts, Fragments, and Reconstructions**
Leah Whittington
This seminar explores the history and theory of fragments from antiquity to the present day, with a focus on the literature of the early modern period (1350-1700). The central question will be how writers and readers of different historical moments respond to incomplete or unfinished works, and how those responses inform current approaches to restoration, conservation, and the preservation of the past, from ancient shreds of papyrus to modern digital archives. We will examine the status of the unfinished in literature vis-à-vis other art forms and trace discussions of remnants and pieces through authors and artists such as Sappho, Ovid, Michelangelo, Spenser, Coleridge, Pound, Auden, and de Kooning.

**English 233. Trans-Reformation English Writing**
James Simpson
English literary history shies away from one of cultural history’s most momentous revolutions: the Reformation. This course looks to a serious of discursive areas (e.g. literature, theology, politics) to shape that literary history. We will look to both canonical and non-canonical texts, from Chaucer to Shakespeare; each session will be grounded in a Houghton-possessed book.

James Engell
Dryden, Pope, Swift, Johnson, Burke, Gibbon, Montagu, and others; the lyric, periodical literature, satire, biography, and drama; relations of engaged literature with politics, religion, history; issues of audience, gender, class, genre, and canon.

**English 256n. Theory and Practice of the Victorian Novel**
Leah Price
Reading-list to be determined in consultation with seminar members will include Austen, Bronë, Thackeray, Gaskell, Dickens, Collins, Trollope, read against both contemporaneous and new criticism and theory. Exercises in book reviewing, abstract-writing and conference presentation/public speaking.
English 264x Sensation and Moral Action in Thomas Hardy
Elaine Scarry
Approaches Hardy's novels, stories, and narrative poems through the language of the senses (hearing, vision, touch) and through moral agency (philosophic essays on ``luck'' and ˝action').

English 277a. Contemporary African American Literature
Glenda Carpio
Discussion of African American novels, plays and poetry produced since the 1960s. Among other topics, we will discuss the Black Arts Movement, the renaissance of black women authors in the 1970s, the rise of the neo-slave narrative, and black postmodern texts. Major authors will include but not be limited to Ishmael Reed, Charles Johnson, Toni Morrison, Samuel Delaney, Adrienne Kennedy, Gwendolyn Brooks, Rita Dove, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Colson Whitehead.

English 279. Modern and Contemporary American Poets
Stephanie Burt
Major poets and poems from T.S. Eliot and Robert Frost almost to the present day: we may also read, among others, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, Lorine Niedecker, Gwendolyn Brooks, James Merrill, C. D. Wright, and Terrance Hayes. Appropriate both for students who know some of these poets well, and for those relatively new to the study of poems.

English 280w. The Challenge of World Literature
Martin Puchner
The course will emphasize the current methodological debate in world literature, the merits and challenges of analyzing literature on a global scale, and how literary studies can contribute to the conversation about culture today. Readings include Moretti, Casanova, Damrosch, Mufti, Smith, Coetzee, Rowling, and others.

English 350. Teaching and Professional Development
Marjorie Garber
The craft of teaching (discussion, lectures, tutorials, course descriptions, syllabi). This colloquium, designed for third-year graduate students, also considers issues related to the field exam, prospectus, and other aspects of advanced graduate study in English.

Spring 2019

English 46. Arrivals: British Literature 700-1700
James Engell

English 53. Poets: Whitman, Dickinson, Stevens, Graham
Helen Vendler

English 55. Poets: Fundamentals of Lyric Poetry
Peter Sack

English 60a. Literary Migrations: American Horrors
Ju Yon Kim

English 6x. Migrations:
Jesse McCarthy
**English 103d. Beowulf and Seamus Heaney**
**Daniel Donoghue**
Translations of excerpts from Beowulf will proceed in parallel with careful reading of Heaney's verse translation. Questions concerning translation theory will emerge from the comparison of in-class efforts with Heaney’s and other versions. What is the relation between translation and interpretation? How does Heaney's Beowulf compare with the body of poetry he has produced over the decades? The course begins with a review of grammar.

**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 twelfth- an 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 141. When Novels Were New**
**Deidre Lynch**
The novel’s emergence as a new literary form and the remarkable record of narrative experimentation that emergence involved, as seen in works by Behn, Defoe, Haywood, Richardson, Fielding, Hogarth, Sterne, and Austen. Questions about genre and about the nature of fictionality will be central for us, and so we will investigate what was novel about novels by pondering how novels differ from epics or histories or the news in newspapers. But we will also use our reading to investigate what the modern novel’s emergence can tell us about modernity itself—about love, sex, and marriage, consumer capitalism, empire, and urban life.

**English 175d. The Rhetoric of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln**
**John Stauffer**
A critical examination of Douglass’ and Lincoln’s speeches and other exemplary writings from Lincoln’s 1838 Lyceum Address to Douglass’s 1894 "Lessons of the Hour.” We explore Douglass’ and Lincoln’s respective rhetorical practices in relation to their politics.

**English 176fr. 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 178x. American Novel from Dreiser to the Present
Philip Fisher
A survey of the 20th-century novel, its forms, patterns of ideas, techniques, cultural context, rivalry with film and radio, short story, and fact. Wharton, Age of Innocence; Cather, My Antonia; Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms and stories; Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury and stories; Ellison, Invisible Man; Nabokov, Lolita; Robinson, Housekeeping; Salinger, Catcher in the Rye and stories; Ha Jin, Waiting; Lerner, Leaving the Atocha Station, Stories by James, London, Anderson, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Gaitskill, Wallace, Beattie, Lahiri, and Ford.

English 187w. Writing about the Arts
Stephanie Burt
Book reviews, music reviews, essays, literary journalism, and general-audience criticism from the 18th century to the present, with an emphasis on writing reviews and writing about the arts yourself, as well as reading masters and innovators in this entertaining and practical genre, from the Scriblerians through Hazlitt, Woolf and Ellen Willis to Pitchfork and Tumblr.

English 190n. Writing Nature: Creativity, Poetry, Science, Ethics
James Engell
What can writing tell us about nature and the relation of humans to it? Readings in William Wordsworth, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, John Burroughs, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson, who form a tradition blending poetry, ethics, and science. Additional nature and conservation writing (e.g., Susan Fenimore Cooper, Theodore Roosevelt), recent poets (e.g., Gary Snyder, Mary Oliver), and prose writers (e.g., Annie Dillard, Bill McKibben, Barbara Kingsolver, Wendell Berry). Assignments include creative work and field notes as well as critical essays.

English 192. Political Theatre and the Structure of Drama
Elaine Scarry
The estranged, didactic, intellectual theatre of Brecht, and the ritualistic, emergency theatre of Artaud serve as reference points for a range of American, English, and Continental plays. The unique part played by “consent” in theatrical experience. Emphasis on the structural features of drama: establishing or violating the boundary between audience and stage; merging or separating actor and character; expanding or destroying language. Readings include Brecht, O’Neill, Artaud, Genet, Pirandello, and such earlier authors as Euripides and Shelley.

English 199a. How to Do Literary Theory
Andrew Warren
This is an introductory course in the lively history and practice of literary theory. Since literature came into the world people have had theories about it: what it is, what it can & shouldn’t do, why it exists, how it works, what makes a piece of writing good or mediocre or sublime—and who gets to say so. We will read a wide range of answers to these questions written by very different people in very different places and times, from Ancient Greece to 1960’s Paris, from post-colonial Kenya to present-day New York and Mumbai. To get a feel for how these different literary theories work in practice each student will also choose a literary text on which to perform different styles of readings. By the end of the course you will be an expert in that text and in a dozen different ways of reading and asking questions about it.

General Education
AI 56. Shakespeare, The Later Plays
Marjorie Garber

Hum 10b. A Humanities Colloquium: From Joyce to Homer
Stephen Greenblatt, Luke Menand, Jay Harris, Sean Kelley, Leah Whittington, Deidre Lynch
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 / 617-495-4252.

Graduate Seminars

English 210q. Queer/Medieval
Anna Wilson
The / in this course title can suggest a slippage or interchangeability; opposition and polarization; or (in fanfiction tagging conventions) erotic or romantic friction between two entities. This course functions as an introduction to queer theory as an intellectual tool with which to read texts far removed from the political, cultural, and social discourses from which queer theory emerged. We will ask: what can queer theory offer readers of medieval literature in its explorations of gender, sexuality, power, narrative, trauma, and time? We will read a range of foundational and cutting-edge queer theorists including but not limited to Judith Butler, José Esteban Muñoz, Lee Edelman, Eve Sedgwick, and Carolyn Dinshaw, alongside texts from the European Middle Ages (roughly 500-1500), in Middle English or in translation. These texts may include Aelred or Rievaulx’s Rule of Life for a Recluse, Thomas of Monmouth’s The Life and Miracles of William Norwich, The Book of Margery Kempe, the poems of Baudri of Bourgeuil, the letters of Abelard and Heloise, and more.

English 223t. Shakespearean Transformations
Stephen Greenblatt
We will investigate both Shakespeare’s relation to his sources and the transformation of his plays over the subsequent centuries and in different cultures.

English 228. Milton: Graduate Seminar
Gordon Teskey
A survey of Milton’s life and poetry.

English 248. The Comic Enlightenment
Andrew Warren
Against the eighteenth century’s so-called progress of Reason ran a countercurrent that emphasized the irrational, the emotional, and the ridiculous. Beginning with Erasmus's In Praise of Folly, Rabelais's Gargantua & Pantagruel and Swift's Gulliver's Travels, the course will read comic works by authors such as Henry Fielding, Voltaire, Lawrence Sterne, John Cleland, Charlotte Lennox, Denis Diderot, Jane Austen, Byron &
Lewis Carroll. There will also be extensive readings in theories of comedy and humor, from Hobbes and Bergson to Zupancic and Deleuze.

**English 276x. African American Literary Tradition**  
*Henry Louis Gates Jr.*  
An exploration of the emergence and development of the African-American literary "tradition" from the 18th to the 20th century. Close reading of the canonical texts in the tradition, and their structural relationships are stressed.

**English 278p. Postwar Art and Thought**  
*Luke Menand*  
Literature, theory, and the arts from 1945 to 1970. The course is U.S.-centric but with emphasis on the international circulation of art and ideas. Figures include Beauvoir, Fanon, Baldwin, Sontag, Olsen, Rich, Mailer, Jones/Baraka, Brooks, Lévi-Strauss, De Man, Pollock, Rauschenberg, and Warhol.

**English 283. New Research in Theater and Performance Studies**  
*Ju Yon Kim*  
This class will examine representations of interracial encounters in contemporary American novels, films, and performances. We will explore how these narratives conceive, questions, and reimagine the relationships not only between differently racialized groups, but also between race and nation, individual and community, and art and politics. Topics addressed in this course will include competing narratives of indigeneity, contact, and migration; cultural appropriations and collaborations; cross-racial performances; and interracial encounters in a transnational context.

**English 291ds. Disfluency and Style**  
*Marc Shell*  
This seminar focuses on works, including Hamlet and Billy Budd, where an inability to speak provides a motivating formal element as well as a substantial theme. The seminar considers such literary authors as Henry James and Lewis Carroll for whom their more or less involuntary ways of stuttering becomes a style of writing or a larger philosophy. Theoretical issues include the historical link between the terminology of linguistic neurology and classical rhetoric; aesthetic issues involve problems of rhythm, metrics, and silence in poetry.

**English 291sw. Introduction to Scholarly Writing**  
*Amanda Claybaugh*  
Through a careful reading of the most influential recent scholarship, students will explore a range of argumentative modes and evidentiary practices; through workshops of their own writing, they will experiment with rhetoric, voice, and style. Students will leave the course with an article ready for submission.

**English 295. Media Theory**  
*David Alworth*  
An overview of media theory in an expanded field. This course reads the most recent work in media studies alongside relevant philosophical and theoretical precursors. It pairs scholarship on specific topics (e.g. the book-as-medium, the algorithmic imagination, the mediation of data and facts, the idea of “the human,” social media) with foundational work in the field by McLuhan, Kittler, Luhmann, Hayles, and others. Relevant philosophical and historical readings are paired with key texts in media theory. Students will have the option to submit nontraditional (e.g. "DH") final projects.

**English 296e. The Literary Essay**  
*Marjorie Garber*  
The essay from the time of Montaigne and Bacon has been an astonishingly supple and capacious genre, with a range of reference from the highly particular and peculiar to the broadly general. In its breadth of reference and occasional form, the literary essay was the forerunner of much of what is today called “cultural studies,” on the
one hand, and “creative nonfiction” on the other. This seminar will consider major essayists from the sixteenth
to the twenty-first centuries, with particular attention to strategies of argument, evidence and style, and to
contemporary critical writing. Montaigne, Bacon, Addison, Johnson, Hazlitt, Emerson, Benjamin, Adorno,
Eliot, Woolf, Barthes, Sontag, and others.