Engl. 3890.01 – Movements in Literature: “Love Books”

[Studies in intellectual currents that create a group or school of writers within a historical period. May be repeated for credit more than once if there is no duplication in topic. Students may enroll in more than one section of this course each semester. [3] (HCA)]

Jessie Hock (co taught with Lynn Enterline)
TR – 2:35-3:50

What does it mean to write about love, beauty, and pleasure in the expectation that someone else will read what you’ve written? From a spiritual, even cosmological force to an embodied, even pornographic experience, “love” in the texts we will read in this class is a highly diverse phenomenon. However varied, the idea of love allows poets and philosophers to explore what it means to write—or read—about subjectivity and emotion. We will begin with four of the most influential ancient authors (Plato, Lucretius, Virgil, and Ovid) who link desire to the forces of unreason, violence, madness, and poetic fantasy. The rest of the course will follow medieval and renaissance writers in Italy, France, and England as they adopt or challenge ancient models. We will pay particular attention to the rise of a new tradition of love as a form of lyric autobiography, in which male authors depict love as a kind of “secret wound” or poetic “madness.” We will also pay attention to articulations of female pleasure, desire, and sexual experiences that emerge within this tradition. Finally, we will explore “libertine” movements in which narratives about apparently “deviant” lovers enable social critique and dissent.

Readings will include texts by Plato, Lucretius, Virgil, Ovid, Dante, Petrarch, Wroth, Labe, Shakespeare, Marvell, Behn, and more, and will span a wide range of genres, including epic, lyric, dramatic, narrative, epistolary, and philosophical prose. Students will become acquainted with ancient, medieval, and Renaissance literary and cultural history, while also fine-tuning their critical reading and writing skills. Course requirements include active class participation, a variety of short assignments, a midterm, and a final essay.

Engl. 3890.02 – Movements in Literature: “The New Negro Movement”

[Studies in intellectual currents that create a group or school of writers within a historical period. May be repeated for credit more than once if there is no duplication in topic. Students may enroll in more than one section of this course each semester. [3] (HCA)]

Gabriel Briggs
MWF – 12:10-1:00

This course examines the literary and cultural factors that influence the development of a modern African American identity by reconstructing the emergence of the “New Negro.” In the 1920s, the term New Negro entered general parlance to denote a modern form of African-American racial representation. The emergence of this African-American identity is different from the compliant, rural and under-educated African American who preceded the New Negro, as well, from the negative racial stereotypes created by whites or drawn from the romantic racialism of white fiction writers. New Negroes self-identified as progressive, urban figures with cultural and intellectual sensibilities generally connected to the period between World War I and World War II. Our analysis will trace the evolution of New Negro thought from its political origins in the late nineteenth-century through its radicalization in the World War I era, and will conclude with its more conservative, cultural transformation during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Students will work toward developing strategies for positioning authors and texts within specific cultural, historical, and theoretical contexts, and should be willing to experiment with new ways of reading literary and cultural texts. Among the numerous selections we will read are works by Anna Julia Cooper, W. E. B. Du Bois, Fannie Barrier Williams, Booker T. Washington, Elise McDougal, Sutton Griggs, Nella Larsen, and Langston Hughes.

THIS COURSE SATISFIES THE DIVERSE PERSPECTIVE REQUIREMENT.
Engl. 3891.01 – Special Topics in Creative Writing:
“What’s So Funny?: An Investigation”
[Advanced instruction in creative writing in emerging modes and hybrid genres. [3] (HCA)]
Lorrie Moore
W – 12:10-3:00
A look at literary texts from Shakespeare to Toni Cade Bambara to discover how literary humor is used in writing. What are the mechanics of making it occur? What are its various attributes and categories and sub-species? What are the underlying theories in practice? This is not a lecture course but an intensive reading and discussion course—class presentations and quizzes required but only a little writing.

Engl. 3892.01 – Problems in Literature:
“Heterodox Visions: Marlowe, Blake, and Ginsberg”
[Studies in common themes, issues, or motifs across several historical periods. May be repeated more than once if there is no duplication in topic. Students may enroll in more than one section of this course each semester. [3] (HCA)]
Roger Moore
TR – 9:35-10:50
This course explores three revolutionary poets—Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), William Blake (1757-1827), and Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997)—all of whom exalt the spiritual power and potential of humankind. Marlowe, Blake, and Ginsberg were rebels who chafed against the social, sexual, and religious constraints of their times and turned to radical, heterodox spiritual traditions for inspiration and solace. We will place their works within appropriate historical context (for Marlowe, the English Reformation; for Blake, the Enlightenment French Revolution; for Ginsberg, post-World War II American prosperity) and will examine them in light of the mystical literature which fired these poets’ imaginations. Our readings will include Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays as well as *Edward II* and *Doctor Faustus*, Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *The Book of Urizen*, and various lyric poems and fragments, and selected poems and essays by Ginsberg. Requirements will include two papers, a mid-term exam, and a research project.
THIS COURSE SATISFIES THE APPROACH REQUIREMENT.

Engl. 3898.01 – Special Topics in English and American Literature:
“Sensational Victorians: Sensation in Victorian Prose and Poetry”
[Topics vary. May be repeated for credit more than once if there is no duplication in topic. Students may enroll in more than one section of this course each semester. [3] (HCA)]
Elizabeth Meadows
TR – 11:00-12:15
In the shocking fictions of Collins and Braddon, Tennyson’s poetry of sensation, and the sensually charged poetry of D.G. Rossetti and Swinburne, literary sensations became a nexus for Victorian anxieties about the physical effects of reading. In this class we will investigate how concerns about literary sensations, in both high and low cultural forms, intersect with important Victorian discourses of law, medicine, class, and gender. How does sensation function as a literary mode? What counts as sensational literature? How did authors’ use of sensation in poetry and prose engage with questions of subjectivity, agency, and will? What connections between literature and madness, cultural forms and disease did authors draw on or forge in the sensational novels and poetry of the nineteenth century?
Engl. 3898.02 – Special Topics in English and American Literature:  
“South Pacific Literature and Cultures”  
[Topics vary. May be repeated for credit more than once if there is no duplication in topic. Students may enroll in more than one section of this course each semester. [3] (HCA)]  
  
  Bridget Orr  
  MWF – 12:10-1:00  
  Course description is forthcoming.

Engl. 3898.03 – Special Topics in English and American Literature:  
“Narrative of the Southern Poor”  
[Topics vary. May be repeated for credit more than once if there is no duplication in topic. Students may enroll in more than one section of this course each semester. [3] (HCA)]  
  
  Michael Kreyling  
  MWF – 1:10-2:00  
  For ye have the poor with you always, and whenssoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.” Gospel of Mark, 14:7

This well-worn passage from Mark has been used to justify doing nothing (or not much) about poverty—after all, the poor are “always” with us—and doing something “whenssoever” we feel the pang. Recently, the narrative of income inequality (the 99% and the 1%) has converted the story to numerical ratios rather than sonorous King James English. But the anxious narrative is still there.

To be brief: in the social and cultural history of the U.S., the South has often stood in for the poor person and poverty as a narrative. In the 17th century, the European colonists of New England might have had little, but the (white) lubbers and crackers of the Carolinas had less, and seemed not at all inclined to adopt a work ethic and improve their circumstances. In the South more than in other parts of the U.S., slavery welded poverty to racial division, a bond that hasn’t yet been totally cracked. And so white Americans tend to hear “poor” and “black” as synonyms. In the 20th century, white sharecroppers became the intractable poor—deeply resistant to modern economic change, often violently resistant to efforts to improve their lot in life, and sometimes even picturesque in their suffering. They were “always” poor. Even when they got some wealth, they were still easy to spot: rednecks, hillbillies, trailer trash embodied something indelibly white and poor.

During this course we will explore the entwined narratives where moral obligation, social planning, cultural observation, race, and artistic representation overlap in our apparent understanding of the poor in the U.S. The south is to be the focus, but discussion will not be restricted to just one region.

The reading is various, and predominantly literary. The following is just a sample: (fiction) William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying; Lee Smith, Oral History; Wendell Berry, Hannah Coulter; and Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird. (nonfiction) Michael Harrington, The Other America; Nancy Isenberg, White Trash; James Agee and Walker Evans, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men; Paul Theroux, Deep South, and J. D. Vance, Hillbilly Elegy. (film and television) The Andy Griffith Show and The Waltons.