Fall 2010

English 303 (7430): Graduate Fiction Workshop
Nancy Reisman

The central goal of this graduate fiction workshop is to help graduate writers further develop their art and refine their aesthetics. This is primarily a studio course: the participants’ works-in-progress will serve as key course texts. We’ll also read and discuss published works of fiction (novels as well as short stories) and craft essays. As workshop writers present their fiction-in-progress, we’ll consider artistic vision in relation to questions of form and structure, and the possibilities for invention and for reinvigorating tradition. We’ll explore the questions of perception, narrative stance, varieties of tension, dramatic and non-dramatic progression, voice, language, and other aspects of craft. What role does lyricism play? How do we represent various experiences of time? Conceptualize character? How might we consider conflicting and/or echoing movements within a given piece? Which “rules” right be most interesting to explore the limits of, and which to break? Finally, how might we think about the relationships between and among our experiences of culture / cultural moments, the ways in which we tell stories, and the stories we tell? At the beginning of the semester, we’ll set up a schedule for presentation of fiction-in-progress, and throughout the term, writers will also offer their written and oral responses to published works, and will meet with visiting writers.

English 304 (7440): Graduate Poetry Workshop
Rick Hilles

Lynn Enterline

Designed as a Proseminar to introduce first year graduate students to an academic career of research and writing, the seminar will focus on the ideological, literary, rhetorical, affective, sexual, and institutional parameters of early modern masculinity. Moving between sixteenth-century, critical, and theoretical texts, we will consider throughout what a specifically literary perspective adds to the field of gender studies. Texts and authors may include: Ovid, Shakespeare, John Webster, Andrew Marvell, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Jean Laplanche, Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler, Louis Althusser, Pierre Bordieu, and a range of contemporary investigations into the history of emotion and sexuality in the early modern period.

English 307 (7460): Literature and the Craft of Writing: Traditional Poetic Form and Modern Practice
Mark Jarman

We will study the prose of a wide range of Modern and Contemporary poets, including Thomas Hardy, W.B. Yeats, Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens. T.S. Eliot, Marianne More, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Louise Bogan, Langston Hughes, Theodore Roethke, W.H. Auden, Elizabeth Bishop, Gwendolyn Brooks, Richard Wilbur, Donald Justice, Maxine Kumin, and Sylvia Plath. Required work will include in the verse forms of these poets, plus extended analysis of their techniques. Texts will be Timothy Steele’s All the Fun’s in How You Say a Thing, Lewis Turco’s The Book of Forms, and Derek Attridge’s Poetic Rhythm, an Introduction.

Carolyn Dever

This course will address questions of embodiment, eroticism, and representation in Victorian “sensation fiction,” including novels that sample the tropes—thrills, chills, and mysteries—of sensationalism in the more conventional framework of mid-century realism. Setting the stage for the semester’s inquiry is a pair of texts—Wilkie Collins’s The Woman in White and W.T. Stead’s The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon—that establish sexual mystery as a form of narrative epistemology and also an vexed material practice. Additional primary readings for the course will include Emily Brontë’s Wuthering Heights, Charles Dickens’s Our Mutual Friend, Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s Lady Audley’s Secret, Ellen Wood’s East Lynne, and Trollope’s The Small House at Allington. The semester’s conclusion will include Hardy’s Tess of the D’Urbervilles, Stoker’s Dracula, and Wilde’s The Picture of Dorian Gray, read in tandem with their near contemporary, Freud’s Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality. I will assign additional historical, critical, and theoretical readings in order to underscore both the materiality of Victorian sexuality, and the elliptical narrative epistemologies that Victorian culture employs both to mark the body and to conceal it.
Vera Kutzinski

For most of the twentieth century, the ideology of modernism has defined African American writing as auto-ethnography and separated it from so-called high (white) modernism in the U.S. In this seminar, we will explore the lives and works of three prominent members of the Harlem Renaissance to analyze how exactly the term “African American” relates to “modernism,” that is, how each term is transformed when brought into contact with the other. We will read comprehensively: poetry, fiction, autobiographies, letters, and translations (in Hughes’s case). Our goal will be to discern how each of the three authors figured his own self (or selves) in relation both to the literary / cultural establishment(s) and to the larger society. The main question for this seminar is how aesthetics and politics intersect in the imaginative work of literary representation and in critical and theoretical inquiry. Readings: Hughes, The Big Sea, I Wonder as I Wander, Collected Poems, Remember Me to Harlem (Letters); Johnson, The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man, Collected Poems, God's Trombones, Black Manhattan, Along this Way; Toomer, Cane, The Wayward and the Seeking, Complete Poems. Requirements: weekly 500-word response papers, one oral presentation on relevant scholarship, and one final paper (15-20 pages).

Michael Kreyling

First, it isn’t called “southern literature” any longer. It’s “The New Southern Studies.” Whether the name change signifies a real difference, a “turn” in the field, or not us the central question of the seminar. We have Dilsey in The Sound and the Fury to heed; she didn’t think changing the name Maury Compson to Benjamin would help: “Name ain’t going to help him. Hurt him, neither. Folks don’t have no luck, changing names.”

What I plan to do it this: arrange a group of texts representing the canon in southern literature/NSS, and approach them in each meeting of the seminar from the ancient and the modern points of view. Some of these entries will take more than one meeting. The seminar schedule will probably look something like this: William Gilmore Simms, The Yemassee (or another of his antebellum historical romances). Discussion will circulate through basic theories of the historical novel (Lukacs) and nationalism (Benedict Anderson), Thomas Dixon, The Clansmen. The romance of reconstruction; a primer in post-bellum politicized narrative. David Blight, Race and Reunion. Early theories in the “new” science of sociology (William Graham Sumner). Plessy v. Ferguson. Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery. W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk. Uplift, activism, African American masculinity. Approaches by Houston Baker and Riché Richardson. Twelve Southerners, I’ll Take My Stand. Regionalism. William Faulkner, Go Down Moses. The major figure as a political piñata: Was Faulkner part of the Civil Rights movement? William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom! The greatest novel written by an American—in the same year as Gone With the Wind—the most popular novel written by an American. Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird. The novel and its 50th anniversary. Katherine Stockett, The Help. The knock-off south. Memory, memorialization. Madison Smartt Bell, All Souls’ Rising. The global south. The South on film: D.W. Griffith, Birth of a Nation; David O. Selznick, Gone With the Wind, Lars Von Trier, Manderlay; Kevin Wilmott, C.S.A.; and others. Dorothy Allison, Bastard Out of Carolina. Shelby Lee Adams, The True Meaning of Pictures. Trash, class, exploitation. I suggest that, over the summer, anyone interested read some of the titles in the early weeks of the semester (The Yemassee, The Clansmen, I’ll Take My Stand) and some of the titles I see as important but in the supporting cast (The Help, Gone With the Wind, the films too would make a good summer series).

English 355 (8155): Special Topics in English and American Literature: Early Cinema 1893–1920
Paul Young

This seminar treats the period between the first projected film screenings in the United States (1895-1896) and the regularization of production, distribution, and exhibition in place in the U.S. (as well as Western Europe, Russia, Japan, and India) by 1920. Our focus will oscillate between the medium itself during these formative years and the cultural concerns to which cinematic discourse spoke: mechanization, industry, and urban experience; the growing public presence of women; and the racial, ethnic, and regional differences that problematized “American Identity” even as the cinema identified (nearly) all Americans as potential spectators. No prior knowledge of film is required, but participants should be prepared to read and view widely outside of class in order to gain proficiency in reading film styles and techniques more rapidly. Requirements will include weekly screenings and readings, student presentations, a midterm analysis exercise, and a final seminar paper.
English Graduate Courses offered in 2010

Spring 2010

English 303 (7430): Graduate Fiction Workshop
Tony Earley

English 304 (7440): Graduate Poetry Workshop
Kate Daniels
This is an intensive workshop in poetry writing. Students are expected to complete 10-12 new poems (or the equivalent) over the course of the semester. We will use the Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry, Third Edition, as a base for the class. In addition, we’ll read individual volumes of poetry by the poets who will visit campus as part of the Visiting Writers Series. Extensive revision and regular conferencing with the instructor are expected.

English 305 (7450): Graduate Nonfiction Workshop
Peter Guralnick
This is a graduate workshop in Creative Nonfiction with a particular emphasis on the profile and long-form narrative piece. Three major pieces will be required, along with some brief additional exercises. Every student in the course will critique each of the papers in writing, and the class will consist primarily of constructive discussion of the work. In addition, there will be readings of work by such writers as Gay Talese, Gary Smith, Janet Malcolm, Jonathan Lethem, Joseph Mitchell, Jack Kerouac, W.C. Heinz, Louis Menand, and Alice Munro. Much of the focus of discussion will be on characterization, narrative technique, selectivity of detail, and angle of perception—in other words, how to make a real-life story or profile come alive in much the same way that a fictional narrative can. The implicit bond between reader, writer, and subject will also provide a jumping-off point, along the proverbial Rashomon-like nature of truth. Most of all, the workshop should be seen as a kind of shared enterprise in which a mutual enthusiasm for writing should lead to discussion that is as wide-ranging as it is lively and engaging.

English 307 (7460): Literature and the Craft of Writing: Frost, Stevens, Their Craft and Influence
Mark Jarman
Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens are two of America’s greatest and most original poets and tower over their contemporaries in the twentieth century. As individuals and artists they could not appear more different. Frost presented himself to the world as a New England farmer, while Stevens was an executive with a major insurance agency in Hartford, Connecticut. Frost held various posts at universities and gave frequent readings of his work, barding around, as he called it. Stevens’s reaction with the American public was mainly as an insurance adjustor, one of his era’s best investigators of claims. Their poetry differed markedly as well. Frost’s poems reflect his persona as a Yankee agrarian, recording the voices and lives of country people in New Hampshire and Vermont. In his poetry, Stevens departed entirely from the drab world of business to celebrate the wildly imaginative and exotic in his unique verses, often about fantastic characters. Not only do they provide a contrast in their poetry, but in their professional careers. Yet both poets had much more in common than is apparent. Both encouraged the thought of William James and George Santayana at Harvard University in the 1890s. Both spent a long apprenticeship as poets before publishing their first books. Both were masters of traditional English verse, especially the blank verse line, but Stevens was one of the great innovators in American free verse, a course Frost never followed. Both were engaged by the modern dilemma of alienation. Both saw poetry as an answer to the modern problem of religious belief.
Our course will examine the work of these two poets side-by-side, with special emphasis on their craft and innovations by both poets. We will also consider poets who benefitted from the example of one of the other. In the case of Robert Frost, Robert Lowell and Seamus Heaney; and Elizabeth Bishop and John Ashbery, in the case of Wallace Stevens. You will be required to give a presentation to the class and write a paper. Our texts will be the Library of America Editions of Robert Frost’s poetry and Wallace Stevens’s Poetry and Prose. There will also be supplemental readings of more contemporary poets.
English 307 (7460): Literature and the Craft of Writing: Where the Girls Are: (Some) Contemporary Women Short Story Writers and their Influences  
Nancy Reisman  
This course will explore the work of a range of late twentieth and twenty-first century story writers, their aesthetics, voices, and literary techniques; their generational and cultural moments; the sense of relationship, desire, and place within their work; their visions of the short form; and their literary and non-literary influences. We’ll read work by Grace Paley, Alice Munro, Edna O’Brien, Angela Carter, Lorrie Moore, Edwidge Danticat, Deborah Eisenberg, and Jhumpa Lahiri, among others. Course projects will offer opportunities to engage with the art-making process as well as with various analytical considerations of these writers’ works.

Jonathan Lamb  
Three has been a further spate of theories of the novel in the last few years, with new books or essays by Catherine Gallagher, Michael McKeon, Nancy Armstrong, Alex Woloch, and Candace Vogler, to name a few. One of the most interesting contributions was not directly concerned with the novel but with the nature of contract, specifically the original contract which, in the work of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau (for example) forms the basis of civil society. In her book, *Wayward Contracts*, Vicky Kahn explored the English Revolution as a collision between two radically different kinds of narrative: the story of feudal obligation and the story of foundational consent. When the latter supervenes and became the basis of English history in the eighteenth century, a very close liaison was produced between politics and poetics, Kahn argues, because a fiction had managed to transfigure not only the nature of politics, but also the nature of experience. She is not the first person to suggest that the novel comes about not as an attempt to reflect the empirical actuality of life, but as an exercise in fictionality itself. Gallagher and Lynch both argue that fiction is concerned with fiction, not with the real, and that it is its quality of being made up, not being empirically accurate, which appeals to the reader. But what is this were true not just of the novel, but of all the business of civil society? Often in *Robinson Crusoe* we find the hero saying things such as, “I imagined it, so it was,” or dreaming of the next phase of his life on the island before it actually happens. Is it the law of imagination we out to be invoking, and not the standard of empirical actuality? Have we been reading novels the wrong way round?  
Aims: Well, if we have, how might we begin to re-read novels? The course will be divided into two parts. The first will negotiate theories of fiction, from Samuel Johnson to Candace Vogler, with Kahn’s provisions in mind, to see if we can form an idea of the preposterous kind of novel, and what that would entail for the characters within it, as well as the readers of it. This will require making some basic distinctions between fiction, history, and romance; also between characters, persons, and authors. In the second half, I want each student to propose a novel that exhibits some of these preposterous characteristics, ranging for their examples between the seventeenth and twenty-first centuries.

English 325 (8430): Seminar in Modern British and American Literature: Comparative Modernisms  
Mark Wollaeger  
This course aims to provide an introduction to modernism attentive to the recent global / transnational turn in modernist studies. As currently conceived, it should be titled Modernisms: Genealogical and Comparative. The genealogical axis will begin in two “origins”: Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (1857) and Baudelaire’s *Flowers of Evil* (1857), which are often described as the progenitors of modern fiction and modern poetry, respectively. From these beginnings we will move forward through some major English-language works by Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce, and T.S. Eliot (*The Good Soldier, Ulysses*, and early Eliot up through *The Waste Land*). Once into the twentieth century British modernism, we will push further out along the comparative axis (opened already by the movement from England to Ireland) by reading Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* alongside Ahmet Tanipar’s *The Time Regulation Institute*, a Turkish comic novel. We will also loop back to *Ulysses* via some Japanese experimental fiction, including Sei’s “Streets of Fienish Ghosts,” and possibly by some Indian Anglophone literature. We will also read significant theoretical work underpinning the global turn, from Benjamin’s essays on Baudelaire (e.g., “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century”) to more recent work by theorists of cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, and comparativity (e.g., Anthony Appiah, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Fredric Jameson, Jonathan Culler, and Franco Moretti). Rather than require a long seminar paper at the end, this course will culminate in two shorter pieces (ten and five pages) designed as talks and seminar position papers for submission to the Modernist Studies Association Convention, which meets every fall, and will also require a variety of short papers and presentations during the semester.
English 355 (8155): Special Topics in English and American Literature: The Other Latino: Contemporary Latino Culture
Lorraine Lopez

Latino literature consists of poetry and prose written by American authors of Hispanic heritage who have been inculcated by the U.S. experience, who write in English, and who self-identify as Latinos. While seeking to honor the diversity within this diversity, the seminar focuses on the vibrant new writings by U.S. Latinos—Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, and Dominican-Americans, whose work is an important component of mainstream American culture. Authors whose work we will investigate include Junot Díaz, Helena Maria Viramontes, Stephanie Elizondo-Griest, Daniel Chacon, Sergio Troncoso, Cristina Garcia, and Julia Alvarez, and topics we will cover are cultural hybridity, most-Movement identity, borderlands theory, gender dynamics, and popular religiosity.

English 355 (8155): Special Topics in English and American Literature: Print Culture and Literary Production
Dahlia Porter

In the opening section of The Dunciad, Alexander Pope describes the endless stream of “Journals, Medleys, Merc’ries, Magazines” issuing from Grub Street, home to publishers, booksellers, aspiring poets, and impoverished hack writers. Pope’s concern, like many of his generation, stemmed from the rapid expansion of the universe of print—an ever-expanding world in which authors and readers acquired new roles, literature became a business, and the locus of literary authority was continually up for grabs. If Pope responded to these new formations with satire (and a lawsuit against Curll for publishing his letters), by 1815 Wordsworth had come upon a different solution: every original author, he argued, “has the task of creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed.” The world of print might be used to an author’s advantage; the only trick was figuring out how. This course will examine the central questions of print in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We will begin with a survey of recent criticism to establish the scholarly conversation and pinpoint from useful methodological approaches (book history, world and image studies, material culture, and new historicism). We’ll then devote several weeks to a trio of significant eighteenth century publishing projects: Pope’s Dunciad, Richardson’s Pamela, and Johnson’s Dictionary. After working through a matrix of conceptual and technical issues with these case studies, we’ll shift our attention to the formal and generic innovations of the Romantic Era. Coupling theory, criticism, and primary texts, we’ll consider topics ranging from Ekphrasis (Blake as engraver and poet); paratexts (prefaces, illustrations, and interludes in Darwin and Smith); annotation (footnotes in Owenson’s novel The Wild Irish Girl and Southey’s oriental tale Thalaba the Destroyer); collection (museums, miscellanies, and Lyrical Ballads); celebrity (the wildly popular Lord Byron); periodicals and reviews (James Hogg and Blackwood’s magazine); and the death of the author (quite literally, in Shelley’s Adonais).

English 355 (8155): Special Topics in English and American Literature: Cosmopolitanism Otherwise: African American and Caribbean Women’s Border Crossings
Ifeoma Nwankwo

This course will center on the ways Black women word artists have narrated, represented, and theorized transnational border crossing during three key era in African Diaspora history: pre-emancipation; New Negro Renaissance; and the Contemporary Period (1980 to present). What do they identify as the drivers behind and the key positive or negative outcomes of these journeys? What language or terminology do these women use to talk about such movements? Do / Can we see recurring paradigms for enacting or discussing cross-national engagement? How do these conventions converge with or diverge from those foregrounded in contemporary scholarly discourse? Through in-depth examinations of the treatment of the international autobiography, fiction, poetry, scholarly writing, and music lyrics by African American, Caribbean, and Afro-Latin American women, we will consider the benefits and the drawbacks of employing cosmopolitanism as a way of reading and discussing Black women’s cross-border movements. We will explore questions such as: What is the history of cosmopolitanism as a concept? Who has used it and to what end? Why should we or should we not use it to discuss / interpret Black women’s border crossings? What alternatives are there, and what are the benefits and limitations of these alternatives, especially as employed by scholars? Are there analytical maneuvers that the concepts of Diaspora, The Black Atlantic, Pan-Africanism, and Third World Feminism allow us to make that cosmopolitanism does not, or vice versa? The syllabus is divided into units. Each unit represents a particular category of transnational movement (e.g. migration) or destination (e.g. “Africa”). Each unit’s reading list includes at least one text from each of the following categories: literature, history, literary criticism, and literary theory. The course requirements, plainly stated, are: class participation, position papers, discussion leading, and a final paper. All students are expected to come to class with a brief (3-4 page) position paper on the day’s readings and be ready to use it as a basis for engaging in dialogue with classmates. In addition, for each classroom session, one student will be responsible for not just leading discussion, but rather for inspiring a vibrant discussion of the readings.