

# MA in Literature Program

## Course Descriptions

### Summer 2018

#### Pre-session I: May 14-18

#### **ENGL 756 -- A Domain of One's Own: Digital Literacy for the English Professional**

Dr. Sherwood

M-F 8:30 – 4:30

**This course satisfies three credits of the Research Skills requirement.**

Through this accelerated, pre-session course, I want to enable students to incorporate new, digital tools into their own teaching of writing and literature. Whether you are a digital native or immigrant, I invite you to join us as we collaboratively learn by exploring available Web 2.0 tools (such as blogs and wikis) and creating and managing a personal webspace on a domain belonging to you. As we learn to utilize these tools, we will become acquainted with relevant theory and methodology, develop instructional strategies and classroom applications, and think critically about how to manage a professional web presence as 21st century academics. No prior digital-teaching experience is required, but you should be comfortable exploring new software with guidance. All students will be required to register for a shared server space through Reclaim Hosting at a cost of approximately \$40 for the year. Please note, this is not a course in the use of Learning Management Systems such as Moodle or Blackboard. As the course approaches, please look for the website at [sherwoodweb.org](http://sherwoodweb.org) or feel free to email.

Students will:

1. Cultivate a professional online identity for the scholar and teacher with an awareness of changing disciplinary and cultural norms;
2. Develop a digital writing "workflow" using appropriate techniques (exs. Markdown, HTML, CSS) to produce and publish on the web;
3. Demonstrate working knowledge of simple markup to create and publish an academic website on a hosted server, managing their own web domain;
4. Identify and critically evaluate tools for digital learning;

MA-level 756 goals:

1. Explore personal learning environments appropriate to the discipline and to the academic goals of an MA student; demonstrate how platforms constrain and enable communication and interaction;
2. Enhance their existing digital literacies by producing a project(s) with at least two multimodal elements: sound, images, visual design and typography, interactivity (exs. audio podcast, video, Twine game).

Doctoral-level 856 goals:

1. Implement personal learning and teaching environments appropriate to the discipline, including but not limited to blogs and wikis and to academic goals including professional advancement and the job market, participation in disciplinary discourse, and contribution to the community or public sphere; demonstrating theoretical knowledge and practical application of how platforms constrain and enable communication and interaction;



2. Enhance their existing digital literacies by producing a project(s) with a full range of appropriate multimodal elements: sound, images, visual design and typography, interactivity (exs. audio podcast, video, Twine game).

Feel free to contact Prof. Sherwood ([sherwood@iup.edu](mailto:sherwood@iup.edu)) or visit the course archive on his website ([www.sherwoodweb.org](http://www.sherwoodweb.org)) for more information.

## **Pre-session II: May 21-25**

### **ENGL 760 Teaching College Literature**

Dr. Veronica Watson  
M-F 8:30 - 4:30

**This course satisfies three credits of the Research Skills requirement.**

This is a seminar and workshop course in which we'll focus as pragmatically as possible on current approaches to teaching introductory courses in literature--as informed by recent theory as well as the real constraints of the classroom, the institutional setting, and the needs of our students and ourselves. We will also consider the teaching of literature in non-academic contexts, which calls on many of the same skill sets and considerations as what happens in a college classroom. Employing the modes of reflective practice and critical pedagogy, we will explore both the theoretical and practical concerns of teaching college literature, with special attention paid to the design and implementation of pedagogical goals that encourage "significant learning" (Fink).

Evaluation will be based on workshop participation, critical evaluations, and on course materials prepared, including course descriptions, syllabi, policy statements, sample assignments, and so on.

## **Summer Session I: May 29-June 21**

### **ENGL 761 Topics in American Literature before 1870**

#### **Periodicals, Period: Antebellum US Literature in Newspapers and Magazines**

Dr. Todd Thompson  
M-TR 8:00 -10:30

In the antebellum United States, new technologies and a highly literate public led to what one scholar has dubbed a "print explosion," with a glut of newspapers, magazines, gift books, and other periodicals. With a blurrier line than exists now between "literature" and "news," much of the artistic outpouring that has been labeled the "American Renaissance" was originally published in such formats. But, even with the emergence of historicizing methods, attention to audience, and increased access to electronic archives of nineteenth-century periodicals, scholars and students still tend to read these works in a way that removes them from their original publication context. This class will seek to remedy this oversight by re-reading antebellum literature with attention to medium as well as message. Together, we will attempt to articulate a collaborative theory on reading, researching, and teaching periodical literatures. We will also consider the relationships between literary criticism, periodical studies, and digital humanities. Coursework will include regular response

papers, contextualizing presentations on periodicals, a conference paper proposal, and a seminar paper.

### **ENGL 772 Topics in Women's Literature (American) Black Women, Black Plays**

Dr. Mike Sell

M-TR 10:45 - 1:15

This course provides students the opportunity to develop critical understanding of the writers, texts, themes, and methods that comprise the canon—better yet, and with a nod to Beyoncé, the canon-in-formation—of African American women playwrights and plays. We will consider (and support semester projects about) early twentieth-century women; for example, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Mary P. Burrill, Zora Neale Hurston, Eulalie Spence, May Miller, Marita Bonner, or Shirley Graham. As we will do with contemporary playwrights: Suzan-Lori Parks, Lynn Nottage, Lydia Diamond, Dael Orlandersmith, Anna Deavere Smith, Sarah Jones, Charlayne Woodard, Katori Hall, Christina Anderson, and Ifa Bayeza, for examples.

But our focus will fall strongest on black women who wrote plays between 1959 and 1973, the era that witnessed the rejuvenation of the Civil Rights Struggle; the emergence of the Black Power, Black Arts, and Black Feminist movements; and the comprehensive reformation of the U.S. literary and theatrical economy. This remarkable generation of playwrights explored—sometimes emphatically, sometimes warily—a conception of Blackness that was inextricably linked to political, cultural, social, and personal transformation. Among the playwrights we might consider: Dorothy Ahmad, Maya Angelou, Vinnette Carroll, Alice Childress, Pearl Cleage, Martie Evans-Charles, J.e. Franklin, Adrienne Kennedy, Sonia Sanchez, Ntozake Shange, and Sharon Stockard.

Beyond the obvious benefits of learning about African American women writers and what they wrote, this course will also give students the opportunity to further explore and apply relevant critical-theoretical approaches (critical race theory, black cultural studies, intersectional feminism, black feminist performance theory) and learn the specific disciplinary methodologies required for the effective study of dramatic literature.

### **Summer Session II: July 2 – July 26**

#### **ENGL 763 Topics in Brit Literature before 1660**

##### **Play to play: Shakespeare and Contemporary Adaptations**

Dr. Orchard

M-TR 1:30 - 4:00

The course will look specifically at contemporary drama adaptations of a selection of Shakespeare's plays. We will discuss the ideological, gendered and political differences between the texts, examine the anxiety of influence, and explore the cultural arguments for the appropriation of Shakespeare's plays. Discussion will centre around theories of adaptation, both generally and specifically in terms of Shakespeare's work and final papers will consider these theories as part of the comparative analysis. There will be daily responses and a final paper that considers one of the plays and its adaptation/s.

Pairings:

*Taming of the Shrew* and Fletcher, *The Woman's Prize*  
*Merchant of Venice* and Wesker's *A Merchant*

Othello and (1) Paula Vogel, *Play About a Handkerchief* (2) Djanet Sears, *Harlem Duet*  
Hamlet and (1) Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*; (2) Blessing, *Fortinbras*  
The Tempest and (1) Césaire, *A Tempest*; (2) Osment, *This Island's Mine*

## **ENGL 766 Topics in Comparative Literature**

### **Reading Poetry: Psalms, Odes, and Dramatic Monologues**

Dr. Michael Williamson

M-W 6:00 - 9:00

This course is open to students who love poetry, students who are baffled by poetry, students who are scared of poetry, students whose lives are transformed by poetry, and all the range of possibilities in between. ENGL 766/866 offers students opportunities to study three major poetic forms – the ode, the psalm (or prayer poem), and the dramatic monologue – over the course of almost 3,000 years of literary history. Our main objective will be to develop intensive experience and emerging expertise in reading these three main poetic forms along with some offshoots and variations. Our first unit will focus on very old poetry. The Psalms (mostly written between 996 and 586 BCE), the Pindaric Victory Ode (about 498-444 BCE), and the Arabic Ode (around 550- 730 CE) are poetic forms whose origins lie in oral poetry. Our main questions for Unit One will be “What can we learn about the structures of our imaginations from the structure of these poetic forms?” “How do these poetic forms intertwine the human, natural, and divine worlds?” How do they negotiate the complex interplay between private experience and public performance or recitation?” Unit Two will consider the “socially oriented” form of the 19<sup>th</sup> century dramatic monologue and 20<sup>th</sup> century versions of the form by Gwendolyn Brooks. We will ask the same questions in Unit Two that we ask in Unit One, but we will consider the larger question, “How does poetry convey the experience of time travel, uncanny encounters with the past, confrontations between publically recorded history and privately experienced fantasy?” As we explore each unit, we will refer to other poems that help us to get a clearer sense of the range of possibility for each poetic form.

- 1) *The Book of Psalms* Trans. Robert Alter. (W.W. Norton, 2009) 978-0393337044
- 2) Pindar, *Pindar's Victory Songs*. Trans. Frank Nisetich. (Johns Hopkins UP), 1980. 978-0801823565
- 3) *Desert Tracings: Six Classic Arabian Odes by 'Alqama, Shanfara, Labid, 'Antara, Al-A'sha, and Dhu al-Rumma*. Trans. Michael Sells (Wesleyan UP, 1989) 978-0819511584
- 4) William Wordsworth, *The Major Works* (Oxford World Classics) 978-0199536863
- 5) Alfred Tennyson, *Selected Poems* (Penguin Classics) 978-014042443
- 6) Gwendolyn Brooks, *The Essential Gwendolyn Brooks* 978-1931082877

Suggested reference texts:

Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (Basic Books, 2011)

## **ENGL 771 Topics in Postmodern Literature**

Dr. Slater

M-TR 4:30 – 7:00

In this class, we will work at defining and identifying postmodernism in film and lit, taking a long view in relation to tragedy through Sezen Kayhan's *Fragments of Tragedy in Postmodern Film* (2014), available as an online e-book and a short view through Brian McHale's *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodernism* (2015). We'll read a few novels and study a few films which I have not had time to select yet. But I will aim at selecting a variety in terms of genre, gender, period, and place of production. Students will very likely write one or two short essays and a research paper and

contribute to a small-group presentation.

Course Requirements: a1) a presentation and a corresponding analysis paper (5-6 pages) on a chosen theory article or book; 2) a criticism paper (5-6 pages); and 3) a seminar paper (12-15 pages)

Required Texts\*:

Coetzee, J.M. *Waiting for the Barbarians*. 1980. Reprint. New York, Penguin, 2010.

Kincaid, Jamaica. *Lucy*. 1990. Reprint. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.

Hennessy, Rosemary. *Fires on the Border: The Passionate Politics of Labor Organizing on the Mexican Frontera*. Minneapolis: UMin Press, 2013.

Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan, eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology, 3rd Edition*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2017.