

Spring 2018 Graduate Seminars (updated 10.03.2017)

<p>ENGL 7001 J. Wheeler</p> <p>6:00-9:00 T jwheeler@lsu.edu</p>	<p><u>Literary Nonfiction Workshop</u> <i>Prereq: admission to the MFA program or permission of instructor.</i></p> <p>Lexicographer Samuel Johnson once defined the essay as a <i>loose sally of the mind</i>. While the expanse of creative nonfiction is vast (memoir, profile, criticism, technical writing, investigative journalism, travel writing, nature writing, etc.), all of this kind of writing has in common the imperative to communicate a process of thought about a particular subject. And nowhere in literature is the process of human thought laid bare quite like it is in the tradition of the essay. Our workshop will use the history of the essay as a means of exploring how to best translate a process of thought from the brain to the page in our own creative nonfiction. Each week we'll read a loose sally from the long tradition of the essay and/or from the genre's rich contemporary resurgence. And we'll write our own loose sallies. You'll be expected to compose about 30 pages of high-quality nonfiction, as well as engage in weekly workshops of your peers' work.</p>
<p>ENGL 7006 J. Davis</p> <p>12:30-3:30 W jenniferdavis@lsu.edu</p>	<p><u>Fiction Writing (Reading & Writing First Books: Fiction Workshop)</u> <i>Prereq: admission to the MFA program or permission of instructor.</i></p> <p>This workshop will be structured in a flexible format that accommodates students writing short stories, novels, and story cycles. In addition to workshop, we will read a variety of recently released first books (novels and story collections) published by a range of venues, including large publishing houses, independent publishers, and university presses, with the goal of learning a little more about the art and business of the first book.</p>
<p>ENGL 7007 L. Mullen</p> <p>12:00-3:00 T lmullen@lsu.edu</p>	<p><u>Poetry Workshop (The Messy Mess)</u> <i>Prereq: admission to the MFA program or permission of instructor.</i></p> <p>This workshop will focus on process in order to find a way to the kind of faith in ourselves and our art that sustains a lifetime's work, while widening our sense of what writing can be and do, now. Embracing the "mess" which is necessarily part of the act of creation, lingering in the kitchen rather than the dining room, we'll be drafting and revising, reading, viewing, and critiquing. The goal is to free ourselves from limiting expectations by expanding our formal options while learning to welcome and fully engage the productive chaos of difficult subject matter (and the excess generated by time's accrual). Required readings will include Douglas Kearney's <i>Mess and Mess and</i>; assignments will include a "notebook," a mid-term (10 pages or equivalent if multi-modal) where the challenge is <i>incoherence</i>, and a final project (20 pages or equivalent). Note: this mess is rooted in poetry (which has proved so hospitable to other forms and experiments) but not restricted; students from other genres and disciplines are encouraged to enroll.</p>

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ENGL 7050

K. Cope

6:00-9:00N T

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Restoration and 18th Century Literature (Thoughtful Art: Foundations and Expressions of Enlightenment Culture)

Were we able to compute the ratio of art, science, thought, and letters produced during the Enlightenment to the population of that literally “old Europe,” numbers mavens would soon discover that this era exceeded all others in per capita production of memorable, curator-worthy artifacts. So, too, with the rate of increase in cultural activity and with the circulation of information through the book trade and related media. This astounding outburst of cerebration was not without its effects for the expressive arts, including literature. The rise of didactical verse, the creation of genres such as topographical poetry or philosophical essays, and the appearance of paintings, statues, and even buildings expressing some literary idea are only a few examples of the unprecedented thoughtfulness of Enlightenment art. This course will examine several of the major British as well as multi-national controversies and debates and will consider their impact on British literature as well as on Enlightenment culture. Included in the carousel of case studies will be debates concerning the nature of light; the age of the world; the origins of consciousness; natural versus artificial language; volcanism, earthquakes, storms, and natural disasters; the rules for the production of dramas; constitutional monarchy versus absolutism; space travel; the merits of public libraries; republics versus dictatorships versus kingdoms versus empires; and much more! The majority of texts will be harvested from online sources and databases, making this an economical as well as accessible course.

ENGL 7221

R. Godden

3:00-6:00 TH

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Topics in Critical Theory and Cultural Studies (Disability Studies: Divergent Bodies in the Middle Ages)

The literature of the Middle Ages abounds with representations of bodies that are excessive, strange, monstrous, grotesque, infirm, and miraculous. To approach these Divergent Bodies, scholars have increasingly looked to Disability Studies and its critical analyses of how binaries such as human/monstrous, healthy/sick, and disabled/normal are discursively constructed. This seminar considers several ways of thinking about the nonnormative body in premodern literature and culture: How do categories of the monstrous and the disabled overlap in medieval culture? How do representations of disabled bodies intersect with racialized ones? With gendered bodies? How do objects like prostheses and assistive devices redraw what it means to be human? To explore these questions, we will read widely in contemporary Disability Studies, and in scholarship that applies it to premodern texts. We will also read diverse primary texts in medieval literature, including Chaucer, Arthurian literature, travel narratives, and Saints' Lives. Further, we will consider Shakespeare's *Richard III* and you will have the opportunity to explore how Disability Studies is being done or could be done in your own field of research.

ENGL 7222

S. Weinstein

12:30-3:30 M

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Topics in Literary Studies (A Social History of Spoken Word Poetry)

In this seminar, we will explore the popular genre of contemporary spoken word poetry as it developed in the United States in the late-20th and early-21st centuries. We will study spoken word as a discourse with orienting values and practices, and will examine its position in relation to other U.S. poetics and to its myriad social contexts. Our readings will incorporate performance studies and literary studies, as well as historical studies of poetry movements.

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ENGL 7423

S. Otero

3:30-6:30 T

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Topics in Folklore (Transculturation in Global Literatures)

How does literature create place and imagined communities transnationally? What kinds of subjects and audiences are generated through literary transculturation? This graduate course looks at how transculturation informs representations of cultural admixture and appropriation in global literatures. Transculturation is a concept developed by Cuban folklorist Fernando Ortiz to describe how historical processes like slavery, colonialism, and migration play a part in developing national and transnational cultural flows. The literature we will read in this course explores the aesthetic ramifications of cultural borrowing and reinvention in a diverse global context. Authors explored include, but are not limited to: Laia Jufresa, Cristina García, Amitav Ghosh, Banana Yoshimoto, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Lisa McInerney.

ENGL 7541

J. Butts

3:30-6:30 M

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Digital Rhetorics/Multimodal Texts

This course looks at the ways in which we create and consume all sorts of texts in their various forms—particularly digital ones. What changes when our rhetorics become digital? We will explore the various effects of digitality upon rhetorical texts, and consider how we will continue to read, write, and practice rhetoric in different ways in the future. We will attempt to follow Aristotle's three forms of human activity in our exploration together: *knowing, doing, and making*. *Knowing*: The class will read to learn about some benchmark concepts in theory pertaining to rhetoric, from the likes of Aristotle to Heidegger to DJ Spooky, and make connections to divergent digital texts and contexts. *Doing*: We will also analyze and respond to some examples of digital literature, like *Device 6* and the creative work of Darius Kazemi and Shelley Jackson, in order to make some decisions together about how to interpret what claims these novel texts are making about how language and electronic media work in the world. *Making*: Finally, we will also intervene in our collective rhetorical digitality by constructing texts that push our thinking about how different formats and approaches to composition work.

ENGL 7623

L. Glenum

6:00-9:00N TH

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Topics in Professional Writing and Technical Communication (Arts Administration: Delta Mouth)

Prereq: admission to the MFA program or permission of instructor.

Learn the ropes of arts administration while helping to stage Delta Mouth 2018! The Delta Mouth Literary Festival is a nationally distinguished literary festival hosted each year by LSU's MFA program. The festival is an extremely vital part of LSU's literary community and part of our service to the greater Baton Rouge and Louisiana arts communities. In this class, we will unpack the process of visioning and planning a large-scale literary event. Students will hone practical skills in grant-writing, fundraising, professional standards of correspondence, publicity, marketing, and all the minutiae required to make a literary event happen—from writing a mission statement to hosting visiting writers. Many of the skills developed in this class are the same skills required to work in publishing or for an arts non-profit. Students will work with this year's student co-directors to stage Delta Mouth 2018 and to lay the groundwork for the 2019 festival.

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ENGL 7783

J. Catano

12:30-3:30 W

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Topics in Film and Video Studies (Noir to Neo Noir: Fiction and Film)

Noir is often conflated/confused with hard-boiled detective fiction. But while a crime is often part of the content, noir is really as much a visual or prose style as a plot and characterization. This course will work with that set of characteristics, along with historical and sociocultural dynamics that were part of *noir's* early 20th century fiction and film hey-day as well as its 60s/70s reappearance and reworking in French New Wave films and re-releases of such classics as *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Ongoing issues we'll explore include gender roles and sexuality, class, violence, place/regionalism, and others. Suggestions for primary texts, especially more recent works, will be sought from course members for final text selections. Weekly forums via Moodle; choice to create in written/visual noir style for one assignment; class presentation; final project.

ENGL 7920

C. Barrett

12:30-3:30 M

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English Seminar (Dissertation Workshop)

Limited to Ph.D. students who have passed the general exam or are taking exams in the Spring semester.

In this seminar, we will share the process and products of writing in a few advanced academic genres, including (but not limited to) the dissertation prospectus, the journal article, and the dissertation chapter. Remaining committed to the individual research agenda of each seminarian, we will consider several dimensions of the research process: identifying stylistic, methodological, and theoretical models; developing familiarity with the key journals and presses in your specific field(s); discerning your writing process style and developing strategies to build on your strengths and address areas of opportunity; writing in effective, efficient ways in different windows of time; refining your skill in writing advanced academic prose; honing your skill in both offering generative critique to colleagues and making the most of the generative critique offered to you; sharpening your appetite for, and success at, thorough revision; creating and sustaining productive momentum by integrating reading, thinking, composing, teaching, and revising; and practicing expressing your research project(s) in short and long forms, both written and oral. By the end of the term, you will have achieved the writing goal you set for yourself in this seminar (drafting a prospectus, e.g., or revising a chapter, etc), and you will have contributed to the success of each of us in this seminar.

ENGL 7962

S. Weltman

6:30-9:30 W

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Studies in the Victorian Period (Charles Dickens)

An international literary superstar whose books have never gone out of print, commemorated by annual festivals worldwide and his own theme park in the UK, for many Dickens epitomizes Victorian literature and culture. In this course, we will explore as much of the extravagant fun, the tearful melodrama, the evocative prose, the social critique, the quirky characters, and the immense cultural impact of this prolific novelist as we can in one semester. Important topics for discussion include gender, sexuality, class, industrialization, empire, race, inheritance, seriality, theatricality, performance, biography, the city, the environment, body size, disability, illustration, historical context, narrative technique, modes of publication, and editorial control. Readings may include *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, **Bleak House*, **Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit*, **Great Expectations*, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, as well as a few of Dickens's shorter works such as *A Christmas Carol*, *Chimes*, and *A Cricket on the Hearth*, along with critical, biographical, historical, and theoretical material. Although he was revered as "The Inimitable," we will certainly look at imitations and adaptations of Dickens. Victorian triple-decker novels can hit 900 pages (the biggest ones are marked with an asterisk), so if you have a chance to read one or two of them over winter break, do it. Requirements include formal and informal oral presentations, an annotated bibliography, an oral book review, a short paper, an article-length paper, lots of delightful reading, and active class participation.

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<p>ENGL 7971 M. Bibler 12:00-3:00 T mbibler@lsu.edu</p>	<p><u>Topics in Southern Studies (Queer Theory/Southern Studies)</u> This seminar will focus on some of the key theories and methodologies of Queer Studies, concentrating foremost on recent scholarship as well as some foundational works by Eve Sedgwick, Jose Esteban Munoz, John Howard, and others. Our aim is to map the landscape of this critical/theoretical terrain in order to ask how a study of U.S. southern culture(s) might illuminate and reshape that terrain further. We will especially concentrate on developments in Queer of Color critique to help us foreground and understand the multiracial dynamics of the Queer South.</p>
<p>ENGL 7975 A. Gourdine 12:00-3:00 TH agourdi@lsu.edu</p>	<p><u>Topics in African-American Literature (Race, AntiBlackness, and the Politics of Academic Activism)</u> Relying on novels like Zadie Smith's <i>On Beauty</i>, Ishmael Reed's <i>Reckless Eyeballin</i>, and Danzy Senna's <i>Caucasia</i> alongside Claudia Rankine's <i>Citizen</i>, Audre Lorde's <i>Zami</i> and select writings from Sylvia Wynter, this course explores race in the academy. Specifically, these narratives center black bodies and amplify how academic theorizing race and racism appear as praxis, manifest in a particular set practices, and organize antiblackness. Through various media and genres, we unpack how antiblackness and parallel theories of race/racism are imagined, embodied, activated, and/or realized, and resisted. The discourses we engage will shift, but using bell hooks' <i>Writing Beyond Race</i> and Charles Mills' <i>The Racial Contract</i>, this course will create a space to actively consider what counts as activism in the academy. In addition to the printed texts, we have dynamic online content. Course assignments will include discussant essay, annotated bibliography, new media review/analysis, among others.</p>

Of Related Interest

<p>CPLT 7120 K. Jensen 4:30-7:30 M</p>	<p><u>Theories of Emotion</u> In this course, we shall examine historical notions of "the passions" and modern theories of both emotion and affect. In addition, we will study literary theories of the emotions, ending by looking at some examples of how critics put these theories into practice in reading literary texts. Students will be able to put one (or more) of the theories we study throughout the semester into practice by using it to analyze a literary text or texts of the student's choice in a final paper. The course will be discussion based, and we will work to see where among the theories we study, there are ideas in common and where there are significant shifts in thought. Readings include sections or books by Arika, James, Brennan, Clough, Ahmed, Keen, and Vermeule, as well as articles using emotion or affect theory to analyze literature.</p>
<p>CPLT 7130 M. Zerba 10:30-12:00 TTH</p>	<p><u>Modern Odysseys</u> As comparative literature and world literature open new pathways of exchange between geographically and culturally distant regions of the globe, students of literary study are facing the challenges of reading texts that span these divides. This course will examine how the Return Tale, which has antecedents reaching as far back as the Mesopotamian <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> and Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>, has provided 20th century writers and creative artists with ways of thinking about social, sexual, and racial identity in the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and Europe. We will focus particularly on how the effects of slavery and colonization in the Caribbean shape the Return Tale. Topics of study will include: the Return Tale (<i>nostos</i>) in world literature; <i>I'errance insulaire</i> in Caribbean and Mediterranean island settings; Odyssean <i>metis</i> (cunning, craft) and Caribbean <i>métissage</i> (interweaving, intermixture); the Mediterranean as a deep culture (land-locked sea, stratification through deep time) and the Caribbean as an archipelago (far-flung, island-dotted sea, diffuse); <i>retour</i> as <i>detour</i>, <i>katabasis</i> (descent); memory and storytelling; personas and masks: text as performance. Readings will include: the <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> (selections), Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>, Sophocles' <i>Philoctetes</i>, Aimé Césaire's <i>Journal of a Return to the Native Land</i>, Virginia Woolf's <i>Orlando</i>, Derek Walcott's <i>Omeros</i>, C.P. Cavafy (selected poems), Édouard Glissant's <i>Poetics of Relation</i>, Nikos Kazantzakis' <i>Report to Greco</i>, Jacques Lacarrière, <i>Ce que je dois à Aimé Césaire</i> and <i>L'Été grec</i>, and Romare Bearden, <i>Black Odyssey in Visual Art</i> (Cut-out series).</p>

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CPLT 7140 / HIST 7975

S. Andes

3:00-6:00 TH

Biography of Latin America

This course will investigate identity and representation through historical biography and memoir. Our subject is Latin American figures both well-known and otherwise. We will mainly be reading works concerning the post-1810 era. We will read a book a week. Students will have several critical writing assignments. History as biography is truly ancient. As far back as humans have told their story, the deeds and misdeeds of exemplary Men and Women were told. This class is NOT about looking at the Great Men of History. Our task is to look at the genre of biography in relation to history writing, memory and identity. How and why do people write about individuals? What do biographies tell us that other approaches to history don't tell us? People are fascinating subjects. We will explore biographies of Latin American people in context.