

MA in Literature

MA in Composition and Literature

Course Descriptions | Spring 2023

*****You can take any course number a second time as long as the topic of the course is different. No course number can be taken more than a total of three times.*****

ENGL 676 Critical Approaches to Literature and Composition

Devotion, Idolatry, and Art

W 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Dr. Michael T. Williamson

What do we discover when we read and respond to literature? How do theories of composition – including theories of literary style, theories of composure (meditation, prayer, daydreaming, etc.), and theories that urge us to synthesize or pull apart the relationship between the human, natural, and divine (or supernatural) world – enable us to understand those discoveries? What strategies can we use as writers, readers, researchers, and teachers to convey those understandings to others? In three units, we will consider these questions across thousands of years of literary work. Unit One will explore Devotion in Literature. We will read Psalms (9th to 4th centuries BCE), Pindaric Victory Odes (5th century BCE – celebrating Olympic Victors), George Herbert’s *The Temple* (1633), and selections from Christina Rossetti’s poetry. We will also consider the structure of Biblical poetry and compare that structure to other modes of composition. Unit Two will examine the theme of Idolatry in two novels by Charlotte Brontë – the well-known *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Villette* (1853), a biting satirical response to the success of *Jane Eyre*. Unit Three will focus on Art in Literature. We will read Chaim Potok’s *My Name is Asher Lev* (1972), a novel about a boy from a strict Hasidic family who enters the art world of modernist Expressionism and Surrealism, and Kathleen Norris’s *Dakota* (1993), a memoir about a writer who adopts the practices of meditation from a Benedictine monastery as she recomposes herself. This unit will also explore watercolor “translations” of Norris’s poetry into painting. The lines between devotion, idolatry, and art become blurred as often as they sharpen distinctions. They compose us, but they also help us to decompose and reconstitute our worlds.

Required Texts:

UNIT ONE: DEVOTION

Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation With Commentary*

George Herbert, *The Complete English Poems* Penguin

Frank Nisetich (translator), *Pindar’s Victory Songs*

Selections from Christina Rossetti

Readings from D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* and Howard Brody, *The Healer’s Power*

UNIT TWO: IDOLATRY

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

Charlotte Brontë, *Villette*

UNIT THREE: ART

Chaim Potok, *My Name is Asher Lev*

Kathleen Norris, *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*

Richard E. Miller, "The Arts of Complicity"

ENGL 760/860 Teaching College Literature

Teaching College Literature with a Student-Centered Pedagogy

M 6:30-9:00 pm

Dr. Lingyan Yang

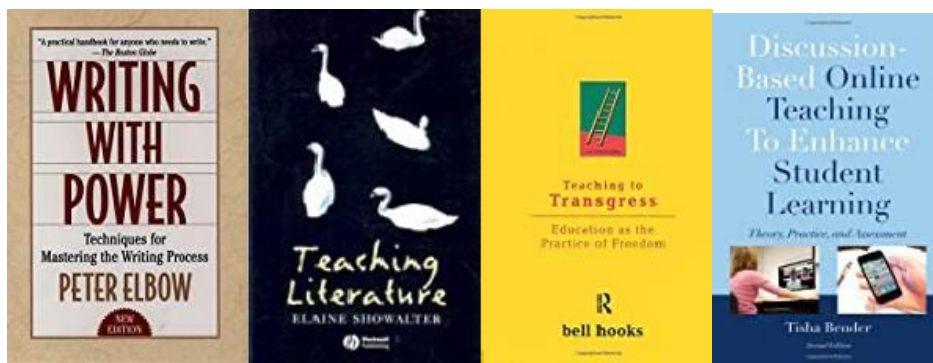
This graduate pedagogy class trains doctoral and Master's students in literature and criticism to articulate a student-centered pedagogy of your own, study theories of pedagogy, design not one, but 3 syllabi, mostly for college literature classes, to professionalize in in-person, hybrid, and remote modes of instructions in the 21st century. It motivates students to articulate your own Teaching Philosophy and get familiar with the theories of pedagogy, such as the student-centered pedagogy, which is very foundational to American college-level teaching in general, feminist, Marxist, postcolonial/global and American multiethnic, visual, and other pedagogies, which are informed by a range of critical theories, and so forth. Our class also motivates every student to practice syllabus design for the following 3 classes at IUP and at American colleges and universities: A. ENGL 121: Humanities Literature, the introductory general literature class; B. ENGL 101: College Writing, which is foundational to college level teaching, and which is the freshman composition class that many English teachers teach initially; C. a 200 or 300 level English B.A. survey or specialty literature class for English majors in one's field of specialization. This means that a doctoral student will design this English major's class in or closest to your future dissertation field. A Master's student will design a major's class in one of your strongest and favorite areas, on which you have successfully taken a graduate class in our Grad Lit Program.

We will analyze and discuss a rich and diverse range of texts on pedagogy, theory, practice; the writing, reading, and appreciating literature process; who the students are, the roles of the teacher, professionalism in the classrooms for both the teacher and student, what literature/authors/texts/periods/genres/forms to teach in syllabus design, how to teach, the historical evolution of pedagogy in American academy, the changing dynamics between the

teacher and the student, challenges and rewards of teaching college literature in challenging times, the relationship between instructor's academic freedom, one's class, and university/college/ Dept./program curricula, teaching and research, and how the critical categories of gender, class, sexuality, age, ethnicity, race, culture, and history enrich and complicate everyone's individual pedagogy and teaching.

Requirements include active participation in class discussions, a Teaching Philosophy (1-page, single-spaced); design of 3 syllabi: ENGL 121: Humanities Literature, ENGL 101: College Writing, one 200 or 300 level English B.A. literature survey or specialty class; a few short responses; oral presentation of your syllabus design of the 200 or 300 level English literature class, and an ENGL 860/760 Final Teaching Portfolio.

Required Texts:



And a handful of articles.

ENGL 764/864 British Literature after 1660
Science Fiction: Myth/Landscape/Mindscape/History
M 3:45-6:15 pm
Dr. Michael T. Williamson

This experimental course will explore connections between post-1945 British science fiction writing and other related genres, artistic movements, and theories from around the world. We will consider the intersections between medical humanities and science fiction, agricultural reform and science fiction, surrealism and science fiction, psychology and science fiction, myth and science fiction, and climate change and science fiction. Our journey will of course take us to outer space, but it will also take us to Botswana, South Africa, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, and the international mindscapes of Surrealism. As we encounter versions of the non-human, we will also explore how thinking about myth animates this popular genre.

Possible Required Texts

J.G. Ballard, *The Complete Stories of J.G.*
Ian Banks, *The Player of Games*
Akwaeke Emezi, *Freshwater*
Bessie Head, *When Rain Clouds Gather*

Gwyneth Jones, *Life*
Gwyneth Jones, *Bold as Love*
Tanith Lee, *The Birthgrave* DAW
Courtia Newland, *A River Called Time*
Adrian Tchiakovsky, *Children of Ruin Orbit*
James White, *Alien Emergencies*
John Wyndham, *The Day of the Trifids*

ENGL 766/866 Comparative Literature

Postcolonial Theory & Globalism

W 3:45-6:15 pm

Dr. Reena Dube

This course examines some key texts through the lens of postcolonial theory and critique, in doing so we pay close attention to the ways in which these texts have been read and interpreted and critically deployed for understanding what they reveal about the postcolonial condition and consequently about the global world order. Our major focus will be on the critical readings and we will examine the primary texts via these readings. The course is made up of 3 Units and in each unit we will be reading, viewing, and discussing a cluster of texts that refer to each other and are intertextually imbricated with each other and therefore create a kind of literary and film history.

Texts & Films

Joseph Conrad *Heart of Darkness*
Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart*
Charlotte Bronte *Jane Eyre*
Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea*
Bram Stoker *Dracula*
Nosferatu (1922) dir. F.W. Murnau
Jane Eyre (2011) dir. Cary Fukunaga

Course Requirements

- Three 3-4 pg. Response Papers (30% of the total grade)
- Presentations (you will be assigned different texts/ essays and will have to present and lead discussions on them) Some will be based on the critical essays that we will focus on in class. (15% of the total grade)
- A major final paper based on any text or texts from the course and your own research (15 pg. and no more than that) with a works cited pg. (50% of the total grade)
- Class attendance and active participation (5% of the total grade)

ENGL 772/872 Women's Literature

Jane Austen & the Novel of Refusal

TH 3:45-6:15 pm

Dr. Melanie Holm

In Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, her less than dreamy leading man, Henry Tilney declares unchallenged and unbeckoned that "a woman's only power is the power of refusal." The maxim has a certain weight rolling off his tongue in the fictional world of the novel, but how do we take such a line coming from the pen of woman writer—especially if that pen belongs to as prolific, poised, quietly provocative a writer as Jane Austen?

In this course we will read all six of Jane Austen's novels in the order of their publication - *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), *Northanger Abbey* (1818, posthumous), and *Persuasion* (1818, posthumous) - alongside selections from her juvenilia and unfinished works to ask questions concerning: what, if anything, she refuses; what the modes of that refusal might be; and what it means both now and then to deem her a "Woman Writer" and/or her work "Female novels." To achieve this end, various critical articles, contextualizing historical readings, excerpts from writers who influenced Austen's work and world, and modern-day adaptations will accompany our reading of the primary texts.

ENGL 956 Literary Theory for Teachers and Scholarly Writers

W 6:30-9:00 pm

Dr. Mike Sell

This course is a bookend with ENGL 955 History and Theory of Criticism, but focuses on more recent critical-theoretical writings and issues in English Studies and emphasizes both scholarly and pedagogical practice. The central question of the semester is, "Why theorize?" This has always been the subject of contentious debate among scholars and teachers, but it's a question that has taken on the contemporary burden of the ongoing crisis in the humanities and the widespread animus shown towards critical thinking, especially critical thinking about racism, nationalism, and gender/sexuality.

To get a sense of why there is so much contentiousness and to address the contemporary status of theory, we'll think in terms of three conceptual frameworks:

- (1) Theory is a way to address the four fundamental questions of literary study: Why should we read literature? What should we read? How should we read? and Who wrote the text/reads the text/teaches the text?
- (2) Theory is a canon of essays that do "theoretical" things.
- (3) Theory is a set of analytic and ethical guidelines for conceiving and implementing pedagogical practices that can help students engage meaningfully with literary texts.

What theories and writers will we explore? I'll send you a survey a month or so before the semester begins to ask what you are most interested in, though I'll likely include new theories of form, affect theory, postcritique, critical race theory, and queer theory.

Major semester projects: an annotated bibliography, journal-length essay, and statement of critical teaching philosophy.

**ENGL 983 Literary Theory Am
Speculating Black Futures**

T 3:45-6:15 pm

Dr. Veronica Watson

This course explores the rich African American literary tradition that examines alternative visions of the future--future worlds that are either worse or better than our present one. Examining texts from the African American science fiction and Afrofuturist traditions, we will investigate desires, imagination, and creative labor that goes into (re)imagining Black futures. From graphic novels, comics, film and television, music videos and literature we will trace utopian and dystopian visions of possible black futures, and consider the personal/political/cultural work those texts do. Taking up Lavender's argument, we will also consider Afrofuturism as a narrative practice that potentially offers new avenues of engagement and analysis for Black literature.

The reading list is still in development, but will tentatively include selections from the following:

Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *The Water Dancer: A Novel*

Ryan Coogler, *Black Panther* (2018)

Samuel R. Delany: *Aye, and Gomorrah: And Other Stories*

Isiah Lavender III, *Afrofuturism Rising*

Jordan Peele, *Get Out* (2017)

Rivers Solomon, *Sorrowland: A Novel* or *The Deep* or *An Unkindness of Ghosts*

Colson Whitehead, *Zone One*

Alex Zamalin, *Black Utopia*

Selected short stories, music videos, and critical articles