

# MA in Literature Program

## Course Descriptions

### Fall 2017

#### **ENGL 674: Research Trends in English (required course)**

**Dr. Michael T. Williamson**

**T 6:00-8:30pm**

This M.A.-level course offers practical training in special methods and materials of research in English. We will discuss and practice several intertwined research processes that are central to success in a graduate English program: professionalization, research techniques, reading and interpreting disparate academic genres, textual studies and bibliography, and archival work. Using Franco Moretti's essay, "Graphs, Maps, and Trees" (New Left Review 24 2003: 67-93) as a starting point, we will focus on creating alternative modes for reading literary history. In particular, we will explore how literary inheritances take on new and strange forms as they travel across time, genre, space, and form. This class will be divided into four main units of 3 weeks each. Unit One will explore Nadine Gordimer's novel *The Pickup* in light of feminist studies, classical Arabic Odes, and medieval Arabic and Hebrew poetry. Unit Two will explore research trends in war literature by women and on war literature and classical literature by focusing on Eileen Chang's collection of short stories, *Love in a Fallen City* and Chinese poetry from the T'Ang dynasty. Unit Three will consider research trends related to science fiction by two black feminist writers, N.K. Jemisin and Octavia Butler. Unit Four will shift time periods to explore the 19th century poet Felicia Hemans's creation of a gendered reconsideration of history. Digital texts will figure prominently in Unit Four. As you pursue a variety of research leads, you will work to define their field(s) of study and become fluent in the resources and approaches necessary to make significant scholarly contributions.

Required Texts: You must purchase a hard copy of each of these books.

Butler, Octavia. *Seed to Harvest* (Grand Central) 978-0446698900

Chang, Eileen (Zhang Aileen). *Love in a Fallen City* 978-1590171783

Hemans, Felicia. *Records of Woman* (U of Kentucky P) 978-0-8131-0964-0

Gordimer, Nadine. *The Pickup* (Picador) 978-1250024046

Jemisin, N.K. *The Broken Earth* (Orbit) 978-0316229296

Sells, Michael, trans. *Desert Tracings: Six Arabian Odes* (Wesleyan UP) 978-0-8195-1158-4

Young, David. *Five T'ang Poets* (Oberlin UP) 978-0-932440-55-6

#### **ENGL 518: Young Adult Literature (required course)**

**Dr. Emily Wender**

An introduction to literature for and about young adults. The course emphasizes critical study of the literature and its classification as well as resources and rationales for using young adult literature (YAL) in the middle, secondary, and college classroom. In its focus on YAL as a contemporary category literature, the course asks the following questions:

- How is “adolescence” defined in YAL? What are some common tropes, themes, or assumptions that create these definitions of adolescence?
- What textual forms, elements, and structures define YAL? In particular, how are non-conventional structures used, and to what end?

In this course we will explore the multiplicity of definitions, approaches to, and ways of reading YAL, including just a few of its many forms and genres: realistic fiction, magical realism, dystopia/science fiction, graphic novels, and historical fiction. We will also think about YAL's forceful cultural role and the ways in which it both reinforces and challenges society's perceptions of youth. We begin the course exploring our own conceptions of adolescence, building to a collective understanding of a youth lens and the potential usefulness of that approach in reading YAL. That said, the course values a range of productive approaches to the young adult experience as captured in YAL, with explicit attention to how race, gender, sexuality, class, and disability are explored in YAL.

This course also incorporates pedagogical experiences and concerns. In particular, in imagining various readers of YAL, we will think about what pedagogical structures and choices might serve potential students: What does YAL offer the adolescent reader? What does it offer the adult reader? What does it offer the teacher of adolescents and/or adults, and how might we take advantage of those opportunities? Thus, coursework puts students in the role of both scholars and teachers, asking them to write responses to readings and research particular texts as well as design curriculum for students and teach lessons on course material.

This course focuses primarily on American young adult literature and often features such authors as Jacqueline Woodson, Sherman Alexie, Laurie Halse Anderson, and David Levithan. Authors and works shift yearly. This course thus offers a survey of the literature adolescents choose to read, enjoy, and find relevant to their lives. Includes literature that offers psychological and sociological perspectives on adolescents.

### **ENGL 614 Critical Pedagogy in English Education**

This course offers students a broad range of theories that help to shape and inform pedagogy—and ultimately their classroom practice in the secondary English language arts. Topics can include an overview and introduction to critical theory, critical race theory, sociocultural theory, transactional theory, cultural theory, transformative learning theory, queer theory, social justice theory (including students with special needs), spatiality/hybridity theory, identity theory, constructivism, second language theory, feminism, and new literacy studies; and as new, cutting edge theories evolve, they may also be included. Students will explore myriad ways of turning theory into practice through course readings, activities, student teaching, discussions, and small- and large-group cooperative learning. This course is required for students in the Post-Baccalaureate Program for English Certification and also serves as an elective for students seeking coursework in critical pedagogy.

### **ENGL 753/853: Literature as a Profession**

Dr. Melanie Holm  
TR 3:00-4:45pm

What does it mean to be a professional reader of literature? How does the profession work? This course explores these questions with the aim of preparing students to pursue their graduate study as professional training. By the end of the semester, students will have a clear understanding of the professional landscape and how to orient their study towards the kind of career they desire, a general understanding of the major journals and texts involved in their fields, practice in developing scholarly documents, writing proposals and cover-letters, and giving conference papers.

Goals and Objectives:

- Design your graduate career
- Develop professional documents
- Prepare to participate in scholarly and professional activities

Course Text:

Kelsky, Karen. *The Professor is in: The Essential Guide to Turning Your PhD into a Job*. Three Rivers Press, 2015.

**ENGL 760/860: Teaching College Literature**

Dr. Christopher Kuipers  
MW 3:00-4:15pm

*Note that ENGL 860 serves to satisfy the doctoral research skills requirement.*

This course is a workshop for newer teachers of college literature courses. (Experienced teachers of literature may consider registering for the course in summer, if offered.) Employing the modes of reflective practice and critical pedagogy, we will explore both the theoretical and practical concerns of college literature teaching, with special attention paid to creating and implementing pedagogical goals that encourage “significant learning” (Fink). By the end of the course, future teachers will have designed and gathered various teaching materials, including plans for one or more literature courses. Evaluation will be based on course materials prepared and on performance in other course activities and assignments. Those who have had some experience in college literature teaching may be invited, in consultation with the instructor, to create supporting materials for a literature teaching portfolio.

**ENGL 761/861: Topics in American Literature Before 1870**

Dr. Todd Thompson  
M 6-8:30pm

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

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. Assigned readings may include such works as Washington Irving, William Irving, and James Kirk Paulding's magazine *Salmagundi*; Edgar Allan Poe's magazine writings; Fanny Fern's newspaper columns, Frederick Douglass's *The North Star* and *Frederick Douglass' Paper*; James Russell Lowell's "Hosea Biglow" poems as printed and reprinted in newspapers; story papers such as *The Flag of Our Union*; annual gift books; and more. Course work will include contextualizing research on individual periodicals, research in electronic and print archives, pedagogy presentations, and a final seminar paper constituting an original contribution to antebellum American periodical studies.

### **ENGL 763/863: Topics in British Literature Before 1660**

Dr. Christopher Orchard

TR 12:30-1:45pm

#### *Political Crises and English Theatre 1580-1660*

This course will focus on political crises and theatre from 1580-1660. We will be asking questions about the theatrical representation of moments of political tension during the reign of several kings and queens, starting with Elizabeth I and extending in the Civil War and Protectoral years of Oliver Cromwell. The subject matter will relate to issues of abdication, resistance to royal authoritarianism, Inevitable to this discourse will be issues of censorship, and relationships between authority and the playwright, and negotiated stances between playwright and audience, as well as an examination of the status of closeted drama after the theatres were closed in the 1640s. Students will be expected to write weekly responses alongside a conference length paper to conclude the course.

Texts will include among others

Shakespeare, *Richard II*

Ben Jonson, *Sejanus*

Thomas Middleton, *Game of Chess*

Philip Massinger, *The Roman Actor*

Jaspar Mayne, *The Amorous Warre*

Christopher Wase, trans. Sophocles, *Electra*

John Tatham, *The Distracted State*

Cosmo Manuche, *The Just General*

William Killigrew, *Pallantius and Eudora*

### **ENGL 765/865: Topics in Literature as Genre**

Dr. Mike Sell

R 6-8:30pm

*Video Games and Literature*

There is little question that video games are an ascendant, potentially hegemonic medium. Whether as a form of entertainment, a procedural component of day-to-day life (e.g. gamification), a method and adjunct to education, or ideological figure, video games demand our attention as scholars, teachers, and citizens. As the title suggests, this is a course that explores the relationship between digital games and literature. In other words, it is a course that explores how digital games can be considered a form of literature and how digital games have been represented in literature.

Over the course of the semester, we will learn about the specific figurative and narrative capacities of video games, whether mainstream, independent, or queer. We will examine literary representations of video games to better understand their cultural function and significance. We will explore the adaptation and remediation of literature into video games and video games into literature, including vernacular literatures such as shipping, slash fiction, machinima, and cosplay. And we will develop practical strategies for incorporating video games into the literature and writing classrooms.

Do you need to be an experienced video game player to succeed in this class? Absolutely not. Almost all of the games we will play do not require tremendous skill and whatever deficits you might have will be quickly overcome as you gain experience. That said, many of the games do take time to complete, so you'll want to get started before the semester begins.

I'll be in touch in advance of the semester to let you know the final list of games and texts, and I welcome your suggestions. The readings, games, and films will be chosen from the following:

Games: Overwatch, Gone Home, Her Story, 80 Days, Alabaster, Depression Quest, Mainichi, Dys4ia, Spec Ops: The Line, Kentucky Route Zero, and With Those We Love Alive. (All games are available online or through the Steam digital distribution platform. Go to [steampowered.com](http://steampowered.com) to create an account.)

Print texts: William Gibson, *The Peripheral*; Philip Dick, *The Game-Players of Titan*; Hazel Newlevant (ed.), *Chainmail Bikini: An Anthology of Women Gamers*; Bryan Lee O'Malley, *Scott Pilgrim*, 1-6; Cory Doctorow and Jen Wang, *In Real Life*

Screen texts: *The Guild* (web series); *Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World* (dir. Edgar Wright); *WarGames* (dir. John Badham); *Edge of Tomorrow* (dir. Doug Liman).

Miscellaneous: Fan fiction, art, machinima, and essays on Overwatch.

### **ENGL766/866: Topics in Comparative Literature**

Dr. Susan Comfort

W 6-8:30pm

#### *Human Rights and Postcolonial Literature*

This course will explore concepts and issues of human rights, as represented in postcolonial literature and culture. As cultural critics and literary scholars have suggested, the discourse of human rights, and many key human rights instruments, would not have been imagined or

articulated without the mediation of literature and culture. Arguably, postcolonial literature has played an especially crucial role in advancing critical, transformative visions of human rights through experimental uses of traditional genres and also through the invention of new ones, such as the testimonio and magical realist novel, to represent the voices and struggles of the marginalized and oppressed under colonialism—and, more recently, under neoliberalism.

This course will explore representative texts of postcolonial human rights literature, at the same time situating our inquiries within the history of colonial and neocolonial capitalism and movements for decolonization and social justice. Some of the issues we will explore include: the colonial/neocolonial uses of humanitarianism; the dilemmas of power and representation; politically fraught constructions of the human, and the re-vision of human rights to include non-human persons and living systems. We will ask, for example, what are some of the ways postcolonial literature spurs debate on human rights emerging from global issues such as militarization and state violence; the widening gap between wealth and poverty; the intensifying exploitation of labor and the environment; indigenous rights; gender, lgbt, and women's rights; and refugee crises? What are some of the forms of critique and imaginative engagement that postcolonial literature might offer us? What are some alternative visions of the nation, democratic citizenship, global justice, the distribution of wealth, and sustainable communities that we might gather from postcolonial literature and culture? As we explore these and related questions, it is my hope that we gain a sense of cooperation and community as we work together to define and engage a critical praxis for creating a world of social justice and sustainability.

**Course Requirements** include: 1) a short presentation and a corresponding analysis paper (6-8 pages) on a human rights concept or issue; 2) weekly response papers; 3) a course project presentation and paper (12-15 pages)

**Literature selections will likely include the following:**

Manlio Argueta, *One Day of Life* (El Salvador, 1980)

J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (South Africa, 1980)

Edwidge Danticat, *The Farming of Bones* (Haiti, 1998)

Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West* (Pakistan, 2017)

Linda Hogan, *People of the Whale* (U.S., 2008)

Abdelrahman Munif, *Endings* (Iraq/Saudi Arabia, 1977)

Chinelo Okparanta, *Under the Udala Trees* (Nigeria, 2015)

Nawal El Saadawi, *Woman at Point Zero* (Egypt, 1975)

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, & Micere Githae Mugo, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (Kenya, 1976)

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (India, 1997)

To situate the literature, the course will also include key historical instruments of human rights, such as the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and Principles of Environmental Justice as well as historical and theoretical readings, such as Andrew Clapham, *Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

**ENGL 773/873: Minority Literature**

Dr. Gail Berlin

TH 6-8:30pm

*The Holocaust in Literature*

“To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.” -Theodore Adorno

“Literature must resist this verdict [that poetry is barbaric] . . . for it is now virtually in art alone that suffering can still find its own voice, consolation, without immediately being betrayed by it.”

-Theodore Adorno

This course will introduce students to the Holocaust through the lens of the written word and of the literary imagination. We will examine texts written by men and women, Jews and non-Jews, victims and perpetrators. We will encounter chronicles, diaries, memoirs, poetry, short fiction, film, oral interview, documents, documentaries, photographs and artwork and the mixed genres so characteristic of this period. We will also distinguish among literatures written during the war, shortly afterwards, and recently. Among the key questions we will tackle are: How and why did the Holocaust happen? What do survivors want us to know about the Holocaust and what do they hope we will learn from their narratives? How is the Holocaust represented and what does representation in various genres imply? How was language, the very medium of literature, affected by the Holocaust? Is language adequate to record the unspeakable? What sorts of analyses of Holocaust literature are appropriate, respectful, and responsible? Are the usual critical tools sufficient? How should one respond to literature of trauma? What will happen to Holocaust literature once survivors are no longer writing memoirs? Who is “permitted” to write Holocaust literature? What are the causes of Holocaust denial? The course will endeavor to create a supportive atmosphere for a series of difficult discussions.

Course requirements are still being considered, but may include an oral presentation, a journal, and one paper.

Our key class anthology will be Lawrence Langer’s *Art from the Ashes: A Holocaust Anthology*. Among additional readings currently being considered are: Charlotte Delbo’s *Auschwitz and After*, Primo Levi’s *Survival in Auschwitz*, Sara Nomberg-Przytyk’s *Auschwitz: True Tales from a Grottesque Land*, Dawid Sierakowiak’s *Diary*, Helga Schneider’s *Let Me Go*, and William Heyen’s *Shoah Train*, and Alicia Appleman Jurman’s *Alicia: My Story*.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the instructor (ivy@iup.edu).

### **Independent Seminars (ENGL 797):**

**Please contact the professor whose area of expertise matches your plan for an Independent Study**

*Dr. Melanie Holm:* 18<sup>th</sup> century British and European literature; Gothic literature; Aesthetics, Epistemology, Skepticism

*Dr. Christopher Kuipers:* world and comparative literature; Bible and classical literature; early British and early American literature; anthologies; poetry; the literary canon; comics/the graphic

novel; fantasy and science fiction; ecocriticism and pastoral; popular culture studies; and, please query about other possible areas.

*Dr. Mike Sell:* Modern and postmodern literature and film, avant-garde literature and culture, African American literature and culture, video games, critical theory