

English Graduate Electives - Spring 2025

ENGL4915 Advanced Fiction Writing Workshop - Graver | Tu 11:30-1:55 (G/UG)

Admission by permission of the instructor. The Advanced Fiction Workshop provides encouragement, practice, and criticism for students who have demonstrated accomplishment in writing fiction. The workshop format demands self-motivation and universal participation. Since students' stories are texts for class discussion, a generous willingness to respond to others' writing and to expose one's own work to such reactions is an essential prerequisite. Individual conferences with the instructor supplement workshop discussions. Students are expected to produce a steady stream of new and revised fiction throughout the semester. Narrative preferences from the traditional to the experimental are welcome.

Students should submit up to 8 double-spaced pages of writing, preferably fiction (your submission may be part of a larger piece; if so, indicate this on the manuscript), along with an email explaining your interest in the course and a list of previous creative writing or journalism workshops, with instructors, school (if not BC), and grades, to Professor Elizabeth Graver (graver@bc.edu) by 11/8 at 5pm. Ideally, the writing sample will be fiction, but if your strongest writing is in nonfiction, poetry or drama, that is also acceptable, although prose is encouraged. Include your class year/program/major. Late applications may be accepted on a rolling basis if space permits.

ENGL4917 Advanced Poetry Workshop - Matson | Th 2-4:25 (G/UG)

Admission to this course is by permission of the instructor. This is a workshop for those who already have some experience writing poetry, and who wish to work intensively on matters of craft and revision. Students will produce roughly two poems a week, responding to each other's drafts in workshop discussion. Though the bulk of class discussion will be about student writing, some class time will be devoted to a discussion of useful models and what they can teach us about strategy and craft. Short in-class exercises will be given weekly as prompts to begin the writing process. In ongoing consultation with the instructor about which poets might interest them most, students will devise their own reading list of contemporary poets and keep a response journal. In at least two half-hour conferences over the semester, each student will be given individual feedback on revisions. The final project will be a chapbook of at least 12 revised poems produced over the semester, culled from around 25 drafts produced in and out of class. *Interested students should send 3-5 poems to Professor Suzanne Matson (suzanne.matson@bc.edu) by 11/8.*

ENGL5575 Topics in Creative Non-Fiction: Writing Place - Matson | Tu 9-11:25 (G/UG)

Through the reading and writing of creative nonfiction essays, we will use place as a lens through which to explore the human relationship to natural and built environments, as well as to ideas of home, travel, exile, place, and displacement in our complex contemporary world. Students will write three essays (Home/Insider Essay; Place/Displacement Essay; Reported Place Profile) over the course of the semester and extensively revise and polish two of them. Readings may include work by Wendell Berry, Joan Didion, Ocean Vuong, Anne Dillard, Sarah Broom, Terry Tempest Williams, Natasha Tretheway, Rick Bass, Elizabeth Kolbert, John Seabrook, Carlo Rotella, Robin Wall Kimmerer, and Jamaica Kincaid.

ENGL6025 Seminar: Race, Place, and Black Atlanta - Curseen | Th 4:30-6:55 (G/UG)

From Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois to OutKast and Donald Glover's hit series, Atlanta is an enduring geographic/political site of black cultural imagining. Nevertheless the city often receives second or third billing in courses examining black literary and cultural production. While acknowledging the networks between Atlanta and more frequently highlighted places like New York and Paris, this course posits Atlanta as a rich geographic, cultural, and political site from which we can trace, if not also reimagine, a history of reading the complex relationship between race and blackness in the U.S. Paying particular attention to issues of gender, body, and mobility, the course will foreground a diversity of texts across mediums, genre, and time. This class is designed as a hybrid graduate/undergraduate course. To that end it will include different tracks for the final project. Students taking the course at the graduate level will be responsible for composing at least one position paper based on a critical secondary text and facilitating a class discussion around that paper. *Fulfills BOTH the Seminar and the Race, Blackness, and Language requirements for English majors.*

ENGL6041 Seminar: Game of Thrones: Medieval English Political Poetry - Weiskott | Tu 2-4:25 (G/UG)

Before House Stark and House Lannister came the House of York and the House of Lancaster. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in England witnessed a series of social and political upheavals, from the Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt to the Wars of the Roses. English poetry responds to and intervenes in these events. Political writing influenced the decisions of kings, shaped public perception of national politics, and landed people in prison (or worse). This course makes a survey of political poetry from England, 1300-1500, with focus on William Langland's *Piers Plowman* and the poetry of John Gower. We read canonical authors such as Chaucer, Gower, and Langland alongside little-known texts from manuscript archives. Topics include multilingualism, the relationship between literature and politics, and the histories of poetic forms. No prior knowledge of Middle English required. Gower's French and Latin poetry is read in translation. *Note: Students may not receive credit for both this course and the graduate version, ENGL 7003 Game of Thrones.*

ENGL6307 Seminar: Literature and Contagion - Boesky | M 2-4:25 (G/UG)

This seminar explores the representation of contagion through a cluster of novels and essays from the 17th century to the present. Our focus is not on individual illness/suffering, but instead on wider issues evoked by illness on a large (even massive) scale prior to and after Covid-19. How do issues of class, ethnicity, gender, political or national affiliation impact the way we understand these issues? How do borders and affiliations get drawn through imagining (and curtailing) epidemics? Literary texts depict contagion in ways that can confirm as well as challenge historical and sociological studies. Our focus is on the literary; we will explore the heroes and anti-heroes of plague narratives; the relationship these texts draw between emerging states and individuals around questions of disease; the rise (and limits) to biopower; and the survival of humanity after pandemic in recent science fiction.

ENGL6308 Seminar: Yeats: Work, Thoughts, Contexts - Howes | Tu 4:30-6:55 (G/UG)

W. B. Yeats, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923, was arguably the most important Irish poet ever to write in English. This course will include Yeats as a dramatist, a prose writer, and a thinker, but

the major emphasis will be on his poetry. We will consider his work in its various social, political, and historical contexts, which include the cultural nationalism of the Irish Literary Revival, the Easter Rising of 1916, the Anglo-Irish War, the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, and the political turmoil as the Europe of the 1930s moved towards war. We will also engage with a range of contemporary scholarship on Yeats.

ENGL7020 Experimental Writing for Scholars - Rotella | Tu 7-9:30

Research and field knowledge doesn't always have to lead to writing the usual scholarly papers and articles. In this workshop-style graduate seminar, we try out alternative forms presented by journalism, the essay, and other traditions: magazine feature, op-ed, interview, explainer piece, reported essay, memoir, obituary, digital forms, and more. Our objective is to expand our writerly repertoires and audiences. We write and workshop every week, and analyze examples of the genres we study. We also have class visits from colleagues who offer their own perspective on the rich variety of forms available to the experimentally ambitious scholarly writer.

ENGL7027 Inhabiting Narrative - Tanner | Tu 2-4:25

This class will explore the way that different narrative forms, including the novel, the short story, film, photography and graphic memoir, capture the rhythms of consciousness, emotion, habit, spatial orientation and embodiment. Focusing on the tension between everyday experience and heightened moments of crisis or insight, we will consider how narrative captures the elusive and complex dynamics of embodied subjectivity through voice, image and form. We will focus on narratives of the last century, including literature by Faulkner, Hemingway, Morrison, Robinson, and DeLillo, films including *Lost in Translation*, *Rachel Getting Married* and *What Maisie Knew*, and photography collections by Shelburne Thurber, Nicholas Nixon and Andrew Moore. We will contextualize these works with snippets of narrative theory, phenomenology, and everyday life theory.

ENGL7035 Ireland and the Blue Humanities - Taylor | Th 2-4:25

In the wake of the environmental turn in the humanities, the blue or oceanic humanities is drawing increased attention from critics. This course introduces theories of the blue humanities by writers such as Steve Mentz, Melody Jue, and Astrida Neimanis alongside the study of Ireland's island literary culture. Together, we will delve into this very new field of the blue humanities and learn its lessons about human humility, oceanic intelligence, and environmental crisis. At the same time, we will read Irish writing about the sea and consider its relationship to colonialism and imperial ideology. Primary texts include *At The Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean*, *Wild Blue Media: Thinking Through Seawater*, and *The Queerness of Water*, as well as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Emily Lawless's *Grania*, J.M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, and David Thomson's *People of the Sea*.

ENGL7036 Historical Fiction - McAleavey | M 2-4:25

What is at stake in reimagining history through fiction? In this course, we consider the development of historical fiction from the eighteenth century to the present. We will investigate important settings for historical novels, likely including: the Middle Ages as seen through Arthurian legend, the Jacobite uprisings in the Scottish Highlands, the French Revolution, and American slavery. Topics will include: the claims of realism and the powers of fantasy, the relationship of space to time, the rise of nationalism,

and the power of fiction itself to shape history. Theories of genre, historicism, and historiography will guide our conversation.

ENGL7037 Žižek - Restuccia | W 4:30-6:55

This graduate course will focus on major works of Slavoj Žižek, from *Looking Awry* (in which he offers a very useful way of distinguishing between modernism and postmodernism, through their relation to the Real) to his most recent book *Christian Atheism: How to Be a Real Materialist* (in which he concentrates on the meaning of Christ on the cross, sacrifice, Buddhism, quantum mechanics, Antigone, Ukraine, true dialectical materialism, etc.). We will also take up *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, *Sex and the Failed Absolute*, along with at least excerpts from many other works. Given that Žižek considers himself a Marxist Hegelian as well as a Lacanian, we will also study works that will help us understand his philosophical/psychoanalytic bases. There is no need for students to have prior knowledge of such material. The course will be a solid introduction to Lacanian theory read awry through the lens of Žižek, who has evolved into a psychoanalytic theorist and philosopher in his own right; he has brought psychoanalysis into the socio-political realm as well as famously shown how to read film and popular culture psychoanalytically.

ENGL8825 Composition Theory and the Teaching of Writing - Mathieu | M 4:30-6:55

This course is designed to prepare graduate students to teach first-year college writing courses; to introduce students to central issues, problems and theories in composition studies; and to examine ways in which contemporary critical theories (including feminism, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, and critical pedagogy) have influenced the teaching and study of composition. Requirements will include a theoretically-informed analysis of a student essay; a piece of creative nonfiction and an accompanying description of the process used to produce it; an annotated syllabus for a first-year college course; and a week of student teaching in a First Year Writing classroom. *This course is for first year MAs who will teach their second year. By application only.*

ENGL9913 PhD Seminar: Tripping the Dark Fantastic: African Diaspora in/and Genre Fictions - Frederick | Th 10-12:50

Refracted through the lens of popular fiction written by black writers, we will journey through the field of African Diaspora Studies (ADS) to explore a variety of critical and thematic preoccupations. Critically engaging Afrofuturism/Africanfuturism, Afro-Pessimism, and Black Aliveness, "Tripping the Dark Fantastic" asks: what do contemporary discussions of identities, race, gender, class, place, and diaspora look like when depicted in popular literature written by black writers? What critical work can readers do with these extra-literary themes imagined in popular fiction's hyperboles? We address these questions by examining contemporary category fictions, specifically horror, science fiction, fantasy, thriller, detective/mystery, as well as urban romance to determine how each form represents concerns of 20th/21st century black peoples in Africa, the Caribbean, US, and Canada. Our focus on these literary explorations of ADS concerns is complemented by historical and sociological studies of these countries. This class analyzes social, historical, critical, and ADS themes depicted in works by Steven Barnes (US, thriller), Patrick Chamoiseau (Martinique, police procedural), Colin Channer (Jamaica, urban romance), Tananarive Due (US, horror/mystery), Nalo Hopkinson (Canada, sci-fi/fantasy), NK Jemisin (US, epic fantasy), Barbara Neely (US, mystery), and Nnedi Okorafor (Nigerian-American, science fiction).