WINTER 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

503.001 **Middle English** **T. Toon**
Day & Time: T/TH 8:30-10am
Location: Remote
3 Credits
Meets with UG English 410.001

Both Old English 501 and Middle English 503 must be taken for this course to count as one basic language.

This term we will examine works in early Middle English, as well as the better known and more frequently studied major authors – Chaucer, Gower, Piers, the Pearl poet. Readings will include selections from prose and poetic histories, mystical writers, contemporary social and political documents (laws, recipes, medical texts, chronicles, charters). We will examine a wide range of early Middle English texts as we develop an appreciation for the roles written English played in medieval England and the cultural and political consequences of the ability to read and write.

The course requirements include regular in-class participation, frequent quizzes, two hour exams, and a short paper.

508.001 **Discourse & Rhetoric:** **D. Gold**
Writing Citizens, Teaching Citizens
Day & Time: T TH 4pm-5:30pm
Location: Remote
3 Credits

Literacy education in the US has long been associated with *civic* education, and writing instruction in particular has long been seen as a gateway to citizenship. If we teach our students how to write well, we tell ourselves, they will be better prepared to take their place as citizens, deliberating in a democratic public sphere. But is this just wishful thinking? Do we even know what we mean by democratic deliberation? Do the discourse norms we model in our classrooms have any traction beyond them in an increasingly agonistic, fragmented, and privatized public sphere? In seeking to promote student agency, do we inadvertently reify racialized constructions of language or neoliberal notions of self and schooling that work against this end?

To answer these questions, we'll first consider historical linkages between schooling and citizenship at critical moments from the Progressive era to the Civil Rights Era to the contemporary digital realm. We'll then examine how theorists of writing pedagogy have imagined these links, considering rhetorical ethics, models of deliberation, instructor ideologies, and public engagement. We'll then turn to contemporary activist pedagogies that seek promote inclusive and expansive notions of citizenship, including feminist, antiracist, and critical literacy approaches.

Though this class centers scholarship in writing studies, rhetoric, and communication, it is open to anyone seeking to be a more critically informed teacher of writing and citizenship, and students will be

encouraged to design a final research or teaching project in line with their disciplinary interests. Possible readings may include:

Historical Pedagogies

- Amy J. Wan, *Producing Good Citizens: Literacy Training in Anxious Times* [Muse]
- Candace Epps-Robertson, *Resisting Brown: Race, Literacy, and Citizenship in the Heart of Virginia* [Muse]
- Carmen Kynard, *Vernacular Insurrections: Race, Black Protest, and the New Century in Composition-Literacies Studies* [UM]
- Deborah Brandt, *The Rise of Writing: Redefining Mass Literacy* [UM]
- Danielle S. Allen and Jennifer S. Light, eds., *From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in a Digital Age*

Rhetorical Pedagogies

- John Duffy, *Provocations of Virtue: Rhetoric, Ethics, and the Teaching of Writing* [Muse]
- Patricia Roberts-Miller, *Deliberate Conflict: Argument, Political Theory, and Composition Classes*, [PQEB]
- Elenore Long, *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics* [WAC]
- Daniel P. Richards and Louise Wetherbee Phelps, eds., Special Issue: On Ideological Transparency, *Pedagogy* [MUSE]

Resistance Pedagogies

- Frankie Condon and Vershawn Ashanti Young, eds., *Performing Antiracist Pedagogy in Rhetoric, Writing, and Communication* [WAC]
- Shari Stenberg, *Repurposing Composition: Feminist Interventions for a Neoliberal Age* [Muse]
- Tony Scott and Nancy Welch, eds., *Composition in the Age of Austerity* [Muse]
- Jo-Anne Kerr and Ann N. Amicucci, eds., *Stories from First-Year Composition: Pedagogies that Foster Student Agency and Writing Identity* [WAC]
- *RSQ*, special issue on demagoguery [T&F]

528.001 **Disability Studies: Speculative Genders** **P. Kuppers**

Day & Time: TH 1pm-4pm
Location: Remote
3 Credits

This class will introduce students to disability arts and culture. Our focus this semester will be on speculative gendered formations: forms of thinking forward in difference, in sci-fi and horror texts, designs, films and technologies, and in theoretical texts of imaginative futures. What will humans/animals/others be, how are gender and sexuality (re)configured, how do we reimagine power and life, education and the social contract, precarity and utopia, embodiment and enmindment? We will engage in texts like Theri Pickens' *Black Madness :: Mad Blackness* (Duke 2019), chapters from Donna Haraway's interdisciplinary science studies *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*and Alison Kafer's *Feminist Queer Crip*; and read material from Samuel Delaney's *Dahlgren* (1974), from N. K. Jemisin's character Oree in *The Broken Kingdoms*, chapters from Alice Wong's *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century* (2020), and more.
This version of the course will partly work through the arts, not just about them – some practical exercises will be part of the class work.

This class meets for two hours in class, with additional time in self-study and online engagement with exercises from *Studying Disability Arts and Culture*. This arrangement of the material hopes to make the class more widely accessible, and allows for a wider diversity of expression and disciplinary foci.

MEETS WITH: ARCH 609/EDUC 580/ENGLISH 528/KINESLGY 505/PMR 580/RACKHAM 580/SOC 580/SW 572

578.001 ***Creative Writing*: The Art of the Uncanny** **T. Faizullah**
Day & Time: M 4PM-7PM, W 12PM-3PM
Location: Remote
3 Credits

The summary of this course: to study the uncanny as both an aesthetic and a writer's tool. In this context, "the uncanny" will be considered from two key perspectives:

a) as a psychological phenomenon/effect as studied by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan
b) as an element/genre of its own that connects and overlaps with horror, fantasy, and surrealism

These perspectives will be applied to weekly reading, writing, and research assignments. We'll begin with Freud's The Uncanny and then move on to selections by authors such as Toni Morrison, Vievee Francis, Jesmyn Ward, Victor LaValle, Carmen Maria Machado, Tommye Blount, Mary Shelley, Diane Seuss, Neil Gaiman (Sandman) Ted Hughes (Crow), E.T.A Hoffmann, Haruki Murakami, Jorge Luis Borges, and Natalie Diaz, to name a few, punctuated by assigned episodes of The Twilight Zone and Black Mirror. The aim of this course: to enhance your ability to write and analyze literature that values what is fearful, mysterious, and unsettling.

627.001 ***Critical Theories*: Introduction to (Digital) Media Studies** **H. Hu**
Day & Time: T/Th 10-11:30
Location: Remote
3 Credits

This course will offer an overview of media studies from the perspective of literary and cultural studies. Welcoming both students working with digital media and students working outside of the contemporary, this course makes aesthetics, visual culture, and literary forms central to the analysis of media. It asks: What might a 19th century novel say about today's digital servers? Reciprocally, what can today's analysis of media and mediation on a screen say about a poem or a film?

This course will draw out connections between the history of media theory and newer research in the field: on race, gender, and sexuality; on robots and digital labor; in sound studies; in the environmental humanities; on the "infrastructural turn" towards logistics and materiality; and on new methodological innovations, such as the study of cultural logics behind the screen. In a moment of Zoom & pandemic teaching, it also hopes to foreground and experiment with the digital platforms by which communities and collectivity are made and unmade.

In addition to considering a myriad of books and artworks, the theorists we'll encounter may include Friedrich Kittler; John Durham Peters; Markus Krajewski; Arvind Rajagopal; Lisa Parks; Jenny Rhee; Eunjung Kim; Simone Browne; Edouard Glissant; Kara Keeling; Sianne Ngai; Rita Raley; Fred Moten and Stefano Harney; and Stephanie Boluk & Patrick LeMieux.

630.001 ***Special Topics*: Modern Languages and Literatures**: **G. Desai**
Disciplines, Institutions, Professions: Re-thinking English Studies through the Archives
Day & Time: F 9-12
Location: Remote
3 Credits

In this course we will examine some of the ways in which the academic study of English in the United States has developed from the late nineteenth century to the present. We will ask what it means to think of English as a discipline and what it means to think of it as a profession and whether the two are the same. We will ask how an institutional history of English studies might reflect upon or refract from a disciplinary history that is more invested in internal debates within the field.

In as much as this course is about the history of English studies, it is equally a course about archival methods and best practices in working with archives. Much of our time will be spent learning to work with archives and students will be expected to pick a topic of interest to them and work with relevant archives to pursue it. Given our current conditions, most of the archival material that we will work with this semester will be that which is available online but this course should better prepare you to work with physical archives in the future. You will have a variety of options for presenting the outcomes of your research – it could take the form of a curated website, a public facing exhibit, a paper, an ongoing blog and other possibilities that we can discuss together.

632.001 ***Topics in Drama*: E. Brater**
Plays, Playwrights and Playwriting: Staging America Now, 2021
Day & Time: T 4-7
Location: Remote
3 Credits

This graduate seminar will examine the several ways in which contemporary American dramatists participate in the lively debate any healthy democracy needs to have about itself. The focus of our discussion is based on recent work by playwrights Lynn Nottage (*Sweat*), Samuel J. Hunter (*Pocatello*), Annie Baker (*The Flick*), Dominique Morisseau (*The Detroit Plays,* especially *Skeleton Crew*), Ayad Akhtar (*Disgraced*), Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins (*An Octoroon),* Abe Koogler (*Fulfillment Center*), Suzan-Lori Parks (*The America Play, Father Comes Home from the Wars*), Stephen Adly Guirgis (*Jesus Hopped the A Train, The Motherfucker with the Hat*, "Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven"), Antoinette Nwandu (*Pass Over),* Lucy Thurber (*Transfers*)*,* and Jennifer Kidwell, Lightning Rod Special, Scott Sheppard (*Underground Railroad Game*), among others (recent additions: Jackie Sibblies Drury (*Fairview*); Jeremy O. Harris. "Slave Play"); Michael R. Jackson, "A Strange Loop," and Marcus Gardley (*The House That Will Not Stand*). Commenting on and responding to volatile political, social, and economic issues, including those informing matters of race, class, privilege, access, sexual orientation, precarity, ageism and gender, such enterprising theatrical practitioners test the limits and possibilities of the stage as cultural artifact, icon and instrument, all the while destabilizng inherited forms of performance, provenance and representation. To what extent do their plays respect, challenge or extend the boundaries of theatrical realism to accommodate itself to

changing values and definitions of refpresentation on the American stage—and beyond? Can we characterize their work, collectively, as a "replay" of the neo-realism found in other genre and in other artistic forms? In considering these questions, we will also study the ways in which contemporary American playwrights are in continuing dialogue with their past: landmark figures (Clifford Odets, Arthur Miller, Tony Kushner, James Baldwin, August Wilson, et al.) who haunt their imaginations as they seek to locate and certify their own voices, liberating them from formal and narrative contingencies threatening to undermine and restrict the range of their own ambition.

635.001 ***Topics in Poetry*:** **G. White**
Twentieth and Twenty-First Century American Poetry
Day & Time: T/Th 11:30-1
Location: Remote
3 Credits

In this course, we explore various ways in which poets and poems in the C20 and C21 U.S. (capaciously and critically conceived) have negotiated and enacted their relationship to **politics**. We start with historical / poetics / theoretical background to the question and then zero in on several literary and critical sites where the question of poetry & politics has flared, in poems, criticism, and theory of genre. We will consider and/or focus on a few major turning points across the last hundred years in Anglo-American ideas about what poetry's relationship to politics "ought" to be, and how poems and the idea of genre have changed, accordingly, under those turning points' pressures, and then dwell a bit with contemporary collections. Assignments will cover a range of academic genres: short presentations, including a short response to a fellow participant's presentation, book report (review), with some choice in final assignment: annotated bibliography with accompanying short paper, article draft style longer paper, some creative poeticritical possibilities, too. Students will need to buy / rent / borrow a few collections. Other readings will be available on Canvas or through library links and other online sources.

Auden's writings about theater (maybe ask Ben Glaser if you can circulate it in draft form?) see his writing about it. \\

Something about historical prosody – maybe Brent Hayes Edwards and Virginia Jackson and others on black poetics and form? to show how a formalist reading might be political in a different way than the reifying of forms that Lang Po insists upon.

641.001 ***Topic in Medieval Period*:** **W. Cohen**
The Climate of Disease in Pre-industrial literature: Dante to Defoe
Day & Time: Th 4-7
Location:
3 Credits

This course is concerned with the relationship between literature and ecological crisis from the 7th to the 18th century, with primary emphasis on the period from 1300 to 1700 and on English literature. Its central markers are three major catastrophes that interact with each other and produce demographic stagnation or even decline—the bubonic plague (especially the Black Death), the Native American genocide (the Great Dying), and the Little Ice Age.

The topic might be approached in at least two ways, modes of inquiry that will function as distinct, sometimes antithetical poles of reading and discussion. One addresses the representation of geological upheaval (earthquakes and volcanoes), global cooling, and epidemics and pandemics. As such, it is in principle no different from consideration of any other issue with broad social resonance (gender and sexuality, religion, race, class, imperialism, literacy, etc.). The other treats environmental matters less as a set of themes to be found in literature than as a (partial) explanation of crucial features of literature and literary history, whether or not writers show any awareness of the shaping role of these matters. Much about the first line of inquiry is familiar. For instance, background ecological effects are widely recognized: literature tends to arise at sea level, near bodies of water, and in temperate climate zones; human activity often leads to environmental degradation. Similarly, when environmental things go wrong, writers often address the problem. What is less familiar, however, is the second pole—the ecological causes of literary change. This is arguably the central issue, though obviously an elusive one, since it requires the search for connections between environmental and literary change even in the absence of textual evidence. And it also requires recognition and assessment of the interplay between ecological and more narrowly social forces—a common cause and inevitable effect of environmental disaster.

Primary readings will be selected from among the following: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio; Langland, the *Pearl* poet, and Chaucer; the Dance of Death, Villon, Manrique, and Henryson; Las Casas, Oviedo, Sahagún, and Dutch landscape painting; Dunbar, Nashe, and Davies; Shakespeare and Jonson; Pepys, Evelyn, and Defoe. If there is sufficient interest, we can move forward to late 18th- and early 19th-century writers (Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant; Kleist, Byron, M. Shelley, Leopardi); or even to modern historical novels concerned with the earlier era (Manzoni, Eliot, Brooks, O'Farrell). Secondary readings from a) historical classics such as Huizinga, McNeill, and Crosby, b) contemporary historical and scientific publications, and c) contemporary eco-criticism and theory.

Requirements: an oral report, followed by a 15-page paper that can be developed from the report.

653.001 **Topic in 20c American Literature:** **X. Santamarina**
"Post-bellum, Pre-Harlem": Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth African American Literature
Day & Time: T TH 4pm-5:30pm
Location: Remote
3 Credits

In this course we will study African American literature written from the end of the 19th century—known as the "nadir" (lowest point) in African American history—through the beginning of the 20th century, the moment that gave birth to the "New Negro" of the Harlem Renaissance. These decades represent a period of intense cultural production that reflected both pessimism about post-Civil War racial violence in the US and optimism over new opportunities for black artists. How did African American writers conceive of the role of letters and literature in the national debates over freedpeople's rights to citizenship? How did they try to represent differences in the black community with dialect and invocations of the "folk," and how did they mobilize these cultural forms in their search for new racial, political ideals? And finally, we will discuss the methods and issues pertaining to the periodization of African American literature and history in the Academy. Readings include novels, poetry and short stories by noted and less familiar authors, including Charles Chesnutt, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Pauline Hopkins and Sutton Griggs, in addition to secondary critical material.

811.001 ***Literary Research*:** **H. Bakara**

Animating Archives: Seminar on Archival Research, Methods and Use
Day & TIme: M 4-7
Location: Remote
3 Credits

The subject of this seminar is archival method in literary studies. It asks a basic question: how do literary scholars effectively use and build arguments from archival sources, such as letters, institutional materials, state documents, original manuscripts, newspapers, objects, maps, ephemera, syllabi, records of publishing, and other artifacts. Over the course of the semester, students will both study and practice the art of doing interesting things with archival materials. Readings will be drawn from respected work in our discipline that has animated archives in inventive and interesting ways. We will ask what kinds of archival method seem to be most valued across the many sub-disciplines of English studies. We will also consider how recent shifts in our discipline's center of gravity—the turn to post-critical and "surface reading," affect, new formalism, non-human animals, ecologies, and deep time, for instance—are changing how archives are used or even what counts as an archive. Can archival materials and methods offer more than "context"? And are there specific ways that literary scholars use archival material that distinguishes them from scholars in other disciplines such as history?

The course is designed for graduate students studying any period, form, or sub-discipline. Therefore, readings will be drawn from all periods, from the classical and medieval to the contemporary.

During the semester, students will also be tasked with digging for their own archival materials. While this will be more difficult than usual during the pandemic, it is far from impossible, especially with the array of databases and digitized collections available online. We will have a special session with the research librarians at the beginning of the semester to get a general sense of which archives and databases are available to us, and what kinds of materials they might yield. Students will identify archives and special collections that they might want to visit in the future and develop a road map for future research. They will also locate funding sources for future archival research and write research statements to be used for funding applications.
There will be a lot of archival "show and tell" in class, and in the course of the writing assignments.

821.001 **Seminar: Critical Theory** **D. Hack**
Novel Theory: The Meanings of Realism
Day & Time: T/Th 2:30-4
Location: Remote
3 Credits

This course will survey classic landmarks and recent developments in novel theory, with special attention to two key terms or concepts (and the connections between them): realism and meaning/meaningfulness. We will begin with work by such figures as Gyorgy Lukacs, Walter Benjamin, Erich Auerbach, Roland Barthes, Fredric Jameson, and Catherine Gallagher, using as our test cases George Eliot's *Middlemarch*—widely regarded as the greatest realist novel in English literature—and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*—a novel that epitomizes realism's historical other, modernism, while at the same time laying claim to a more accurate representation of reality. At issue, among other things, will be the way all these texts (theoretical and fictional) presuppose, articulate, or instantiate the relationship between being and meaning—a key binary in the theories of secularization and modernity that underwrite much novel theory and history.

We will also consider recent work on a range of realisms (e.g., classic, peripheral, planetary, trans) alongside additional novels yet to be chosen, including one or more contemporary novels; possibilities include *The Known World*, by Edward P. Jones; *Transit*, by Rachel Cusk; *The Hungry Tide*, by Amitav Ghosh; and *Lost Children Archive*, by Valeria Luiselli. Final choices will be made in consultation with the class.

We will devote the bulk of our time during the latter part of the semester to students' final projects (typically a 20-page paper, but there's some flexibility here), which will be workshopped and presented in class. Final projects should engage with the subject-matter of the course and some of its theoretical readings, but are not otherwise limited by text, time period, genre, or medium.

Please feel free to contact me (dhack@umich.edu) with any questions.

572.001	**Fiction Workshop** Day & Time: W 4-7pm Location: Remote 6 credits	**G. Habash**
575.001	**Poetry Workshop** Day & Time: TH 1-4pm Location: Remote 6 credits	**Hu**
675.001	**Creative Writing Project** Fiction Thesis Workshop Day & Time: T 6-9pm Location: Remote 6 credits	**P. Ho Davies**
675.002	**Creative Writing Project** Poetry Thesis Workshop Day & Time: T 5-8pm Location: Remote 6 credits	**S. Chakraborty**

Fall 2021 Graduate-Level Courses

501.001 Old English **T. Toon**

Day & Time: T TH - 8:30AM-10AM
Location: AH5179
3 Credits
Meets with German 501.001

This course, along with English 503 (Middle English) taught in the winter term, meets one basic language requirement. It does not double-count as both an English course and a language course. You can use it for one or the other.

This course is an introduction to Old English, the language spoken by our forebears until the unpleasantness at Hastings — the Norman Conquest. Since Old English is so different from Modern English as to seem like another language, the greatest effort of this class will be to master the rudiments of the structure and vocabulary of the earliest attested form of English. The reward is being able to read an excitingly different corpus of prose and poetry. You will also develop a new appreciation of where our language, culture, and intellectual traditions come from. Course requirements: daily recitation, weekly quizzes, two-hour exams, a term project (written and oral presentation). Written work also includes regular short modernizations and longer take-home modernizations.

520.001 Introduction to Graduate Studies **V. Traub**

Day & Time: F - 12PM-3PM
Location: AH4199
3 Credits
This course is restricted to and required of 1st Year Lang & Lit and E&WS Ph.D.'s Only

This seminar serves as an introduction to the fields of literary and cultural studies, to U of M's Department of English Language and Literature, to the Rackham graduate school, and to the pressures, debates, and controversies that impact knowledge production—and life—within and beyond the academy. This seminar is not intended as a fourth, substantive course on literature, criticism, theory, or method. It aims to provide opportunities for structured and free-wheeling conversations about topics that could inform and enhance your involvement in scholarly work, courses, fields, the department, the university, academia, and your eventual career, whether inside academia or out. Together we will explore your evolving academic identities and modes of participation in new intellectual environments, seek to develop confidence in the give-and-take of academic performance, and discuss strategies for planning your intellectual path.

Our emphasis will be more on the *how* than the *what*—on developing a robust toolkit and set of resources rather than mastering a particular field of knowledge. We will, however, pause over difficult key terms and concepts when they arise and/or when it seems useful to address certain gaps in knowledge. We will move between practical strategies for thinking and writing to exploring potential methodological strategies, theoretical principles, and real-world commitments. The course will value not only what we already know, but what we don't (yet, or care to) know; we will explore what it means to commit to an intellectual disposition of openness, curiosity and generosity.

In addition to some short pieces and academic websites, readings will be primarily one essay or chapter chosen by each of you; this mode of reading will provide a framework within which to articulate your professional/personal identities and encourage you to interact with your cohort's intellectual passions

and priorities. Students will facilitate discussion on their chosen essay, prepare one substantive discussion question on another essay, interview a faculty member, engage in short exercises meant to develop specific skills, and participate in the intellectual community of the English department. I will ask you to reflect on your past academic experiences, consider which strategies have and haven't worked well for you, be open to learning from the experiences and strategies of others, and identify those areas in which some concentrated effort will augment your capacity to handle whatever lies ahead.

527.001 **Contemporary Critical Theory:**
Rhetoric, Race, and American Literature
Day & Time: TTH - 1-2:30PM
Location: MH3440
3 Credits

What happens when we read literature rhetorically? Put another way: what happens when we take theories and methods typically associated with the study of "composition," or argumentation, and bring them to bear on narrative fiction, poetry, and drama?

As we ponder these rhetorical and literary questions, our course will pay special attention to race, politics, and power. We will investigate how ancient, Eurocentric conceptions of speech and persuasion have acted in the service of enslavement, colonization, and exclusion. On the other hand, we also will explore how African American, Asian American, Native American, and U.S. Latinx speakers and writers have taken up—and revised—these ancient conceptions, redirecting them toward freedom, openness, and justice.

In the first few weeks of the term, we will work to get some grounding in the "rhetorical tradition" of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, and then we will ask how the ideas of these Greek and Roman philosophers shaped sixteenth- through nineteenth-century debates around colonialism, slavery, "Indian Removal," and women's rights in the Americas. In the middle of the term, Zitkala-Ša, Ralph Ellison, Gordon Henry, Jr., and others will invite us to consider fiction, creative nonfiction, and drama as rhetorical theory, analysis, and praxis—especially in relation to early- and mid-twentieth-century American education and law. Finally, toward the end of the term, Gloria Anzaldúa, Jessica Hagedorn, and Ruth Ozeki, among others, will use their books to start a conversation about intertextuality and multimedia: how do poetry, film, TV, and prose work in concert to communicate cross-cultural messages about sexuality, dis/ability, and migration? What are the ethics of narration and readership, of production and reception, of speaking and listening?

Course requirements will include short weekly responses, two in-class presentations, and a final seminar paper of 12–15 pages (or an alternative final project of equivalent substance). Students from other departments and the MFA Program are very welcome.

540.001 **Topics in Language and Literature** **A. Sloan**
Architecture and the Essay
Day & Time: T - 10AM-1PM
Location: NQ1265
3 Credits

In this class, we will read contemporary essays with an eye on structure. How do these essayists visualize and construct their work? Do conventional essays relate in any way to traditional architectural styles? How might we close read, dissect, and diagram a variety of nonfiction pieces in order to better appreciate how they were conceived? What is the effect of a dynamic structural decision on the experience of the reader? We will briefly delve into the way that architects describe their creative process, borrow tactics where possible, and use the concept of a blueprint to engineer essays of our own.

540.002 **Topics in Language and Literature** **L. Makman**
Graduate Internship Seminar
Day & Time: T - 12PM-1PM
Location: NEED
1 Credit Internship Course

This course is the curricular supplement to the English Department Graduate Internship Program. In our class meetings, you will have the opportunity to discuss your internship experiences and reflect on them in ways that will support you in your current placements and help you to envision future career trajectories. We will engage in conversations about transmissible skills, preparation for the non-academic job market, and possible career pathways. You will also participate in workshops on resume writing, networking, and other key topics.

540.003 **Topics in English Language and Literature** **C. Hawes**
Empire and its Discontents: The Literature of the British Eighteenth Century
Day & Time: M W - 2:30PM-4PM
Location: NEED
3 Credits
Meets with History 593

We will study the impact of colonial developments on eighteenth-century genres (travelogues, poetry, the novel, the essay, the play) and discourses (political economy, science, religion, abolitionism, satire). We will study literary responses to slavery, including Olaudah Equiano's autobiographical slave-narrative. We will study the literary impact of internal relations among the four kingdoms, with attention to Catholic Ireland. And we will examine the shift from Britain's First Empire (Ireland, North America, Jamaica) to the second, centered on India. We will give attention to such institutions as the Royal Society, the Royal African Company, the East India Company, and the Society for Abolishing the Slave Trade. We will attend both to the development of colonial ideology and critiques of that ideology. Our reading process will seek to open a dialogue between past and present. We will attempt to rethink the genealogy of postcolonial critique from the perspective of a more refined understanding of the British Enlightenment.

Expectations: Written work will include a research essay, due at the end, and two very short book reports. Lively participation in seminars is of course expected. Please order the specific editions listed on this syllabus as much as possible.

Required Texts

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko and Other Writings* (Oxford)

English Trader, Indian Maid: Representing Gender, Race, and Slavery in the New World, ed. Frank Felsenstein
Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings,* Carretta (Penguin)
Edmund Burke, *On Empire, Liberty, and Reform* (Yale)
Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (Penguin)
Daniel Defoe, *A General History of Pyrates* (Dover)
Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees,* ed. E.J. Hundert (Hackett)
Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal and Other Writings* (Penguin)
Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Oxford)
John Gay, *The Beggar's Opera and Polly*

571.001 Creative Writing Workshop **P. Davies**
Fiction
Day & Time: W - 5:30PM-8:30PM
Location: AHG128
6 Credits
Limited to MFA Prose Students - override needed

571.002 Creative Writing Workshop **J. Townsend**
Fiction
Day & Time: W - 5:30PM-8:30PM
Location: AH4175
6 Credits
Limited to MFA Prose Students - override needed

574.001 Creative Writing Workshop **S. Chakraborty**

Poetry
Day & Time: T - 1PM-4PM
Location: MLB3205
6 Credits
Limited to MFA Poetry Students - override needed

574.002 Creative Writing Workshop **L. Gregerson**

Poetry
Day & Time: T - 1PM-4PM
Location: MH3359
6 Credits
Limited to MFA Poetry Students - override needed

578.001 MFA Course **L. Conklin**
Graphic Forms Workshop: Graphic Fiction and Nonfiction
Day & Time: T - 5PM-8PM
Location: TBA

3 Credits

This craft course is a workshop in graphic fiction and nonfiction. No drawing skill is required to take the course. We will read a number of graphic memoirs and novels, such *The Arab of the Future* by Riad Sattouf, *Killing and Dying* by Adrian Tomine, *Moms* by Yeong-Shin Man, *One Hundred Demons* by Lynda Barry and others, analyzing how visuals support or activate content. We will complete various short-form comics assignments throughout the course of the semester, and end with a two-phased workshop of a final comics project.

579.001 Poetry Craft Course **A. Van Jordan**

Vulnerability, Power, and Afrofuturism

Day & Time: M - 4PM-7PM

Location: MH3347

3 Credits

This is a class not only on the craft of writing but also on the craft of thinking about what one writes and *why*. On a craft level, we will read poetry and fiction, and we will view films that examine ways in which artistic problems can be solved by *re-visioning* possibilities in the natural world. At the same time, we will explore how the disciplines of poetry, fiction, and film can inform one another. For this mission, we will examine texts and films that often are categorized under the label of Afrofuturism.

627.001 Critical Theory: **S. Nair**

Diaspora: Theory and Literature

Day & Time: T - 4PM-7PM

Location: MH2353

3 Credits

It has been 30 years since *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* was founded. The explosion of diaspora studies readers and the number of book titles addressing the subject demonstrate that the field has now been thoroughly institutionalized. The conventional theological reading of diaspora tied to a cycle of divinely ordained exile, suffering, redemption, and return led to a hostland-homeland, diaspora-nation binary, with the implication that a diaspora never quite loses sight of the original home and longs to return to it. Such a nostalgic trajectory has been dispelled in the increasingly complex and multipolar disseminations of numerous populations across time and space. Many contemporary theorists of diaspora deploy it as "a category of practice" rather than as a rigidly defined entity, a stance we will pursue in this course. How do we hold on to diaspora as a specific analytical concept while at the same time acknowledging its relationality to other large terms like migration, hybridity, postnationalism, transnationalism, and globalization?

This course will begin with a review of the interdisciplinary discourses of diaspora theory, with some classics in the field, but go on to explore where the field is currently situated and what future directions it might take in the humanities. We will read a selection of major theorists of diaspora, viewing the field from a broad perspective. But the course will ultimately focus on two diasporas, African and Asian, particularly through the choice of literary texts that will help us also theorize diaspora. These include Segun Afolabi's *A Life Elsewhere;* Ayad Akhtar's *Homeland Elegies: A Novel*; Mia Alvar's *In the Country: Stories;* and Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*. We will read selections from theoretical texts on diaspora that model research in the humanities (Brent Hayes Edwards, Samantha Pinto, Gayatri Gopinath, Vijay Mishra, Michelle Wright) and examine race, feminism, labor, and queer studies from a diasporic perspective. We will also read about digital diasporas. For ideas to explore a regional diaspora of your

selection related to your research interests, we will read essays from *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory* (eds. Marianne Hirsch and Nancy K. Miller), which present an array of topics and locations.
Requirements include short presentations and papers and a final long research paper, although in lieu of the long research paper, I am open to other options tailored to your specific methodology and area of interest.

630.001 **Special Topics: Writers at Work** **A. Gere**
Day & Time: T - 4-7PM
Location: MH3427
3 Credit

In this course we will look at writing in two ways. From one angle we will consider conceptions of writing itself—its embodied, social, and technological aspects as well as the rituals, processes, blocks, inspirations, procrastinations, responses, and strategies that enable or prevent the capturing in linear form of ideas whirling in the writer's head. Scholarship in writing studies as well as our own experiences and interviews with other writers will inform this approach to writing.

At the same time, we will explore what writing can do, in both academic and public-facing contexts. This part of the course will include revising and preparing for publication two kinds of texts: a scholarly paper and a public-facing text that takes form in a less familiar genre. The goal here is to, on the one hand, name and claim an argument, craft a compelling introduction, and chart theoretical and/or methodological threads in order to enter a conversation of ideas through scholarly publication. The other goal is to take up an unfamiliar genre like an infogram, op-ed piece, podcast, meme, or blog in order to present an academic argument to a more public audience, thereby extending the boundaries of scholarly communication.

632.001 **Topics in Drama:** **J. Fitzgerald**
Stage Readings: Interpretive Methods in Theatre and Performance Studies
Day & Time: M - 4PM-7PM
Location: AHG128
3 Credits

For literary scholars, the drama has long posed a challenge: How do we "read" texts whose destination requires embodiment, temporality, the sonic and visual arts, and live spectatorship? Many scholarly projects merit the inclusion of dramatic works, but their "theatre-ness" can appear to be a stumbling block to scholars trained in methods of textual analysis. The goal of this seminar is to overcome this gap by introducing questions, frameworks, and strategies for interpreting dramatic works in the fullness of their theatricality. By drawing on the best of both foundational and new scholarship in theatre and performance studies, we will develop a repertoire of critical methods for "reading" theatre in performance.

This course is designed for graduate students studying literature and literary culture, broadly defined, in any historical period or subfield. As much as possible, readings will reflect the range of these possible periods and subdisciplines. Methodological concerns will also vary widely, from the study of performance as a method of cultural analysis to theatre historiography to the intersection of theatre and the visual arts to the study of space, time, memory, spectatorship, and embodiment, with necessary focus on the ways race and empire, and gender and sexuality, figure centrally in these concerns. At least

part of the course will be devoted to the study of theatrical representation, the way the "not-not" of embodied mimesis turns the theatre into a vehicle for meditations on, and critiques of, reality and "the real."

No experience with theatre and performance studies is required or expected. Workload will include extensive readings, lively and engaged discussions, and in-class presentations. Each student's work will culminate in an annotated bibliography demarcating a subfield of particular relevance to their own research concerns.

641.001 Topics Medieval Period: K. Taylor

Intertextuality and Translation: Chaucer and Boccaccio

Day & Time: MW 10AM-11:30AM

Location: MLB2112

3 Credits

Boccaccio and Chaucer are two of the great writers of the Western European Middle Ages, with exceptional geographical range, social inclusiveness, and attentiveness to gender. Chaucer took more from Boccaccio than from any other writer, but mysteriously never acknowledged him by name—and the more mysteriously since both shared so much: disciples of Dante, admirers of Petrarch, scions of the international mercantile class attempting to come to terms—socially, politically, and poetically--with French-based, courtly society. The two writers provide a master course in how to tell a story in the fourteenth century (or maybe any century), and how to write a poetic line. This course will focus on Boccaccio's early Trojan love story *Il Filostrato* and Chaucer's magnificent English adaptation *Troilus and Criseyde*; and Boccaccio's framed story collection set in time of plague and social dissolution, the *Decameron*, and Chaucer's framed story collection, the *Canterbury Tales*—likewise set in a time of social dissolution, but differently conceived, and sharing many stories and topics with Boccaccio: both include the widest range of contemporary issues, including Judaism, Islam, and their relations with Christianity; rural poverty and peasant cunning; urban trickery and nobility; female agency and oppression; exoticism and romance; alchemy and sodomy; saintliness and superstition; relic worship and relic forgery; the magnificence and brutality of powerful rulers. Since the relationship between these two writers is the subject of great debate, it will also give us the chance to explore the methodological resources involved in intertextuality and translation studies—linguistic, cultural and formal. But I have to confess that one of the greatest pleasures will simply be the opportunity to read them side by side. The sheer variousness of these works means that the interests, backgrounds, and expertise of class members will influence our collective choice of focus. You will have the opportunity to shape the course with two oral presentations to the class, several short exploratory papers, and a 12-ish pp. essay at the end of the term (longer for anyone opting to take this course as a seminar). Texts will be available digitally as well as in print; in translation as well as in the original language. I do not assume any prior knowledge of the language or literature of fourteenth-century England or Italy—only the curiosity to find out.

695.001 Pedagogy: Theory Practice J. Whittier-Ferguson

Day & Time: F - 12PM-3PM

Location: AH4207

3 Credits

This course is designed to be useful, thought-provoking, anxiety-abating, and enjoyable for everyone teaching English 125 this year. And though our discussions will focus around the writing-intensive courses you're teaching and will continue to teach for the English Department Writing Program, we will also spend some time talking about the teaching of literature and theory in your own future courses as well as how to navigate the challenges particular to working as Writing Fellows or leading discussion sections in larger lecture courses, for those of you who'll end up in those positions.

It's also intended to serve as a weekly occasion for assembling everyone in their second year in the PhD program in English language and literature and their third year in the Women's Studies program. I'd like for this class to be a cohort-gathering point and to be a place to think together about the work-life balance issues that become newly and particularly pressing when teaching is added to the mix of what are already the full-time jobs of reading, writing, doing research, and having at least something of a life outside the academy. How and where we gather will, I imagine, still be constrained to a greater or, I hope, lesser extent by the pandemic and its after-effects.
The structure of the course is designed to correspond closely to the shape of the term itself, so that you will not be doing busy-work or wondering how an assignment for 695 might someday actually be usable but, instead, be getting into whatever it is you'll be taking up in class in any given week, with the advice and ideas and support of me and of your peers.

I'll consider it part of my job to make resources clearly and easily available to everyone—resources that you may or may not utilize in the heat of the term itself but that, I hope, you'll find useful whenever you're ready to turn to them—and also to make sure that we cover matters arising from your own classroom experiences. These will probably include (but aren't limited to) facilitating discussions; working with student writing; evaluating, commenting on, and grading papers; making and using quizzes and exams; running writing workshops (small-group and whole-class); lectures (short and long); using technology in the classroom; holding office hours; starting (or continuing) to assemble teaching portfolios and to write teaching statements. Toward the end of the course, we'll work on course planning and syllabus design.

I will make a visit to each of your classrooms so that I can see you at work (and we'll talk afterwards about those visits). You will also observe each other teach a class sometime during the term (and will be welcome and encouraged to visit my own undergraduate class in the winter term as well as others being taught in our department in the fall semester). I'll be posting my syllabi and those from colleagues who also welcome visitors. We will also have colleagues visiting us throughout the term to present on different pedagogical subjects—an aspect of this class that I always particularly look forward to. I look forward to meeting with all of you each week as we undertake what is, I continue to believe (after more than three decades of doing it) important, difficult, fun, and deeply rewarding work.

821.001 **Seminar: Critical Theory:** **M. Levinson**
Readings in the Non-Human Sciences: or, Critical Theory by Other Means
Day & Time: TH - 10AM-1PM
Location: STB4000
3 Credits

I offer this course as a stand-alone (welcome first-years!) that might also be of interest to those who have taken my own and others' courses in critical theory. The roster of texts I've assembled—by

practitioners and theorists of the so-called "postclassical" sciences—offers to humanities students a repertoire of models for rethinking some of the basic ideas and methods of our trade. By "basic ideas," I mean deep (as it were, intuitive or cognitively hardwired) *category perspectives* on such dyads as mind and matter, subject and object, thinking and doing, history and structure, entity and environment, animate and inanimate, human and animal, singularity and multiplicity, and so forth. "Basic methods" refers to our standard ways of explaining and connecting the items belonging to each half of those dyads, and second, to our ways of fashioning causalities that bridge the category gap *within* each dyad. As for "models," that term describes intellectual frameworks that are wide enough to give us a purchase on the kinds of topics that students of literature and culture entertain (e.g., language, visuality, sexuality, gender, race, class, power, resistance), and that are deep enough to cast light on the common-sense of both our everyday experience and our scholarly discourse.

Jonathan Culler defines "theory" as "borrowing frameworks from one discipline for use in another." On that definition, these selections from the postclassical sciences offer a body of theory most of us haven't yet sampled, although many date back to the 1960s, the same moment that, in the Anglo- and Francophone worlds saw the emergence of critical theory proper. By that I mean the systematic application of frameworks from anthropology, linguistics, economics, sociology, political theory, and psychoanalysis (in sum, the human sciences) to the study of literature and culture. In other words, "postclassical" as applied to the sciences is not just a synonym for "poststructuralist"; it was twinborn with it.

My earlier theory courses argued the self-revolutionizing impulse of "critique," the method invented by Kant in the 1780s. Critique replaces "first-philosophy" (for the modern period, Descartes is the most proximate example) with meta-philosophy. The official meaning of "first-philosophy" is metaphysics, or the study of Being, but the phrase enjoys a looser usage: namely, philosophical study that regards its objects of inquiry as spontaneously available to rational thought. With Kant, that changes. For the first time, inquiry into XYZ—e.g., beauty, truth, virtue—becomes inquiry into the *conditions of possibility of the experience or phenomenon* of XYZ, turning the tables on both skepticism and empiricism. Kant's reflexive move—his method of "transcendental deduction"—had repercussions unguessed at in his philosophy. Chief among those aftershocks was Hegel's historical dialectics, his answer to the problem of dualism, a problem that Kant had not so much resolved as kicked upstairs, ruling it and all other "metaphysical" matters out of bounds for critical thought. For many of us, Hegel's dialectical and historical "overcoming" of the divides between being, knowing, and doing, represents a decisive moment in the history of philosophy, in some ways a "Copernican turn" more dramatic than Kant's reflexive method. With Kant, first-philosophy gives way to meta-philosophy, while with Hegel, philosophy yields to "theory." Absent Hegelian dialectics, the signal achievements of 20th- and 21st-c critical and cultural theory (a discourse that plainly acknowledges its debt to Hegel) could not have occurred.

In this new course, we lead with Spinoza (the standard genealogy starts with Descartes and Bacon), and we make a wide detour around Kant. Both those decisions set us upon a road not taken by mainstream critical thought. Our new road, like the main route, leads to and through Hegel, but by starting with Spinoza we angle ourselves toward a Hegel who is closer to the 20th- and 21st- century sciences than he is to the post-structuralist thinkers who are standard fare in a critical theory course. (And, we use Deleuze's two studies of Spinoza to tease out the kinship and differences between humanistic and scientific theories of roughly the same era.) All those theories are "post-dialectical" (in that special sense where "post" means both "after" and either "enfolding" or "continuous with"), but the vastly different materials and scale of research in the non-human sciences yield pictures of and stories about mind and matter (and their innumerable spawn of binaries) that have an imaginative and analytic force all their own.

There is, at this point, a sizable set of critics who apply these models to literature and culture. I'm thinking of Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Paul Jaussen, Arkady Plotnitsky, Joan Richardson, Daniel Tiffany, Cary Wolfe, and others, some of whom we will read. The goal of this course, however, is to give you some first-hand acquaintance with work by theoretical biologists, physicists, chemists, and systems theorists, work you are unlikely to read in any other context. Why read them now? Because the ensemble of studies we group under such labels as new materialism, the new ontologies, posthumanism, animal studies, and eco/environmental studies represents the growth industry of our profession. All these studies presume knowledge of paradigms central to today's basic science understanding of our physical, biological, and cultural worlds. In their different but related ways, these paradigms not only challenge that very distinction (i.e., physical, biological, cultural) but develop conceptual alternatives to that (classical) way of divvying up reality.

Reminder: this is not a science and literature course, the focus of which would be conceptual and textual intersections between historically contemporary bodies work (for instance, 19th-century theories of the organism and Shelley's poetry). My title phrase "non-human sciences," gets us to what this course *is*, in the largest sense. Our readings challenge the self-evidence of the distinction between, on the one hand, the human sciences (sciences of mind, sciences of culture: *Geisteswissenschaften*) and, on the other, the natural/physical sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*). I label our readings "non-human sciences" rather than "natural/physical sciences" to signal that these readings refuse the nature/culture binary at a level more foundational (perhaps, thus, more "critical") than what happens in critical/cultural theory proper. These writings, all of which pursue scales of study (e.g., the microscopic, the cosmic) alien to our modes of inquiry, introduce us to all sorts of inanimate and/or non-intentional entities that are sometimes capable of acting like human and other animals: e.g. chemical reactions, machines, assemblages, digital environments, termite mounds, fungi, operating programs. What new insights, questions, research-agendas, and interests might these "lifelike" behaviors suggest to the likes of us, that is, students of "the human sciences"? Have we outgrown (or should we?) our easy assent to "the intentional fallacy" and even, perhaps, "the pathetic fallacy"? If so, what does this mean (this new, disenchanted or perhaps re-enchanted animism) for our ways of talking about writers, works, and contexts? How will it change our protocols for asking and answering the "how" questions (formal questions) and the "why" questions (causality and meaning questions) that spring from our encounters with literature and culture? Throughout the term, we will test out (think, "lab session") our postclassical frameworks on a selection of literary materials—poems suggested mostly by me, novels suggested by you.

Rough reading list for Eng. 800, Fall 2021: Readings in the Nonhuman Sciences

In all cases, we read chapters, articles, and excerpts, not entire books. In practice, of course, we will be reading only a modest subset from each of the 11 categories below—categories that are each more-or-less equivalent to one week of the seminar. The remaining texts will be recommended reading, potentially of interest for oral presentations and term papers.

Philosophy

1. Dualism
    a. Descartes, *Meditations*
    b. On Descartes: Susan Bordo, *Flight to Objectivity*

2. Substance monism/Attribute dualism

a. Spinoza, *Ethics*
b. On Spinoza
    i. Warren Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power*
    ii. Montag and Ted Stolz, *The New Spinoza*
    iii. Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies*; *Collective Imaginings*
    iv. Genevieve Lloyd, *Part of Nature*
    v. Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy*; *Practical Philosophy*

3. Dialectics
    a. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Section 2. Ch. 1 A2; *Phenomenology of Spirit*
    b. Marx, *German Ideology; Communist Manifesto*; *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*
    c. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Ch. 9
    d. Sebastiano Timpanaro, *On Materialism*
    e. John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology*

4. Post-dialectics
    a. Me, "Pre-and Post-Dialectical Materialism," *Thinking through Poetry*, Ch. 4

Science

A. Biological Sciences

5. Post-Classical Biology
    a. Richard Levins and Richard Lewontin, *Dialectical Biologist*
    b. Stephen Jay Gould, *Structure of Evolutionary Theory*
    c. Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, *Autopoeisis and Cognition*
    d. Varela, Eleanor Rosch, Evan Thompson, *Embodied Mind*
    e. Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter, eds., *Incorporations*: excerpts from Georges Canguilhem, Manuel DeLanda, Gilbert Simondon
    f. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*
    g. Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought*

B. Physical Sciences

6. Self-organization, complexity theory, emergent properties theory
    a. Erich Jantsch, *Self-Organizing Universe*
    b. Stuart Kauffman, *Origins of Order*; *At Home in the Universe*
    c. Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, *Order out of Chaos*

7. Indeterminacy and Complementarity
    a. Neils Bohr, *Philosophical Writings* v.1
    b. Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*
    c. Arkady Plotnitsky, *Mathematics, Science, and Postclassical Theory*

8. Wholeness and the Implicate Order

a. David Bohm, *The Essential David Bohm*
b. Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*
c. Brian Cantwell Smith, *On the Origins of Objects*

C. Systems Theory

9. Dynamic systems theory
    a. Susan Oyama, *Evolution's Eye*
    b. Esther Thelen and Linda Smith, *Dynamic Systems Approach to the Development of Cognition and* Action
    c. Niklas Luhmann, *Introduction to Systems Theory*; "Cognition as Construction," trans. Hans-Georg Moeller, "Appendix B" in Hans-Georg Moeller, *Luhmann Explained: From Souls to Systems; Art as a Social System*; "Notes on the Project `Poetry and Social Theory,'" trans. Kathleen Cross, *Theory, Culture, and Society* 18:1 (2001): 15-27.; "How Can the Mind Participate in Communication?," in *Materialities of Communication*, ed. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer, trans. William Whobrey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 372, 374

10. Extended mind
    a. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social; Politics of Nature*
    b. Andy Clark, *Being There*; *The Extended Mind*
    c. Graham Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*

D. Miscellaneous

11. Miscellaneous
    a. Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*
    b. William Connolly, *A World of Becomin*g: *Facing the Planetary*
    c. Jerome Jeffrey Cohen, *Stone, an Ecology of the Inhuman*
    d. Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think*
    e. David Abrams, *The Spell of the Sensuous*
    f. Paul Jaussen, *Emergent Poetics*
    g. Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism*; *Ecological Poetics; Critical Environments (Postmodern Theory and the Pragmatics of the Outside*
    h. Me, *Thinking through Poetry*, Ch.11
    i. Terrence Deacon, "Emergent Process of Thinking as Reflected in Language Processing," *Thinking Thinking: Practicing Radical Reflectio*n, ed. V. Saller and D. Schoeller
    j. Branka Arsic, "Materialist Vitalism or Pathetic Fallacy," *Representations* (2017) 140 (1): 121–136; "Coral Selves"
    k. Ada Smailbegovic, *Poetics of Liveliness*
    l. Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*
    m. Thomas Pradeu, *Philosophy of Immunology*

831.001 Seminar: The Study of Genre G. White
Genre Theory & Contemporary Poetics in the U.S.
Day & Time: TH - 2:00PM - 5:00PM
Location: NEED
3 Credits

Genre is the kind of thing that gets scholars and critics into circles: It's difficult to think or talk about anything without some idea about what kind of thing it is, because knowing what kind of thing it is (its genre) allows us to know what it makes sense to say about it and do with it. This recursive *problem* has been remarkably generative for poets, critics, and scholars of poetry and poetics, and in the broadest sense, this generative problem is what this course will consider.

Taking as its starting ground the field of my expertise – 20th- and 21st-century poetry and poetics in the U.S. (capaciously understood), we will explore theories of and questions about genre as they are taken up by critics, poets, and theorists of the C20 and C21, (though sometimes in order to think about poetry and criticism from earlier periods, and/or about the origins and politics of literary criticism as a field in itself). We will engage genre theory (including but not limited to M.M. Bakhtin, Gerard Genette, Jacques Derrida, Theodor Adorno, Sylvia Wynter), criticism and lyric theory, theories of the ballad, writings in contemporary poetics, a range of poetry, and several contemporary "writings" that identify themselves as hybrid, cross-genre, or "beyond genre. "

One of my aims will be to explore the nearly obsessive critical and creative attention in contemporary U.S. poetics discourses to questions of genre distinction and indistinction. What kinds of problems and solutions does genre thinking create? In debates about the purported politics and ethics of "lyric," the constitution of "world poetics,' in a flurry of critical and creative attention to the purported social, ethical, and political limits and possibilities that genre, and/or its breakdown and recombinations might allow, and in the ambivalent attention to the rise of purportedly "new" or "non" genres that negotiate (at least in part) the unwieldy inheritance of capital-p Poetry -- "hybrids," "lyric essays," "new nonfiction", "poeticriticisms", "trans-genres" – what is invested in genre? How are genre, mode, and kind being imagined and claimed in figural and actual relation to questions about social relations? How do they factor in contemporary imaginings of art's power to effect cultural and social change (or not)? What do we gain by comparing this moment's investments in genre with those of other moments? What are the histories that determine these conversations, and how do they converge and diverse? These BIG questions are importantly bound up in ways the current moment imagines and reimagines art's ability to "matter."

In an effort to further broaden course concerns to accommodate Ph.D. students working in a diverse set of fields and periods, we will consider instances of or arguments about genre's limits, possibilities, breakdowns, and emergences brought forward by students from their own fields and periods, too.

Course assignments will include two presentations (one on a week of course reading, and one presenting an aspect of the student's final course project), and a final project in one of several possible genres: academic essay or article draft; a book review project; annotated bibliography; a drafted "talk" or conference (joint presentations possible!)/ annotated bibliography…. depending on the student's aims in doing this course work.