DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS Fall 2015

This page provides details about the courses we are offering this semester. For the latest information about a course’s status, availability, time, and prerequisites, please consult GoSOLAR (www.gosolar.gsu.edu).

Graduate Course Offerings

English 6510: Grant and Proposal Writing. Dr. Gu.

English 8000: Bibliography and Research Methods. Dr. Schmidt. The purpose of this course is to introduce graduate students to the methods and tools of research in the study of literature. In the process of this introduction, we will be discussing some of the important theoretical conflicts that enliven debate in the humanities today. We will introduce and debate the merits of a number of significant scholarly tools, such as The Oxford English Dictionary and MLA International Bibliography. We will examine and learn to practice important skills in scholarly writing about literature and about constructing scholarly apparatuses for that writing. The course will also introduce important principles of textual editing.

English 8020: Poetry Writing. Dr. Bottoms. This course offers a strong emphasis on critique of student work with the goal of eventual publication. Discussion of current literary markets, grants and prizes, and trends in poetry writing and reviewing.

English 8030: Fiction Writing. Dr. Holman. This course offers a strong emphasis on critique of student work with the goal of eventual publication. Discussion of current literary markets, grants and prizes, and trends in fiction writing and reviewing.

8065: Foundations of Modern Critical Theory. Dr. Thomas This course surveys the philosophical, economic, aesthetic, political, and metapsychological writings that form the historical foundations of modern critical theory. Our reading will range from the early 19th to the late 20th centuries and will focus on Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud.

English 8121: Rhetoric of Digital Media. Dr. Hocks. This course will introduce current theories and practices for design and production with digital media with the goal of developing rhetorically savvy composers and critics. Covers current digital media theory, digital literacy, and theories of visual, aural, haptic, spatial, and other analysis important for digital rhetoric and composition.

English 8125: Writing and Research Methodology. Dr. Gaillet. Theory and practice of reading and conducting empirical research for the study of writing. Strong emphasis on theoretical and ethical principles of research methodology important for critically reading empirical research and designing new studies.
English 8170: Classical Rhetoric: Greek. Dr. Lopez.
The word rhetoric is difficult to define succinctly because it has meant many different things at different times. Today, in non-academic settings, rhetoric means style without substance. In academic settings rhetoric usually means 1) political speeches 2) composition; 3) empty language; 4) the subtle use of language to disguise, obscure, or exaggerate meaning. And yet, for roughly two thousand years, from the 5th century BCE until the Enlightenment, rhetoric provided the structure and the goal of education because it taught people how to be effective public speakers and the purpose of all education was to train people for public life. The study of rhetoric's diminution as well as its subsequent expansion in this century is a fascinating enterprise, but one beyond the scope of this class (see, Brian Vickers. In Defense of Rhetoric). We will look at the texts which form rhetoric's "foundation", a debatable concept which we will explore as we go along, with an eye toward understanding how the discipline of rhetoric understands itself today, where the topics that it entertains come from, and where its skeletons are buried.


English 8195: Composition Pedagogy. Dr. Hall-Godsey.

Folk 8200: Folklore. Dr. Burrison.
This course surveys, from an international perspective, the genres (types of expressive forms) constituting folklore, including selected bibliography and issues of folklore study. To develop some depth, the traditions of the American South are featured for illustration, thus making the course both a graduate-level introduction to folklore and an exploration of southern folk culture. It is designed as a service course, offering the materials and perspectives of folklore study as tools of potential use to graduate students in a variety of fields. At the least, students should gain a better understanding of the role of traditions in people’s lives and an appreciation of folklore as a valuable stream of our culture, operating in the behavior of all of us. Following a foundation section covering folkloristics (folklore study), the South’s distinctly regional traditions, and research methodology, the course will proceed by a series of student oral presentations on the various folklore genres, in some cases amplified with examples from the South or otherwise focused discussions. This structure, combining the lecture and seminar formats supported by audio-visual media, is intended to offer a model for effective teaching of the subject.

English 8203: 20th-Century American Poetry Craft. Dr. Stokesbury.

English 8220: Beowulf. Dr. Christie.

English 8370: Shakespeare, Later Work. Dr. Hirsh.
In this course we will examine a selection of plays that Shakespeare wrote in the second half of his career: King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Antony and Cleopatra, Twelfth Night, and All’s Well That Ends Well. We will explore specific psychological, social, and philosophical issues raised by these works as well as artistic techniques they employ and challenges they create for playgoers and readers. Some attention will be paid to the social, political, intellectual, theatrical, and literary contexts in which Shakespeare worked and to a sampling of the enormous range of scholarship that his works have elicited. In studying a particular work, we might also consider its performance history, textual history, cultural influence, or theoretical
issues it raises. Other topics might include critical approaches, research methods, teaching techniques, and other academic and professional matters. The main purposes of the course are to enhance each student's skills as a rigorous and imaginative reader, playgoer, scholar, and writer. The required text is The Norton Shakespeare. 2nd ed. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. NY: Norton, 2008. Alternatively, you may use The Riverside Shakespeare or scholarly editions of individual plays in one or more of these series: Cambridge, Arden, Oxford, or Norton Critical Editions.

English 8390: Milton. Dr. Dobranski.

English 8620: English Victorian Poetry. Dr. Schmidt.  
This class will provide a survey of poets from the Victorian period. Poems, like all texts, are both constructed and constructing. Through the writing of poetry, Victorian poets attempted to enter the poetic tradition, but they also sought, perhaps less consciously, to create taste and value, to construct gender definitions, and to forge national identity. They also sought to understand themselves, or at least to construct subjectivities they might try to understand. Looking at this poetry, we will try to come to some sense of how this group of poets saw themselves and their activities in relation to the rest of the culture. During the nineteenth century, writing poetry was largely a middle-class occupation. The majority of poetry we will read will involve the interests and ideals of only a portion of the population. Due to this limitation, we should not assume that we can generalize about what Victorian people thought and felt even after we have read their poetry.

Course work for this class will include an in-class presentation, a book review, an eight-ten-page paper, and a comprehensive final examination—part essay, part identification.

English 8640: Gender in Victorian Fiction. Dr. McLeod.

In this seminar we will read and study the modern and postmodern British novel. The novelistic tradition immediately preceding this period is ornate and resplendent; the modern/postmodern novel may at first glance seem more tentative, more experimental and idiosyncratic; sometimes perhaps frenzied, unstable, and confusing. If the Victorian novelist might have assumed an audience well-versed in the relatively stable conventions of the genre, what might we conjecture about the twentieth-century readership? How do we connect these works with the earlier tradition of the novel? We will talk about all the usual topics that come into play when one discusses novels – characters, plot, construction, narratology, author/ity, the world of the novel vs. the world outside the novel – and we will also examine the uniquely modern aspects of this literature. As in any graduate seminar, our reading and discussion of the texts will be intricately intertwined with our development of research skills related to this field. We'll begin with Conrad, Woolf, and Forster, then a quick jump to mid-century with Barbara Pym, and we'll end the century reading Kazuo Ishiguro, Jim Crace, Ian McEwan, and Julian Barnes.

English 8831: 19th Century African-American Fiction. Dr. West

English 8756: Postcolonial Literature: Revising the Canon. Dr. Rajiva.
In Orientalism, Edward Said famously asserts that to characterize the discourse of Orientalism as merely “a rationalization of colonial rule is to ignore the extent to which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact” (39). Said’s attentiveness to the power of discourse has gone on to shape postcolonial literature as the attempt to “write back” to the colonizer. However, writing back has varied greatly according to the colonial history and cultural context of each nation, making the attempt to construct a postcolonial literary canon not only difficult, but ethically problematic. How do we establish a postcolonial canon when the very discipline itself is premised on challenging European ideas of literary canonicity? Is postcolonial literature itself at risk of calcifying into an uncritical, exclusionary canon out of step with our contemporary moment? In this course, we will read a cluster of literary texts through the lens of foundational postcolonial theory, gaining an ongoing awareness of the contingent nature of canonicity in both postcolonial scholarship and teaching practice. Useful to neophytes and specialists alike, this course will develop your ability to engage in informed literary analysis, to discuss postcolonial issues with a nuanced critical vocabulary, and to teach postcolonial literature.

English 8860: Modern American Fiction. Dr. Goodman
This seminar will investigate the diverse positions and the experimental narratives of modernist writers in the U.S. between 1900 and (roughly) 1950. We’ll read the work of writers who were influential in their own time and who continue to generate new perspectives on American literature, culture, and politics of the first half of the twentieth century: Gertrude Stein, Willa Cather, Zora Neale Hurston, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Claude McKay, Americo Paredes, and Carlos Bulosan. Organized around some of the critical cultural and social issues that shaped narrative form (such as the relation between visual and verbal representation, expatriation and diaspora, regional and indigenous redefinitions of place and time, and borderlands politics), the course will offer students opportunities to work with foundational texts and contemporary criticism and to develop their own approaches to modernist studies. Students will take turns posing questions for class discussion, conduct and present research on an aesthetic movement or key figure in the period, and write a final paper that brings together textual analysis and interdisciplinary research.

English 8900: Literature of the American and European Enlightenment. Dr. Smolinski.


English 8910: American Drama. Drama of the Hemispheric South. Dr. Roudané and Dr. Caison.

English 9050: Narrative (Topics in Contemporary Theory and Literature).