

ENGL 516

ENGL 530

Topic: JANE AUSTEN: A Co-Taught Seminar

INSTRUCTORS: Boulukos & Collins

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Jane Austen is, arguably, the most important author in the history of the English novel. She has been used to begin, and to end, influential histories of the novel. F. R. Leavis presented her as initiating the “great tradition” of the English novel as aesthetic artwork; Ian Watt and Nancy Armstrong both end their histories of the eighteenth-century novel with Jane Austen, using her to mark the moment when the novel finally achieves a full-fledged form. At the time Jane Austen published her works, however, opinions differed. Walter Scott praised Emma as a remarkably unified work, while Hazlitt opined (not speaking directly of Jane Austen) that a novel with a plot confined to the lives of women could never achieve real significance. Recently, D. A. Miller has argued that Jane Austen is the embodiment of literary style. Despite her (subsequently) undisputed significance and success, Jane Austen, while often taught, is rarely taught as a “great author” worthy to be the sole subject of a course.

This course will examine Jane Austen from a variety of perspectives. We will consider her place in the history of the novel and in literary history more generally, reading a historically broad swath of criticism alongside the novels. We will also examine such issues as class, politics, colonialism, the impact of war, and gender (both in terms of the cultural work it performs within her novels and as an external condition helping to shape them). We will attend as well to what Claudia Johnson has termed “the cults and cultures of Jane Austen,” considering the impact (on both academic and popular understandings of the novels) of Jane Austen Societies, “Janeites,” and the Hollywood craze for Jane Austen adaptations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

One 5–7 pp. archival paper (1500 words), including proposal; one 15–20 pp. research paper (5000 words), including initial and updated proposals with annotated bibliographies and a draft; brief written responses to assigned criticism; regular attendance; and active participation in seminar discussions.

REQUIRED TEXTS

By Jane Austen:

Emma, 4th ed., ed. George Justice (Norton Critical)

ISBN 978-0-393-92764-1

Jane Austen’s Manuscript Works, ed. Linda Bree, Peter Sabor, and Janet Todd (Broadview)

ISBN 978-1-55-481058-1

Mansfield Park, ed. Claudia L. Johnson (Norton Critical)

ISBN 978-0-393-96791-3

Northanger Abbey, ed. Susan Fraiman (Norton Critical)

ISBN 978-0-393-97850-6

Persuasion, 2nd ed., ed. Patricia Meyer Spacks (Norton Critical)

ISBN 978-0-393-91153-4

Pride and Prejudice, 4th ed., ed. Donald J. Gray and Mary A. Favret (Norton Critical)

ISBN 978-0-393-26488-3

Selected Letters, ed. Vivien Jones (Oxford)

ISBN: 978-0-19-953843-0

Sense and Sensibility, ed. Claudia L. Johnson (Norton Critical)

ISBN 978-0-393-97751-6

About Jane Austen:

The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen, 2nd ed., ed. Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge)

ISBN 978-0-521-74650-2

Claire Tomalin, Jane Austen: A Life (Random House / Vintage)

ISBN 978-0-679-76676-6

ENGL 530

Topic: JANE AUSTEN: A Co-Taught Seminar

INSTRUCTOR: Collins

See Engl 516 above

ENGL533.1:

American Literature Before 1900:

Topic: Herman Melville

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Shapiro

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students in this seminar will engage in an intensive study of the prose fiction of Herman Melville. We will spend a number of weeks on *Moby-Dick*, but the majority of the course will be devoted to lesser-known works (such as *Typee*, *White-Jacket*, and *Pierre*).

Our primary goal will be to understand Melville's fiction in its historical moment—to understand, on the one hand, how Melville worked in, against, and beyond dominant antebellum literary modes and, on the other, how Melville's fiction weighed in on issues such as imperialism, Native American dispossession and genocide, slavery, class inequality, and ideologies of masculinity. We will also aim to understand the history of how literary critics have made sense of Melville's fiction, and thus we will read and discuss the most influential—and some of the most recent—scholarship on Melville's fiction.

By examining how Melville's fiction in particular reflects and interprets conflicts that animated antebellum culture, students in this course will also increase their familiarity with antebellum culture in general. And, by interrogating different theoretical approaches to Melville's fiction (from formalist and poststructuralist to psychoanalytic and Marxist), students will also explore research questions and methods for the study of American literature more broadly.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

multiple in-class presentations, a bibliographic essay, final term paper

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Herman Melville, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (Penguin, 1996)
ISBN-13: 978-0140434880
- —, *Redburn* (Modern Library, 2002)
ISBN-13: 978-0375760044
- —, *White-Jacket; Or, the World in a Man-of-War* (Modern Library, 2002)
ISBN-13: 978-0812966176

- —, Moby-Dick; Or, the Whale (Penguin, 2009)
ISBN-13: 978-0143105954
- —, Pierre; Or, the Ambiguities (Penguin, 1996)
ISBN-13: 978-0140434842
- —, Israel Potter: His Fifty Years of Exile (Penguin 2008)
ISBN-13: 978-0143105237
- —, The Confidence Man: His Masquerade (Penguin, 1991)
ISBN-13: 978-0140445473
- —, Billy Budd, Bartleby, and Other Stories (Penguin, 2016)
ISBN-13: 978-0143107606

ENGL 539

Modern American Seminar

Topic: Faulkner

Instructor: Professor Klaver

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The topic for the Modern American Seminar is William Faulkner. We examine the novels and short stories set in Yoknapatawpha County. Some issues to consider are modernism, narrative experimentation, the plantation novel, Southern novel, the Old / New South, race relations, history, geography, and Faulkner's relation to other writers.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Absalom, Absalom! 0679732181

The Sound and the Fury 0679732241

Go Down Moses 0679732179

Light in August 0679732268

Sartoris 0452007631

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

one research essay, two oral reports, five research reports

ENGL 592

Creative Writing Seminar

Topic: Poetry

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Jordan

PREREQUISITE: Enrollment restricted to MFA candidates.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a graduate poetry workshop with a secondary emphasis on active reading of contemporary poetry with the goal of learning from the strategies of other writers. Students will submit two to four poems per month and respond in writing to work of their fellow poets. In addition, you will select and read two books of poetry each week and submit a short (paragraph) response to those books.

This course operates on the philosophy that you must become a skilled critical reader of poetry in order to become a better writer of it. Emphasis will be on, for lack of a better term, open form poetry, sometimes referred to as free verse. While we will look at content and critical issues in the poems, we will be more interested in the formal features of the poems—the words’ placement on the page, the syntax, narrative structure, punctuation, lineation, ordering, word choice, diction, tone—in order to become more familiar with craft techniques. In other words, instead of reading the poems for their meaning, we will examine meter, rhythm, line breaks, sentence length and complexity, breath, and movement. I do not want to hear an analyses of what you think the poem means. Our goal is to develop our knowledge and sensitivity to the varieties of poetic craft so we can identify them and use them in our own writing. Your goal is to write poems which work on many levels, from a simple, reading of place and action to a deeper more symbolic meaning. To steal and paraphrase an army slogan, Free verse isn’t free. As poets we make choices. In this class we will discuss these choices and the implications of them.

ENGL 592

Creative Writing Seminar

Topic: Fiction

INSTRUCTOR: Blackwood

PREREQUISITE: Enrollment restricted to MFA candidates.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a workshop and seminar focused on fiction aesthetics and craft. One course goal is to help fiction writers begin to artfully shape a book-length work. To this end, we will read and discuss published fiction and essays about fictional aesthetics. We will analyze and discuss how each writer builds a coherent fictional world—in particular we’ll look at how each writer borrows from past narrative forms to build this world. What do we mean by “realism”? What do we mean by “postmodernism” or “genre fiction”? Or “narration”? We’ll also focus on narrative tension as the engine that drives successful fictions. These won’t be lectures but inquiries we’ll all participate in. Ultimately, this should help you identify the various competing narratives at work in your own fiction and the specific tools you use to build them. We will workshop three stories or novel sections in the course and discuss at length how their strengths might be accentuated and weaknesses addressed in light of our discussions about aesthetics and craft.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to write and revise at least three stories and to offer substantial, writer-based critiques on peers’ work. You may also be asked to lead a discussion on a particular topic or work we’ve read.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Selected Stories, Alice Munro
- Steps, Jerzy Kosinski

Engl 593

Topic: The Quest for Insight: Exploring Intersections between Creativity Theory and Composition Theory

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Ronda Dively

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How might “creativity” be defined in the context of expository writing? What capacities of mind are typically associated with creative activity? How do the physical environment and individuals surrounding the writer influence creative endeavor? Is there a “creative” personality, and, if so, how might it be characterized? What, if anything, can be done to facilitate creative processes? These are some of the driving questions that participants in this seminar will attempt to answer as they explore cognitive, social and affective dimensions of creativity in various scientific and artistic domains (including creative writing)—with the ultimate goal of learning more about the creative dimensions of processes associated with expository writing. The eclectic course reading list will include theoretical discourse on creative achievement, empirical studies designed to characterize and/or measure creative processes in the context of problem-solving, introspective reports of famous creators engaged in pursuit of their masterworks, and scholarship on intersections between expository and creative writing processes.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to completing various informal exercises in response to assigned readings, students will complete a creativity journal focused on their semester’s work, a 20-page paper on some aspect of creativity in the context of writing, and a self-proposed final project that experiments with forms or methods for synthesizing course content.

Engl 594

Forms in Poetry (Graduate)

Topic: "The Poetry of Trauma, the Poetry of Joy"

INSTRUCTOR: Joseph

Description: This course will examine the intersection of/divergence from both joy and trauma in contemporary poetry. This course will begin with a focus on American poets whose careers began in the 1970s (post-Confessional poets) and will move forward in time to discuss poets in the midst of their careers right now

We will discuss the tendency of poets to be categorized as either a poet of joy (Stern, Clifton, Oliver, Komunyakaa) or a poet of trauma (Olds, Ai, Rich, Howe, Doty). Is this characterization of prominent contemporary poets a false dichotomy created by readers and audiences, or is there merit to the idea that poetry, as written and practiced today, has become a medium of/for these two emotional modes?

Assignments: In class writing based on each week's readings, a final project on one poet of the student's choosing (creative or scholarly), a lesson plan for teaching that selected poet.

Reading list: Bishop, Plath, Lowell, Sexton, J. Wright, Richard Hugo, Philip Levine, John Logan, Olds, Stern, Lorde, Giovanni, E. Alexander, L. Clifton, Li Young Lee, Doty, Seibles, Komunyakaa, Howe, Emerson, Huntington, Perillo, Smith, Dove, G. Brooks, Paul Monette, James L. White, Hemphill, Campo, Weigl, Turner, Flynn, Erdrich, Harjo, L. Hogan, Alexie, Hirshfield, Kenyon, Laux, Levertov, Gilbert, Gregg, Gluck, Hass, Oliver, Nye, Eady, and Ross Gay.

Books to Purchase:

This Time: New and Selected Poems, Gerald Stern

Strike Sparks: Selected Poems, 1980-2002, Sharon Olds

Engl 594

Contemporary Literature Seminar

INSTRUCTOR: Lordan

REQUIRED TEXTS

Wilhelm, *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang* 0-312- 86615-1

Hegland, *Into the Forest* 055-33- 79617

Shakespeare, "The Tempest"

Wiggins, *John Dollar* 067-10- 39555

Golding, *Lord of the Flies* 057-10- 56865

Johnson, *Fiskadoro* 006-09- 76098

Hoban, *Riddley Walker* 025-32- 12340

Barrie, *Peter Pan* 150-32- 90280

Gottlieb, *The Dream of Enlightenment* 087-14- 04435

COURSE DESCRIPTION

These stories all deal with unintended reinventions of human society. These are neither utopias nor dystopias, but stories that catch unprepared people fumbling through their own lives, trying to imagine what to do and why to do it. By discussing the ideas of the nature of humans as embodied in these books, and as laid out by Enlightenment philosophers, we'll try to figure out what the roles of social constructs (government, family, religion, ritual) are, why we have them and why they succeed or fail in doing what we want them to do, and what the roles of literature, art, and education might be. Ultimately, we'll examine where hope lies for humans.

We'll watch three films, *Peter Pan*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *Into the Forest* in an effort to consider the differences that exist between the private individual act of reading and the public collective act of viewing movies, and how those differences affect the form and content of the stories at hand, and how they reflect the division (and connection) between the individual and the community.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In-class discussions and exercises, informal response papers, and a final paper will be required.