

Department of English

Graduate Course Descriptions

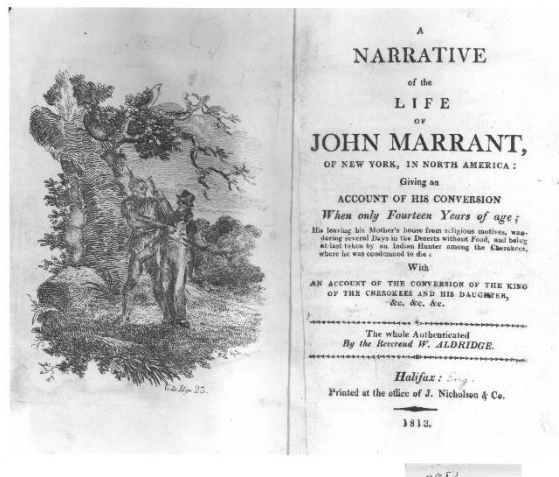
Spring 2024

ENGL 5220: Slave Narrative: Method/Interpretation

CRN 15117 | Mode: In-person | Thursdays, 4:00-6:20 | Dr. John Saillant

Fulfills: M.A.- and Ph.D.-level elective

An in-depth examination of the American slave narrative, considering its early forms, its full flowering in the abolitionist movement, and its afterlives as well as its connections to gender and sexuality. Students will read scholarly works and primary sources and will craft a final project incorporating both.



ENGL 5660: Creative Writing Workshop—Fiction

CRN 15126 | Mode: In-person | Wednesdays, 6:30-9:00 | Professor Richard Katrovas

Fulfills: Creative Writing Ph.D. or M.F.A. workshop requirement

This will be a traditional workshop in which the group critiques one another's short stories and novel chapters. Some of the writing for the course may be in response to assignments, though this will be negotiable. Each student will generate a minimum of thirty pages of prose fiction. An aspect of the course will be a far-ranging conversation on the state of the art, and where it is going.

ENGL 5680: Creative Writing—Playwriting

CRN 15129 | Mode: In-person | Mondays, 4:00-6:20 | Dr. Steve Feffer

Fulfills: *Creative Writing Ph.D. or M.F.A. workshop requirement*

“The imagination is perhaps on the verge of reasserting itself, of reclaiming its rights.”

--Andre Breton

“Tell me whom you haunt and I’ll tell you who you are.”

--Andre Breton

This is a workshop in the writing, development, and presentation of your playwriting and performance texts. We will spend most of our time in class on the sharing and workshopping of your dramatic writing. However, we will also spend a portion of our time devoted to playwriting exercises that will help you develop your existing work, start something new, integrate into your own writing process, or use rehearsal and readings for rewriting purposes.

Our goal will be the development of a new full-length play for graduate playwrights—and those with the ambition to do so (80 pages is the “sexy” length for a new full-length, so we might think of an “act” as half that); or for non-graduate-playwriting folks, a total of 40-50 pages of “**completed**” drafts (an act of a full length; or a couple of ten-minute plays and a one act; or two one acts; etc.; but some things that say “At Rise” and “End of Play” (in roughly that order). It’s just too easy to start things and not finish them—we know as playwrights, the only words that are harder to write than “at rise” are “end of play”!)

The focus of our play readings will be new dramatic work that experiments with format on the page and how that might translate to performance on the stage.

For more information, contact email: steve.feffer@wmich.edu or phone: 269-377-0640.

ENGL 5770/6970: Advanced Readings in Old Norse

CRN 15130 | Mode: In-person | Wednesdays, 4:00-6:20 | Dr. Jana Schulman

Fulfills: *Ph.D. Language requirement (if taken with Engl 5760, “Introduction to Old Norse” and each course is passed with a “B” or better); M.A.-level elective (if taken with Engl 5790, “Introduction to Old Norse”)*

Drinking in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature

The class will be devoted to further refining a reading knowledge of Old Icelandic through translating scenes and episodes that demonstrate the social importance of drinking in medieval Icelandic literature. Over the semester, we will translate these selections in order to examine these “drinking bouts” and what they reveal about Icelandic and Norwegian culture. Since ritual

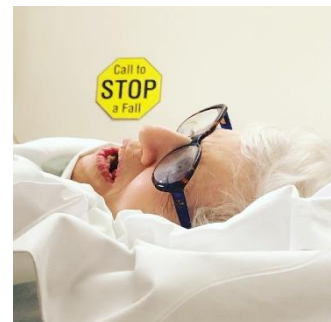
drinking frequently leads to problems (vomiting, waging, exchanging insults, among others), translating and reading these texts as well as reading secondary essays will contribute to an informed discussion of the significance of drinking and the production of alcohol. Students will write a research paper (involving close reading and the use of secondary sources) on some aspect of this and present their results to their colleagues. Reading closely and critically and writing clearly and persuasively also constitute the learning outcomes of this class. Prerequisite: One semester of Old Norse (5760, or 6970).

ENGL 5970: Text + Image: Writing & Photos

CRN 14518 | Mode: In-person | Fridays, 1:00-3:20 | Professor Thisbe Nissen

Fulfills: M.A.- and Ph.D.-level elective

In this course we'll explore work at the intersection of image and text. We'll look at photographs, write about photographs, read about photographs, read about "reading" photographs, write about writing about photographs—and even make photographs, write about them, and write about writing about them... We'll be reading and working in multiple genres: prose fiction, poetry, memoir, creative nonfiction, flash fiction, literary and art criticism, theory, photojournalism, lyric essay, and other hybrid forms that might not yet have names.



Drawing on the rich lineage of literary works that rely on, respond to, and incorporate photographs, we'll look at seminal collaborative works, like James Agee and Walker Evans'



Depression-era *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*; and *12 Million Black Voices*, with text by Richard Wright alongside the government-sponsored photographs of the Farm Security Administration; and also Roy DeCarava's intimate photos of Harlem life published in 1955 as *The Sweet Flypaper of Life*, with a fictional narrative by Langston Hughes. These works have continued to be in conversation with other creative, critical and theoretical works all over the world for nearly a century now, and we'll make our way among the theorists and critics (Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, John Berger, Geoff Dyer, Robert Adams, John Szarkowski, Marianne Hirsch, Tim Carpenter, Annette Kuhn, Jo Spence, and Patricia Holland,

among others); the photographers (Roy DeCarava, Sally Mann, Larry Sultan, Sophie Calle, Nigé Ollis, Neil Kramer, Sandy Carson, Joanne Leonard, Josephine Sittenfeld, and many more); and through selected works by writers who've incorporated photography—both original and archival—in their creations in unique and fascinating ways. These writers and artists may include Leslie Marmon Silko, W.G. Sebald, Michael Lesy, Robert Olen Butler, Teju Cole, Siri Hustvedt, Ransom Riggs, Jeffrey Sharlet, Claudia Rankin, Judith Kitchen, Robin Coste



Lewis, Dao Strom, Nikky Finney, Paisley Rekdal, Maria Romasco Moore, Marvin Heiferman, Steven Dunn, Sheila O'Connor, Lauren Groff, and Q.M. Zhang, among others.

So, dust off your Polaroids, turn on your camera-phones, haul out the family albums and high school yearbooks, sharpen your pencils and your critical eyes and get ready for a whole new kind of English course. It will involve substantial reading, and also a lot of in-class and at-home writing—both creative and critical, though not traditionally academic—and some photographing, and maybe some curation, too. This will be an adventure in seeing, interpreting, and making.

ENGL 6100: History of the Modern Novel

CRN 15136 | Mode: In-person | Tuesdays, 6:30-9:00 | Drs. Jil Larson (Spring 2024) and Scott Slawinski (Fall 2023)

Fulfills: M.A.- and Ph.D.-level elective

These two paired courses offer participants a unique opportunity to study the full history of the Anglo-American novel over the course of two semesters. The first half (Fall 2023) will tell the tale up to 1900, while the second half (Spring 2024) will take the story up to the early twenty-first century. Really conceived as a single course, the Fall and Spring sections are interwoven in such a way that the readings for Fall anticipate the assignments for Spring, while Spring will harken back to Fall. Novels are placed in dialogue with each other within and between semesters, so that, for example, *The Moonstone* anticipates *The Sound and the Fury*, and *Beloved* looks back to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In this way, the course aims to highlight the generic continuities and discontinuities inherent in the novel. These include form, genre, theme, and content, to name a few.

Another unique feature of this year-long course is the aim to build a learning community of participants who enroll in both sections of the course. While it is possible to take only one of the two sections, Drs. Slawinski and Larson hope that a significant number of students will form a cohort by committing to both semesters and thus receiving the entire story of the novel and bring to each class the full range of learning that has occurred previously.

Participants will be reading roughly a novel a week (one exception is *Middlemarch*, which will be read over the course of two weeks). Writing assignments will possibly include a seminar paper at the end of the semester, shorter essays during the semester, and presentations. Each semester will conclude with a mini-conference during exam week where participants will share their work with the entire group by providing a brief overview of their seminar papers.

This course should be useful for students of literature, creative writing, and English education.

Dr. Slawinski will be the instructor of record for Fall and Dr. Larson for Spring, but each will be attending many of the other's classes throughout the academic year.

The *tentative* reading list below is extensive, and students are encouraged to consider reading a few of the novels over the break if time allows.

Fall 2023:

Daniel Defoe: ***Moll Flanders*** (1722)
Samuel Richardson: ***Pamela*** (1740)
Charles Brockden Brown: ***Wieland*** (1798)
Jane Austen: ***Emma*** (1816)
Charlotte Bronte: ***Jane Eyre*** (1847)
Nathaniel Hawthorne: ***The Scarlet Letter*** (1850)
Susanna Cummins: ***The Lamplighter*** (1854)
Wilkie Collins: ***The Moonstone*** (1868)
George Eliot: ***Middlemarch*** (1871-1872)
Mark Twain: ***Huckleberry Finn*** (1884)
Frank Norris: ***McTeague*** (1899)
Theodore Dreiser: ***Sister Carrie*** (1900)
Charles Chesnutt: ***The Marrow of Tradition*** (1901)

Spring 2024:

Arnold Bennett, ***The Old Wives' Tale*** (1908)
Virginia Woolf, ***The Waves*** (1931)
E.M. Forster, ***A Passage to India*** (1924)
William Faulkner, ***The Sound and the Fury*** (1929)
Graham Greene, ***The Power and the Glory*** (1940)
Ralph Ellison, ***Invisible Man*** (1952)
Doris Lessing, ***The Golden Notebook*** (1962)
Jeanette Winterson, ***Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*** (1985)
Toni Morrison, ***Beloved*** (1987)
Kazuo Ishiguro, ***The Remains of the Day*** (1989)
J. M. Coetzee, ***Disgrace*** (1999)
Zadie Smith, ***White Teeth*** (2000)
Ian McEwan, ***Atonement*** (2001)

ENGL 6110: Literary Forms—Poetry

CRN 13946 | Mode: In-person | Thursdays, 4:00-6:20 | Dr. Alen Hamza

Fulfills: *M.F.A. in-genre (Poetry) or out-of-genre (Playwriting, Fiction) Creative Writing Forms requirement; in-genre (Poetry) Ph.D. Creative Writing Forms requirement*

Catalog Description: A study in form and technique in one of the four major literary genres: poetry, fiction, drama, and non-fiction.

ENGL 6150: Literary Theory

CRN 13947 | Mode: In-person | Thursdays, 6:30-9:00 | Dr. Christopher Nagle

Fulfills: *M.A.- and Ph.D.-level requirement; M.F.A. elective*

“There are no dangerous thoughts. Thinking itself is dangerous.” —Hannah Arendt

“The value of thought is measured by its distance from the continuity of the familiar.” —Theodor Adorno

“To work is to undertake to think something other than what one has thought before.” —Michel Foucault

Starting with these assumptions, the main goal of this course will be to provide a representative overview of the most important and exciting works of literary and cultural theory from the past

two centuries. We will focus primarily on the second half of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century, but not before laying some vital groundwork for understanding our more contemporary texts: first, by tracing briefly the shift from Enlightenment modes of thought to the shaping forces of Romanticism; then, by focusing on the modern triumvirate whose revolutionary contributions have shaped theory as we know it today—Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. All of the work that follows (and some of what is paired with these readings) will feature interdisciplinary and intersectional theory that challenges and critiques the Western canonical tradition by centering the critical innovations of women, queer and trans folk, and BIPOC voices and perspectives. No previous expertise in any of this course material is expected or required.

Requirements: short, weekly response papers; at least one seminar presentation, in which the student leads discussion for the session; a final, medium-length seminar paper; and (most importantly) active participation in our discussions every week.

n.b.: as in previous years, we will try to incorporate the visits of exciting visiting scholars to the department's Anthony Ellis Scholarly Speakers Series. More details will follow, but at present we are hoping to host two BIPOC scholars, one working at the intersection of queer and indigenous studies, and one who is a specialist in African-American rhetoric.

ENGL 6780: Teaching the Literature of Social Movements

CRN 15140 | Mode: In-person | Mondays, 6:30-9:00 | Dr. Allen Webb

Fulfills: M.A.-level requirement (English Education); M.A.-level elective (Literature and Language, Medieval); Ph.D.-level requirement (English Education); Ph.D.-level elective (Literature and Language, Creative Writing)

This seminar will examine the literature of historical and contemporary social movements to understand the role of literature in social change, and how teaching such literature can develop students' awareness of justice and ways to take citizen action. We will learn about social movement theory and corresponding activist pedagogy. Students in the course will decide which movements to address and develop teaching philosophies, ideas, and materials to teach about specific movements. Social movements may range from the abolition of slavery to climate change, and could include labor and socialism, chartism, womens' suffrage, Belgian Congo, civil rights, peace, anti-nuclear, LGBTQ, environmentalism, me-too, etc.



ENGL 6900: Scholarship and Writing in the Profession

CRN 10816 | Mode: In-person | Wednesdays, 1:00-3:20 | Dr. Maria Gigante

Fulfills: *M.A. requirement; M.F.A. and Ph.D. elective*

In this seminar, students will analyze and evaluate journals and articles in areas relevant to a research topic, revise and edit a scholarly essay with the support of their peers and a faculty mentor, and prepare for oral presentation and discussion of the work in an end-of-semester event. This course also acts as the culminating requirement for the M.A. in English, wherein students produce a capstone essay and present it at the public colloquium.

While ENGL 6900 is a requirement for MA students in their final year of study, it is also a beneficial course (as an elective option) for students in creative writing and literature, both at the MFA and doctoral level. Scholarly publication or conference experience can be valuable in applying for doctoral programs or entering the academic job market. ENGL 6900 provides a formal avenue to improve your research writing and pursue publication and conference presentation options, as well as build your relationship with a member of the faculty with expertise in your area of interest.

Class-time will include discussions about academic writing/publication, small group work, and individual conferences with the instructor.

