

Spring 2010 Graduate Course Descriptions

Department of English
Reed Hall 314
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AMERICAN LIT COURSES

ENGL 80513.050 :: American Novel 3: Modern Jewish Lit

David Vanderwerken

W 1:00 – 3:40

This class will study works by eight contemporary American writers whose religious heritage is Jewish. American-Jewish novelists have been a dominant influence on American writing since World War II. We will be engaged in trying to understand the distinctive nature of their contribution to recent American fiction and how their work has offered fresh perspectives on American experience. The class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Course requirements are a major paper, a presentation on a work that we will not study as a group, two survey/analyses of recent critical essays on two novels, and a comprehensive final examination.

TEXTS

1. Saul Bellow, *Herzog* (1964)
2. Rebecca Goldstein, *Mazel* (2001)
3. Cynthia Ozick, *The Shawl* (1983)
4. Chaim Potok, *My Name is Asher Lev* (1972)
5. Anne Roiphe, *Lovingkindness* (1987)
6. Isaac B. Singer, *Enemies, A Love Story* (1972)
7. Edward Lewis Wallant, *The Pawnbroker* (1961)
8. Elie Wiesel, *Night* (1958)

OTHER NOVELISTS FOR PRESENTATIONS:

Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, Pearl Abraham, Tovah Mirvis, Allegra Goodman, Norman Mailer, Alan Lelchuk, Michael Chabon

ENGL 80502.080 :: American Lit. before 1900: Claiming Authorship in 19th C. American Culture

Sarah Robbins

M 5:00 – 7:50

This course will trace and critique the social construction of authorship in 19th-century American culture. We'll begin with a survey of popular texts and genres, ranging from sensational fiction to religious tracts, from non-fiction self-improvement texts to magazine narratives. To consider how writers with serious "literary" aspirations navigated those popular culture trends, with varying degrees of success, we'll focus on two

prominent canonical authors, Poe and Hawthorne. In Poe's case, we'll read essays outlining his views of authorship and literary culture, as well as stories and poems reflective of his multi-faceted authorial identity. To position Hawthorne within the context of increasing professionalization, we'll draw on Julian Hawthorne's literary biography of his father.

One persistently vexed arena in the shifting debates over authorial identity pitted high-art conceptions of literary production against more pragmatic goals such as engaging key social issues. The mid-century epitome of the latter was Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, whose sustained influence on authorial identities we will examine not by reading that novel itself, but by analyzing such extensions of her authorial vision as George Aiken's dramatized version of the story and/or southern women writers' responses.

Shifting our attention to unique challenges faced by minority writers in the 19th century, we will study several texts illuminating efforts by African American trying to claim authorial identity. Specifically, drawing on the recently discovered serial by Julia Collins, *The Curse of Caste*; or the *Slave Bride*, and/or *Trial and Triumph* by Frances E. W. Harper, we will examine the role of "niche" periodical publications such as the *Christian Recorder* in providing access to African American writers. As a counterpoint, we will explore key moments in the career of Charles Chesnutt by reviewing private journal writings tracking his complex relations with the white literary establishment, and by revisiting his successful moves to claim publication space in the *Atlantic Monthly* and follow-up book-length publications (e.g., *The Conjure Woman*).

We'll then shift our attention to issues of gender. What should we make today of Hawthorne's famous complaint about the "damn'd mob of scribbling women" dominating the marketplace in his day—or of Melville's convoluted attempt to engage with gendered patterns of "domesticated" narrative-writing in *Pierre*? Fanny Fern's (Sara Parton's) novel *Ruth Hall* tracks one woman's successful rise to riches and renown through authorship, we'll note. But Gail Hamilton's *A Battle of the Books* and Mary Wilkens Freeman's poignant story, "A Poetess," will remind us that would-be women writers in the later 19th-century still faced numerous potential roadblocks associated with their gender.

Finally, to help characterize the still-evolving place of literary authorship in American culture at the turn from the 19th century into the 20th, we'll study Jack London's vision of the struggling artist in *Martin Eden*. Besides work on primary texts referenced above, each member of the class will be responsible for presenting a summary with critique of a book-length study of 19th-century American authorship and a course project in line with our course content and the student's particular research interests.

RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION COURSES

ENGL 80613.055 :: Women's Rhetoric

Charlotte Hogg

T 2:00 - 4:40

In this course we will examine histories, theories, and methodologies in the field of women's rhetorics. We will focus on these questions and issues: 1) What is women's rhetoric? Is there a women's rhetoric, or is the term limiting and essentializing? What are the multiple forms of women's rhetorical practices? 2) What is current scholarship in women's rhetoric and how does it recover, examine, and theorize women's rhetorical writing? 3) In what historical, social, and political contexts has women's writing emerged or been suppressed? How have women found constructive ways to use traditional rhetoric despite having been excluded from that tradition historically?

Course assignments involve short responses, a professionalization project, collaborative book review, and a final project. In addition to examining histories, theories, methodologies, and enactments of women's rhetorics, we'll think about our histories as writers (whether male or female) and how we write and speak, how we use writing and rhetoric to take action in the world, and the implications for teaching and studying the rhetoric of women writers.

Course requirements include active participation, short essays/responses, and a larger final project, and others. Tentative reading list includes Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald, Jessica Enoch, Cheryl Glenn, Nancy Mairs, Shirley Wilson Logan, and more.

ENGL 80603.060 :: Kenneth Burke

Ann George

M 2-4:40

This seminar will be a thorough examination of perhaps the most important and interesting American rhetorical and literary theorist of this century. Designed for students in rhetoric or literature, this course will include a careful consideration of Burke's major theoretical and literary work with particular emphasis on his writing before 1940 and the ways in which his rhetorical/literary theory grew out of his own literary practice and his engagement in modernist conversations about the function of art (and language, more generally) in culture. That is, we will investigate Burke's overriding interest in how language works—what effects texts (of all kinds) can have and how they create these effects. While we will be attending to the canonical Burke, the course will also introduce students to little-known or little-read Burke materials (including magazine articles, short stories, and bits from his massive correspondence). In addition, by providing an opportunity to explore Burke's relationships with other thinkers and, in particular, other American writers of the first half of the century, this course problematizes the standard representation of Burke as the eccentric hermit of Andover farm.

Primary Burke Texts: Counter-Statement (1931); Here & Elsewhere: The Collected Fiction of Kenneth Burke; Auscultation, Creation, and Revision (written 1932; published in Chesebro's Extensions of the Burkeian System—e-book); Permanence and Change (1935); Attitudes Toward History (1937); selections from Philosophy of Literary Form (1941); Grammar of Motives (1945); Rhetoric of Motives (1950); and selections from Language as Symbolic Action (1966).

Likely Requirements: Weekly response papers; oral presentation on 1930s culture; conference style abstract and presentation; seminar paper (I'll be encouraging—but not requiring—you to make use of the Burke archives).

ENGL 60203.045 :: Writing for the Professions

Carrie Leverenz

TR 12:30-2:00

Writing for the Professions offers students from any specialization and at any stage of their graduate work a chance to study the forms of writing that define the discipline of English. In the course, students will:

1. Read about how writing shapes disciplines/professions and how disciplines/professions shape writing.
2. Study common academic genres such as the prospectus, thesis, dissertation, conference presentation, book review, article, and book.
3. Rhetorically analyze publication outlets (journals, etc.) asking questions about intended audience, assumed purpose, preferred genres, stylistic conventions, and how/why publication outlets are ranked.
4. Work toward establishing productive writing processes.
5. Draft/Workshop/Revise students' own professional writing.
6. Consider challenges to normative disciplinary writing: use of personal experience, writing about teaching, multimodal composition, etc.

Readings for the course will be drawn from books like the following:

- Robert Boice, *Professors as Writers: A Self-Help Guide to Productive Writing*
- Wendy Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing*
- Eileen Carnell et al, *Passion and Politics: Academics Reflect on Writing for Publication*
- Susan Peck MacDonald, *Professional Academic Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences*
- Sonia K. Foss and Williams Waters, *Destination Dissertation: A Guide to a Done Dissertation.*

BRITISH LIT. COURSES

ENGL 60473.080 :: British Novel to 1832: Jane Austen and her Influences

Bonnie Blackwell

T 6:00 – 8:40

This course will serve as an introduction to a variety of themes related to Jane Austen, including: her historical status as a writer, conduct books and courtship novels, the status of women and the family from 1700-1830, English material culture of the 18th century, and current critical thinking on the novel.

We will read her six major novels and some of the juvenilia, as well as a selection of her favorite fiction and non-fiction authors including Edmund Burke, Gilpin, Fanny Burney, Henry Fielding, Maria Edgeworth, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Samuel Richardson. We will also read the best of Austen's critics, including Charlotte Bronte, Claudia L. Johnson, Eve Sedgwick, D. A. Miller, Joe Litvak, Mary Ann O'Farrell, and Marilyn Butler.

Requirements include regular attendance and participation, one oral presentation, one abstract, one annotated bibliography of 10-15 sources, and one research paper, 15-20 pages in length.

ENGL 80463 Post-Colonial Literatures: Before and After Orientalism: (Post) Colonial Encounters

Mona Narain

R 2:00 – 4:40

This course examines how (post) colonial theory and literature problematize and examine cultural constructions of other worlds, foreign peoples, exotic civilizations, and, at the same time, play an important part in such current constructions.

An examination of western cultural concepts allows us to see that definitions of “race,” “foreign” and the “orient” are, to use Edward Said’s terms, Orientalist constructions by the West. Beginning with Said’s view that such cultural constructions say as much, if not more, about Western culture than about the “Others” they seek to depict, we explore the West’s ideal self-definitions, its anxieties, its assumptions about the world and cosmic order. At the same time we will ask: how did these “Others” view the Westerners? The course invites students to take a dialogic stance and to question accepted notions of the nature and relationship of the West’s encounters with the East and vice versa through the means of postcolonial discourse.

Recently, one of the main critiques of postcolonial theory and literature has been its “presentist” focus. Is Postcolonial Studies merely a discourse of the late twentieth cen-

tury and thus highly limited in its perspective? To respond to this question, we use a historicist approach beginning with the early modern period into the twenty-first century and revitalize our understanding of Postcolonial Studies. We read primary texts that describe travels far and wide, focusing on the shifting definitions of home and self that result from such encounters. The course also uses texts from different cultures to analyze the instability and evolution of cultural constructions although they are often presented as “natural” and “universal” when they were written and first read.

Critical theory provides us with the vocabulary, framework, and basis for understanding and theorizing these encounters. We will read Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, critiques and responses to Said’s theory by Aijaz Ahmad and Tim Brennan, and selections from Mary Louise Pratt, Homi Bhabha, Paul Gilroy among others. Students will be invited to select a text according to their own interests to supplement their experience of the assigned readings and their work on the seminar paper. Seminar participants should be prepared for a demanding and dense reading schedule. We will read all the required course texts in their entirety with several other additional articles.

I recommend getting a good head start over the holidays with the course reading by reading

- Edward Said. *Orientalism*. (Knopf Publishing Group), ISBN 039474067X, and
- Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. (Routledge) ISBN: 0415054060

Course work will include weekly well-synthesized papers on the assigned texts for the week, research papers that address the theories and literature under discussion, extensive class participation and one class presentation.