

Spring 2024 Graduate Course List and Course Descriptions

Course Number	Course Title	Faculty	Date/time	Room	MA Period Requirement	PhD Period Requirement
Engl-GA 1084 x-listed with Irish Lit	Literature of Modern Ireland II	Kelly Sullivan	Tuesday 6:10-8:40pm	Ireland House	20th/21stC	
Engl-GA 1085 x-listed with with Irish Lit	Topics in Irish Literature, Writing the Troubles	John Waters	Monday 6:10-8:40pm	Ireland House	20th/21stC	
Engl-GA 2075.001	MA Thesis Workshop	Pacharee Sudhinaraset	Tuesday 10:00-12:00pm	306		
Engl-GA 2075.002	MA Thesis Workshop	Martha Rust	Tuesday 4:55-6:55pm	105		
Engl-GA 2270.001	(Global) Medieval Phenomenologies	Misho Ishikawa	Monday 4:55-7:40pm	306	Med/Ren	pre-1800
Engl-GA 2270.002 x-listed with Italian Studies	Paradiso	Maria Luisa Ardizzone	Tuesday 3:30pm-6:15pm	Casa Italiana, room 203	Med/Ren	pre-1800
Engl-GA 2323	Jacobean Tragedy: Sacrifice and Bare Life	John Archer	Wednesday 6:20-9:05pm	105	Med/Ren	pre-1800
Engl-GA 2540	Archives, Monuments, and Cultural Memory	Paula McDowell	Wednesday 11:00-1:45pm	306	18th/19C	PH Elective
Engl-GA 2841	American Fiction 1900-1945	Jo Hendin	Thursday 2:00-4:45pm	306	20th/21stC	
Engl-GA 2900	Aesthetics in the Postcolony	Toral Gajarawala	Thursday 4:55-7:40pm	306	20th/21stC	
Engl-GA 2902	Black Avant-Gardes in Context	Honey Crawford	Tuesday 4:55-7:40pm	306	20th/21stC	PH Elective
Engl-GA 2944	Social Life of Paper	Lisa Gitelman	Monday 11:00-1:45PM	306	20th/21stC	
Engl-GA 2957.001	Utopia from Thomas More to Science Fiction	Jenny Mann	Tuesday 2:00-4:45pm	306	Med/Ren	pre-1800

Engl-GA 2957.002 x-listed with Comp Lit	Failed States: Narratives beyond Nation	Zakir Paul	Monday 11:00-1:45pm	19 UP	20/21stC	
Eng-GA 2958.001 x-listed with German Dept.	Goethe, Hegel, Shakespeare: The Emergence of Literature as Critique	Anselm Haverkamp	Thursday 2:00-4:45pm	19UP	18th/19C	pre-1800
Eng-GA 2958.002 x-listed with German Dept.	Interdisciplinary Approach to Literature: Literature and Justice: Kleist, Kafka, Coetzee	Benjamin L. Robinson	Wednesday 2:00-4:45pm	19 UP	20/21stC	

Engl-GA 1084 x-listed with Irish Lit

Literature of Modern Ireland II

Professor Kelly Sullivan

Surveys the main currents and individual careers of Irish writers from the mid-19th to the late 20th century, surveying 19th-century fiction, the Irish Renaissance, the literature of the Civil War and Free State periods, and post-War Irish poetry, drama, and fiction.

Engl-GA 1085 x-listed with Irish Lit

Topics in Irish Literature, Black Irish Writing

Professor John Waters

This course articulates a genealogy of Irish writing on the subject of race, in Ireland and in the United States. We develop an analytical framework adequate to complex racial histories and the modalities by which these are put to service in scholarship and in popular culture. We address first a range of Irish writers on the trans-Atlantic slave trade and on the movement toward abolition; we then examine writings about Irish identity and Irish immigrant experiences by African-American writers, Frederic Douglas among them, and then consider how the wave of Irish immigrants after the Irish famine were incorporated into the racial power structure of American society. The emergence of Irish American writing on racial identities between Reconstruction and the First World War is considered alongside the early works of African American literature that attempted to understand racialized power through depictions of “passing” and theorizations of the color line. The course considers in some detail the connections between the Irish and Harlem Renaissances, including the strong but occluded role of mixed-race descendants of Irish and African-American peoples. We conclude by examining some writing by and about mixed-race people in American culture, for whom Blackness and Irishness figure, and also the coincident emergence of new Irish identities formed in Ireland by non-white Irish people.

Engl-GA 2270.002 x-listed with Italian Studies

Paradiso

Professor Maria Luisa Ardizzone

The final third of the Divine Comedy is its least user-friendly. T. S. Eliot charged this up to a certain modern prejudice against beatitude as material for poetry, since "our sweetest songs are those which sing of saddest thought." Far less seductive than the Inferno and more abstract than the brightly-colored Purgatorio, the Paradiso has a reputation for being formidable, verbose and somehow irrelevant. All the more reason to study it together. It is simultaneously the most "medieval" part of Dante's masterpiece, being rooted in historical and political upheavals of the moment and the most au courant philosophical debates coming out of Paris, as well as the most "modern," radical and daring. Grounded in the necessity of happiness and the reality of evil, it is a reflection on the foundational ideals of a culture in constant tension with the world as it is. For this reason it can and has been studied from the perspectives of history, politics, philosophy, psychology, literature and art. The course will follow the trajectory of the Paradiso, delving into the questions it poses and the history it presupposes. Students are encouraged to investigate connections between Dante and their own research interests.

Engl-GA. 2344.001

Jacobean Tragedy: Sacrifice and Bare Life

Professor John M. Archer

In this seminar, we will read key philosophical, theoretical, literary-critical texts on violence along with select tragic plays characteristic of the early Stuart period in England (1603-1625). Established work on Jacobean tragedy (to adopt this labile sub-generic category) has assimilated its remarkable depiction of violence to the Stoic values of Senecan models on the one hand, and the related notion of sacrifice on the other, with references to classical studies and cultural anthropology. The work of René Girard was central here. In a very different context, the philosopher Giorgio Agamben has disputed the sacrificial paradigm. Agamben draws our attention to what he calls "bare life" within a mode of violence prior to either the religio-sacrificial or ethico-juridical orders. Agamben's writings take in aesthetic theory, the Holocaust, U.S. detainment policies in our epoch of political violence, Foucault's biopolitics, and the divides, now in question, between animal and human, citizen and noncitizen, life and death. They have made an impact on the study of earlier European literature, partly because of Agamben's interest in ancient Rome, the medievalism he shares with Georges Bataille, and his challenge to Foucault's periodization of sovereign power, biopolitics, and their modes of violence. Jacobean tragedy, fascinated as it is with kingship, revenge, captivity, sexuality, racial difference, animality, and the how, when, and who of killing, lends itself to a reconsideration of these debates. For instance, how might early seventeenth-century drama suggest a critique of gender, sexuality, race and other issues some feel the earlier and later theorizations of violence each lack? Or, can the notion of sacrifice be sacrificed itself so easily by cultural theory or by philosophy? In the seminar, we will read Girard and Agamben, and other writers who share their concerns. The theoretical reading-list will likely include Benjamin ("Critique of Violence"), Bataille, Derrida (*The Beast and the Sovereign* selections), Rey Chow, and Arendt, as well as several recent critics of early-modern English drama. Plays will include the pre-Jacobean but influential *The Spanish Tragedy*, *The Revenger's Tragedy* now held to be Middleton's, Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, and Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. There will be one class report. A short paper early in the course will invite close reading of a key text; there will also be a 20-25 page final paper requiring serious engagement with texts from both the primary and secondary reading lists--although students may choose to emphasize one type of source over the other for that substantial paper.

Engl-GA.2540.001

Archives, Monuments, and Cultural Memory

Professor Paula McDowell

A practical and theoretical seminar whose goals, readings, and (to some extent) fieldwork will be shaped in part by participants' own concerns. Our agenda will be two-pronged: on the one hand, we will examine issues in archive and museum studies of special interest to students of literature; on the other hand, we will consider literary texts as sites of remembering and the question of "monumental" literary works. Beginning with the monuments all around us (or *formerly* around us, such as the Roosevelt Statue at the American Museum of Natural History), we will engage critically with our local landscape, learning to situate monuments in time and space and interrogating the purposes, uses, effects, and value (if any) of monuments. We will then turn to the history, philosophy, and uses of archives, balancing practical training with discussion of issues such as preservation, conservation, and repatriation; intellectual property and censorship; and the effects of institutionalization and the modern system of the disciplines. What is the relationship between cataloguing and canonization? What can librarians access in a library *catalogue* -- let alone a library -- that *you* will likely never see? What is the relationship between an "author's papers," an "author's library," and an author's works? How do we archive and catalogue *oral* texts? Along the way, we will read and/or physically examine a wide variety of genres concerned with cultural memory, such as elegies and memoirs (e.g. Professor Martha Hodes' *My Hijacking: A Personal History of Forgetting and Remembering*, 2023), and "monumental" texts concerned with cultural memory themselves (such as The Oxford English Dictionary (1857-2024), Edward Curtis' 20-volume *The North American Indian* (1907-1930), T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* (1922), and the multimedia artworks of East Village AIDS activist David Wojnarowicz).

Engl-GA 2900.001

Aesthetics in the Postcolony

Professor Toral Gajrawala

This course examines the rich lexicon of *aesthetica* produced by the conditions of decolonization and its aftermath. I refer not only to the literary canon that we typically understand as "postcolonial" but the range of texts that theorize form, beauty, genre, judgement, evaluation, style. As such, this course triangulates three areas of inquiry: aesthetic theory, postcolonial and Global South literatures, and studies of form, genre and narrative. We will thus examine a series of intractable problems in the study of modern literature and culture in the postcolony: how to understand the politics of representation in the anticolonial and postcolonial context? What is the mandate for realism- progressive, social, socialist and otherwise? What role have surrealism, existentialism, and other movements played in the development of new formal styles? How have critics defined the beautiful, the ugly, the elite and the popular? What is the value, even the imperative, of aesthetic judgement? Is there, in fact, a postcolonial aesthetics? This course will adopt a comparative methodology to think across periods, styles, modes, writers, while examining specific genres (the novel, poetry), movements (international modernism, existentialism) and particular forms (realism, surrealism). We will also be reading across poetics and aesthetic theory more broadly, including the work of Theodor Adorno, Jean Paul Sartre, Frantz Fanon, Siane Ngai etc.. and examine how these writers might help us to reflect on the postcolonial condition. Our weekly readings will be organized around certain theoretical frames: language, modernism, critique, judgement, beauty. Along the way we will encounter monolingualisms and heteroglossias, fugitive styles and improvisational aesthetics, national allegories and the Third World "difference," as well as twilight consciousness, the praise of

shadows, traveling theories and misplaced ideas. The final few weeks of the course will be organized around your own primary interests and designed by the students.

[\[1\]](#) Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York, Grove Press, 1991. 94.

Engl-GA 2901.001
Black Avant-Gardes in Context
Professor Honey Crawford

Elisabeth Alexander opens her essay “New Ideas about Black Experimental Poetry,” with a reminder to her reader that “what appears to be doctrinaire, even hegemonic, from here and now, might well have had to fight to make its space in its time.” This course on avant-garde literature and performance of the Black diaspora takes a cue from Alexander’s attention to the subjectivity of temporal perspective by revisiting and reconsidering works that troubled form, took up unusual processes, hybridized genre, championed counter-publics, and pushed ahead of their social and aesthetic contexts. We will dig into writers, artists, and intellectuals whose works remain on the fringes of academic discourse as well as those who, through their rejection of mainstream ideologies, assumed canonical positions within Black literary and performance traditions. In doing so, we will necessarily question how avant-gardes are defined and under whose terms, as well as the tensions and resonances between blackness and avant-gardism. For example, if “avant-gardism” in the 21st Century is argued to be an inadequate or unravelling concept, might studies of the aesthetic and critical preoccupations of Afro-futurism encourage new and more apt theories of the avant-garde? Course materials will draw from poetry, theatre, films, novels, music, performance art, and hybrid forms.

Engl-GA 2944.001
The Social Life of Paper
Professor Lisa Gitelman

What is the cultural work performed by or with the technology of paper, that most excellent of all Chinese inventions? How might a history and theory of paper supplement recent accounts of media, formats, and genres? What does a focus on paper stand to tell us about artifacts like “the book” or constructs like “the literary,” for instance, or even “the digital”? What is the work of paper in the production of knowledge, the shared imagination of value, and the persistence of privileges and inequalities? What would it mean to imagine a paperless future? Organized around discussions of readings in common, this course offers students an opportunity to think creatively about their own methods and objects of study.

Engl-GA 2957.001
Utopia: From Thomas More to Science Fiction
Professor Jenny Mann

A “utopia” is an imaginary world, a fantastical “no-place” that claims to convey important truths about the real world. This course surveys the literary genre of utopia from the 16th to the 21st century, focusing on attempts to invent new worlds through fiction. Beginning with Thomas More’s *Utopia*, we will explore utopia’s emergence in the sixteenth century in response to European political upheaval and colonial exploitation. We will then examine how Anglophone writers transform utopian visions in the 18th and 19th centuries. Finally, we’ll consider how utopia is re-worked in 20th-century science fiction, particularly in its seemingly paradoxical emphasis on both fantasy and realism. Topics will include the politics of gender, sexuality, and race; the relationship between animal and machine; the predicament of an alien in a strange land; the purpose of technology in a perfect society; the relationship between literary form and political theory; and the textual forms characteristic of utopian fiction by Shakespeare, Bacon, Cavendish, Swift, Griggs, Wells, Huxley, Dick, Le Guin, Atwood, Park Hong, Wright, and Jemisin. Students will have the option of developing critical or creative final writing projects.

Engl-GA 2957.002 x-listed with Comp Lit

Failed States: Narratives beyond Nation

Professor Zakir Paul

This course will take a comparative foray into modern novel and narrative theory by questioning the equation between the rise of the novel, the bourgeois subject, and the nation state. What techniques and traces remain in the interstices of such genealogies? Where and how do marginalized figures appear in the novel (the worker, the foreigner, the orphan, the artist, the prisoner, the adulterer, the migrant, the insane, the “gypsy,” the prostitute...)? How does their appearance alter the economics, logics, and atmosphere of time and space? How finally do borders, civil and international war disturb the legislated stability of identifying, reading, and writing as a citizen of a nation state?

Eng-GA 2958.001 x-listed with German Dept

Goethe, Hegel, Shakespeare: The Emergence of Literature as Critique

Professor Anselm Haverkamp

Political criticism (in the general sense of the word ‘political’) is no recent invention, it is the oldest mode of literary application, which limits the reach of literature from the start (Plato’s *Politeia*). In the *Structural Transformation of the Literary Sphere* that occurred after the 18th century (Habermas’s title), literature’s ways of representation came to include critique, and criticism aesthetic critique. The exemplary scene for this turn is Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s* involvement with Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. The philosopher Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* made world historical sense of this primal scene of a literary critique. In a close reading of Shakespeare’s plays, which is unrivaled and little recognized in its depth up to now, Hegel traced and marked in Shakespeare’s theater the threshold of the modern world in its critical emergence. The seminar shall elaborate the theoretical approach of Hegel’s critical method as the model of a ‘new’ criticism as a new historicism and discuss some consequences for the theater performance after Shakespeare and the novel after Goethe.

Engl-GA 2958.002 x-listed with German Dept.

Interdisciplinary Approach to Literature: Literature and Justice: Kleist, Kafka, Coetzee

Professor Benjamin L. Robinson

Kleist, Berlin, 1800s – Kafka, Prague, 1910s – Coetzee, Cape Town, 1980s. Reading these three writers shows how the question of justice has been posed and reconfigured – from the revolutionary epoch, to the climax and collapse of European imperialism in the First World War, and on to the period of anti-colonization and neocolonial predations of globalization. In each case, the literary engagement with justice gives rise to distinctive kinds of literature and probing explorations of modern political life. Saturated by the injustices of their times, these literary works expose aporias in the law, navigate intractable problems of personal and institutional complicity, reflect on the history and the form of rendering justice (or denying it), and, for lack of a clear theoretical conception, convey a sense of the justice that is felt to be missing. What does reading literature contribute to the theory of justice?

Topics of discussion include the critique of violence, poetic license, the history of modern rights, biopolitics and governmentality, activism and vulnerability, the “feeling” for justice and messianicity, precarity and social justice, racial and sexual justice, truth and reconciliation, climate justice. Theoretical readings include Arendt, Benjamin, Butler, Chakrabarty, Derrida, Foucault, Mbembe, Nietzsche.