

## **Spring 2009 English Undergraduate Course Descriptions**

*As the Department implements its new major requirements for the B.A. in English, we will include in our descriptions notes about a particular course's fulfilling the new requirements for the major OR the area requirements for the previous major. On occasion, a "major figures" course may fulfill an area requirement for the old major, though not listed as such in the previous catalogs. Students interested in such a possibility should petition the Department's Undergraduate Director.*

### **ENG 241: Survey of American Literature I**

**MW 2:30-3:45pm Vincent Perez**

Major figures and movements in American literature from the Colonial Period to the Civil War.

FULFILLS THE AMERICAN SURVEY REQUIREMENT IN THE NEW MAJOR

### **ENG 298: Writing About Literature**

**MW 1:00-2:15pm Timothy Erwin**

**TR 10:00-11:15am Anne Stevens**

This course will explore the strategies and terms essential to the analysis of literary texts, to the crafting of effective arguments about literature, and to the evaluation of those arguments. We will focus particularly on the process of close textual reading, on the development of the genuine methods that lead to interesting arguments, on the effective use of evidence, and on the methods and materials central to literary research. Throughout the course, we will also explore questions about the nature and purpose of literature, of particular literary genres, and of literary analysis itself. To that end, students will not only read, discuss, and write about a varied selection of great poems, short stories, and plays, but also work together to improve each other's writing.

FULFILLS THE ENG 298 REQUIREMENT IN THE NEW MAJOR

### **ENG 303: Introduction to Literary Theory and Criticism**

**TTh 2:30-3:45 pm Megan Becker-Leckrone**

As a course on the theories of literary study, English 303 will introduce you to terminology and techniques you can use to make your own reading experiences productive. But it will also examine the grounds upon which those terms and techniques have been established in the first place. The survey will proceed historically, aiming to recognize the broad continuities as well as the disputes among critics regarding the nature of "literature," "language," "interpretation," and other related concepts whose meaning we often take for granted. In other words, this course is devoted to probing the assumptions and delineating the history behind the most basic practices of literary study, as they have been established by a rich field of discourse stretching from the fifth century BCE to the present.

FULFILLS THE LITERARY THEORY REQUIREMENT IN THE OLD AND NEW MAJOR

### **ENG 401A: Advanced Composition**

**Online Denise Tillery**

Study of expository prose, with exploration of its several forms and intensive practice in writing. May be repeated to a maximum of six credits with consent of instructor.

### **ENG 402A: Creative Writing II: Fiction**

**Tuesday 4:00-6:45pm Pablo Medina**

This course assumes that much fiction is based on the author's personal experience and that the best stories are ones where the author's ego disappears behind the narrative tapestry. The course will serve as a forum for the discussion of different elements of the short story and/or the novella, as well as a workshop where student writing will be encouraged and critiqued. Students will be asked to complete three stories of different lengths and to do an oral presentation on a master writer of their choosing.

### **ENG 402A: Creative Writing II: Poetry**

**Tuesday 4:00-6:45pm Claudia Keelan**

### **ENG 420A: Survey of Literary Criticism**

**TTh 11:30-12:45pm Megan Becker-Leckrone**

This course will focus exclusively on twentieth-century texts, surveying some of the most important theoretical ideas and articulations of contemporary theory. It will do so in part by reading work by the “canonical” figures of theory – Lacan, Barthes, Foucault, Benjamin, Kristeva, de Man, and Derrida – but also by focusing specifically on works (by these authors and others) that, simply put, show what rigorous theory looks like at its best. In the process, I hope to introduce you to the major “schools” of theory that have dominated critical discourse since at least the 1960s, but our readings will not be organized around these “schools.” Nor will this introduction (as opposed to my 303 and 703 survey courses) always proceed chronologically or topically. Literary theory does, however, most certainly have a history (one of the things the “schools of theory” approach tends to obscure), and in the course of our survey, I promise you will come to understand it clearly.

In general, class meetings will center around reading a single essay or excerpt, working carefully through it by means of explication, questions, and discussion. There will be – I hope – much puzzling over difficult passages. We will also proceed with the “less is more” philosophy, spending lots of time with relatively few pages of text, rather than aiming exhaustively to conquer tomes. Course requirements include: reading and being prepared to talk about the scheduled text, reading secondary or supporting material I may give you (generally, editors’ introductions and my own handouts), and completing written work on time. You will be graded on your attendance and participation, and your written work.

### **ENG 426A: Religion and Literature**

**TTh 8:30-9:45am Roberta Sabbath**

This comparative study of the Tanakh (Old Testament), New Testament, and Qur’an will focus on thematic connections amongst these sacred texts using contemporary literary theory and hermeneutics.

### **ENG 432A: Chaucer**

**MW 1:00-2:15pm John Bowers**

An intensive study of *The Canterbury Tales* with emphasis on language, historical setting, gender politics, and close readings of key passages in this foundational “anthology” of English literature.

FULFILLS THE MEDIEVAL REQUIREMENT IN THE OLD MAJOR AND THE PRE-1800 REQUIREMENT IN THE NEW MAJOR

### **ENG 434A: Shakespeare: Tragedies**

**TTh 10:00-11:15am Evelyn Gajowski**

This course is devoted to the study of seven of Shakespeare’s tragedies: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Hamlet*, *Titus Andronicus*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*. We’ll try to understand the problems he chose to dramatize, how he chose to dramatize them, what characterizes them as a genre, and why he is considered the greatest playwright in the world. To that end, his dramatic texts constitute our primary subject matter. We’ll approach them from a variety of perspectives and through various activities: doing close readings, performing scenes, viewing cinematic texts, reading selected historical documents and contemporary criticism. Because as a practicing playwright Shakespeare wrote for the stage, not the page, we’ll consider his dramatic texts as scripts for performance, as well as literary artifacts worthy of analysis. The course employs the strategies of an interactive pedagogy, aiming to create a community of interpreters who participate in the construction of meaning together with the professor. Class meetings are structured around projects such as performance groups/oral reports and discussions of assignments, therefore, in addition to lectures on the part of the professor. Required work: 2 essays (40%); final exam (20%); 7 film quizzes (20%, pass/fail); class participation (15%); 1 performance group or oral report (5%, pass/fail).

### **ENG 440A: Medieval English Literature**

**TTh 11:30-12:45pm Ken Eckert**

English language and literature from 1100 to 1485, exclusive of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. Special emphasis on *Havelock the Dane*.

FULFILLS THE MEDIEVAL REQUIREMENT IN THE OLD MAJOR AND THE PRE-1800 REQUIREMENT IN THE NEW MAJOR

### **ENG 443C: Later Eighteenth-Century Literature**

**TTh 1:00-2:15pm Anne Stevens**

This course will focus primarily on three British novels: Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela*, Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, and Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*. Although they are among the most influential novels in all of European literature, they are rarely taught in undergraduate courses because of their length (taken together, over 2000 pages in modern editions!). We’ll take the time in this class to do justice to these complex and fascinating texts, while

supplementing our discussions of these novels with occasional glances at the poetry, drama, and intellectual prose of the years 1740 to 1780.

FULFILLS THE RESTORATION/18TH CENTURY REQUIREMENT IN THE OLD MAJOR AND THE PRE-1800 REQUIREMENT IN THE NEW MAJOR

**ENG 449A: Survey of British Literature I**

**MW 10:00-11:15am John Bowers**

An intensive survey covering the historical periods from the Medieval to the 18th Century with focus upon major authors, genres, and canonic literary works. What every English major ought to know!

FULFILLS THE BRITISH SURVEY REQUIREMENT IN THE NEW MAJOR

**ENG 449B: Survey of British Literature II**

**TTh 2:30-3:45pm Christopher Decker**

FULFILLS THE BRITISH SURVEY REQUIREMENT IN THE NEW MAJOR

**ENG 462A: Modern British and Irish Poetry**

**MW 11:30-12:45pm Nick LoLordo**

FULFILLS THE TWENTIETH CENTURY REQUIREMENT IN THE OLD MAJOR

**ENG 471A: Modern English Novel**

**TTh 11:30-12:45pm Beth Rosenberg**

The modern British novel is best known for its radical experimentation in narrative form and content, specifically the “stream-of-consciousness” technique. This course will survey the development of the British novel from its late nineteenth-century beginnings through the first half of the twentieth century, placing each novel within aesthetic, historical, and political contexts. Not only will we explore the meaning of “modernism,” but we will come to understand the impact of Freud, Marx, and Darwin and discover how the disintegration of stable belief systems is represented in these modernist narratives. The course will be heavily dependent on class discussion, and further direction of the course will be guided by student interests. Novels covered will be Samuel Becket, *Murphy*; Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*; Ford Maddox Ford, *The Good Soldier*; E. M. Forster, *Passage to India*; James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier*; Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*; plus various critical articles to be placed on e-reserve. Course requirements: two five- to seven-page papers, weekly response papers, final exam.

FULFILLS THE TWENTIETH CENTURY REQUIREMENT IN THE OLD MAJOR

**ENG 473C: The Contemporary American Novel**

**Monday 4:00-6:45pm Pablo Medina**

This course will explore the aesthetic and thematic concerns of the Contemporary American Novel beginning with William Kennedy’s *Ironweed* and culminating with Junot Díaz’s Pulitzer-prize winning *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Along the way we will read six more books, which will include Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*, Ivonne Lamazares’ *The Sugar Island*, David Markson’s *The Last Novel*, and Russell Banks’ *The Darling*, along with two books chosen by Mr. Banks, who will be visiting the class during the month of February.

FULFILLS THE TWENTIETH CENTURY REQUIREMENT IN THE OLD MAJOR

**ENG 477A: Film Noir and Its Literature**

**Wednesday 4:00-6:45pm Felicia Campbell**

A study of the gritty black and white world of film *noir* whose roots lie in hard boiled fiction, German Expressionism and post World War II disillusionment. Authors studied include: James M Cain, Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and Philip K. Dick. Films include: *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Laura*, *Blade Runner*, *Gilda* and others. Each student will research a film not covered by the class and make a presentation on it. The text *Crime Novels: American Noir of the 30s and 40s* is available both from our book store and on Amazon.

**ENG 485A: Asian Literature**

**Thursday 4:00-6:45pm Felicia Campbell**

This course examines modern and contemporary Asian Literature using current films for visual context. Texts include: *Story Wallah* by Shyam Selvadurai, *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie, Red Azalea by

Anchee Min and *The Wild Sheep Chase* by Haruki Murakami. Each student will select one other work of his/her choice to critique. The course aims to make the student aware of the scope and variety of modern and contemporary Asian fiction, understand the nature of the Asian diaspora, and more fully understand themselves in a world context through fiction, as well as to see how Americans are viewed from an Asian perspective.