

English Department
Course Descriptions

Fall 2008



ENG	507	Sem Superheroes/Media	Saunders, Benjamin
ENG	510	Thtre Wealth & Poverty	Kintz, Linda

Deep concerns about the contradictions between wealth and poverty coexist have motivated playwrights in many eras, and a tradition of very strong plays has emerged from those concerns. The focus of this course is on reading plays from a variety of historical and geographical locations, but the study of these plays will not remain simply at the level of the written text. Our study will also include the following elements: a) whenever possible, we will also view versions of the plays on film; b) short excerpts from theatre and performance theory will also be part of the analysis; and c) historical readings about the period in which the plays were written and first performed will also be important. The class will be discussion-centered, so that students will have an opportunity to read and think about their interpretations of the plays from as concrete a perspective as possible, and the class will include at least one play being performed live in the community, with actors and directors joining some of the class discussions. Plays will be chosen from the following (although several very recent plays may also be added): Maxim Gorki, Russia, *The Lower Depths* (along with different versions of the play filmed by Akira Kurosawa and Jean Renoir); Georg Büchner, Germany, *Woyzeck*; Dario Fo, Italy, *We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!*; Ariel Dorfman, Chile, *Widows*; Manjula Padmanabhan, India, *Harvest*; Osvaldo Dragun, Argentina, *The Man Who Turned Into a Dog*; Suzan-Lori Parks, US, *In the Blood*; Anna Deavere Smith, US, *Fires in the Mirror*; Aimé Césaire, Martinique, *A Season in the Congo*; Enda Walsh, Ireland, *The Walworth Farce*; Tim Crouch, Scotland, *England*; Fateh Azzam, Palestinian American, *Baggage*; Adrienne Kennedy, US, *An Evening With Dead Essex*; Caryl Churchill, England, *Serious Money*; Sam Shepard, US, *Curse of the Starving Class*; and a collection of short plays produced by the Federal Theatre Project during the Depression in the US.

ENG	510	History of Superheroes	Saunders, Benjamin
ENG	528	Old English I	Bayless, Martha
ENG	536	Adv Shakespeare	Bovilsky, Lara

This course will provide a close look at a number of Shakespeare's major plays. Topics for discussion may include Shakespeare's development within and across genres; his dialogues with other texts and writers; his dramaturgy; his changing reputation; his representations of consciousness, emotion, history, familial and political conflict, masculinity and femininity, desire and sexuality, power, and authorship itself; and the language he uses to stage his ideas. We'll augment our reading with prompts from Shakespeare's contemporaries and ours, to see some of the stories that have been and can be told about Shakespeare.

ENG	546	Restoration & 18C Lit	Dugaw, Dianne
ENG	585	Television Studies	Sen, Biswarup
ENG	604	Intern Literary Edit	Witte, John
ENG	604	Intern Comm Literacy	Clark, Suzanne
ENG	608	Wrk Job Search	Pyle, Forest
ENG	612	Comp GTF Sem II	Bergquist, Carolyn

FLR	511	Folklore & Religion	Wojcik, Daniel
FLR	585	Film & Folklore	Sherman, Sharon

Graduate Seminars

ENG	615	Top The New Rhetoric	Crosswhite, James
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Participants in this seminar will gain a close familiarity with what is arguably the most important work of rhetorical theory published in the last 200 years: *The New Rhetoric* by Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. Through our study of this work, we will also gain an understanding of the rhetorical tradition and some of its main themes and accomplishments: figures of speech, *topoi* or *loci communes*, epideictic, reception theory, and much more.

The New Rhetoric is a 500+ page treatise published in French in 1958 and in an English translation in 1969. It has been in print ever since. It is widely recognized to be a significant contribution to rhetorical theory, and yet although it is widely cited, it is seldom studied in its entirety. There are many reasons for this. It is enormously ambitious. It works across disciplines. It is long. Its content is dense and detailed, and requires study and discussion and thought. The challenges are such that even few scholarly treatments of *The New Rhetoric* move much beyond the first 100 pages or so—the more general theoretical section.

This is a shame because the last 300 pages of the book survey—under the heading “techniques of argumentation”—the many forms by which people are moved to believe and to act and to identify with one another. The forms under study here are not logical forms but rhetorical forms—the forms of the informal. They are abstracted from wide-ranging examples, from different languages and cultures, from law, fiction, poetry, drama, sacred writings, philosophy (and more), and from hundreds of different writers and speakers.

This work has implications for criticism and for critical theory, for philosophy and social theory, and for the study of culture in general. No prerequisites. We will not assume any specialized knowledge, and we will take it slow. One two-page paper due each week. Students who would like to write a longer seminar paper may enroll in independent study for the following term if they choose.

ENG	630	Top Early Mod Travel	Bovilsky, Lara
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Amazons and alligators, cannibals and “monstrous” Caliban, Utopians, men with feet for heads, and worm-men, Pequots and Praying Indians, canoes and tobacco. Such people and objects were introduced to Europeans through fantastically plausible, (un)believable depictions in travel literature, short fiction, drama, captivity narratives, missionary and promotional tracts, engravings, and ethnographies. This course will consider the diverse meanings and uses they possess in early modern texts written and read on both sides of the Atlantic, and in modern reactions to those texts. How are European and Native American interactions represented? How do established literary conventions affect new geographical and cultural awareness and vice versa? What did travel mean for the individual man or woman versus the nation? How did indigenous cultures respond to the presence of Europeans? Primary texts will include Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, excerpts from Columbus’s reports and Montaigne’s travel journal, Roger Williams’s *Key into the Language of America*, Cabeza de Vaca’s *Castaways*, Guaman Poma de Ayala’s *Letter to a King*, Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* and John Smith’s *True Relation*. We will also examine some modern representations of these colonial encounters in fiction and film.

ENG 650 Top Emily Dickinson Ford, Karen

Our main undertaking in this seminar will be to read all of Dickinson's poems and to refine our skills in writing and talking about poetry generally and Dickinson's demanding poetry in particular. We will also read some of her letters about poetry and major critical studies of Dickinson's work--ranging from the early New Critical approaches to poststructuralist, feminist, cultural studies, and New Textual Criticism approaches. Seminar members will write a short close reading, give an oral presentation on a major critical book, and complete various steps toward a 12-15-page seminar paper (abstract, annotated bibliography, draft, and revision). We will read Dickinson's poems in the Franklin edition.

ENG 660 Top Post 1945 Autobiog Tolentino, Cynthia

Autobiography is often seen as a genre that affirms the triumph of American individualism and offers privileged insight to United States cultures. To explore the limits of such views, this course situates postwar autobiography in the context of the post-World War II U.S. state's promotion of the liberal individual, national anxieties about race and sexuality, emerging social movements, and U.S international ascendancy. We will be less interested in determining whether a text should be classified as an autobiography than in studying the ways that writers interpret the genre and raise questions about personal and collective advocacy, experience and authenticity, as well as literary value. Readings include critical essays on issues of autobiography, representation, and historiography.

ENG 690 Intro Grad Studies Eng Bohls, Elizabeth

ENG 695 Top Film Theory Karlyn, Kathleen

This seminar is for graduate students interested in doing advanced work in cinema, television and other forms of popular culture. It will provide an introduction to the theoretical perspectives that have shaped contemporary scholarship in these areas. We will move historically, beginning with early efforts to create a theory of cinema out of existing aesthetic and sociological paradigms, to the impact of Cultural Studies on film theory and the relation between the two. We will place each theoretical model in its historical and critical context, and as much as possible test it by watching examples of film and television texts. Some of topics we will study include the "culture and civilization" tradition, Marxism, psychoanalysis, apparatus theory, stars, feminism, race, queer theory, postmodernism and TV. Our readings will include selections by Matthew Arnold, Sergei Eisenstein, Christian Metz, Stuart Hall, Laura Mulvey, Linda Williams, Richard Dyer, Ella Shohat, Alex Doty, Henry Jenkins and others. Students will be expected to work in depth on one area that has particular relevance to their research interests.

FLR 681 Hist/Theo Folklore Res Wojcik, Daniel

This class examines the nature of scholarly inquiry, research questions, and techniques. Historic orientation with emphasis on ideological development of folkloristics from its beginnings to the present.