

**VCU DEPARTMENT  
OF ENGLISH**

**GRADUATE  
COURSE  
DESCRIPTIONS**

**Spring 2013**

**ENGL 500-003****Practicum: Teaching College English**

A course for graduate teaching assistants only. The course provides training, instructional support and professional development for graduate teaching assistants. It includes practical teaching strategies, curricula development, and managerial skills for the classroom, the Writing Center, and the Computer Center. Does not count toward graduate degrees. Please contact instructor for course details at foprichard@vcu.edu.

**Prichard****MWF 1:00-1:50pm****Call#: 12265****ENGL 500-004****Practicum: Teaching College English**

Semester course; 1-6 credits. May be repeated for credit. May not be applied toward degrees in English. Prerequisite: permission of director of graduate studies. Student participation in planned educational experience under the supervision of English department faculty. The practicum may include classroom teaching, Writing Center tutoring, or participation in research projects.

**Strong****TBA****Call #: 28476****ENGL 528-901****Children's Literature II**

Housed in School of Education. Please contact School of Education for course details at 828-1305.

**TBA****W 7:00-9:40pm****Call#: 12266****ENGL 552-901****Teaching English as a Second Language**

Housed in School of Education. Please contact School of Education for course details at 828-1305.

**Franson****W 4:00-6:40pm****Call#: 23053****ENGL 560-001****Special Topics in British Literature: Shakespeare**

In this course, we will consider the development of Shakespeare's poetic and dramatic techniques over the course of his 20+ year career in the theater. We will begin by reading two of his most accomplished history plays (Richard II and 1 Henry IV) We will then read four comedies (A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It and Twelfth Night). We will then read six tragedies (Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, and Antony and Cleopatra. And we will end the semester with his late romance The Tempest. There will be a midterm and a final exam, plus a short essay and a longer "research" essay. This course will be taught in combination with the undergraduate course ENGL 401-001.

**Sharp****MWF 11:00-11:50am****Call #: 29350**

**ENGL 560-002****Special Topics: Ends of the British Empire**

In 1883, the historian J. R. Seeley observed of the British Empire, "We seem[. . .] to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind." Not long after, the empire Seeley described would disintegrate with greater speed than any fit, and with much presence of mind, documented in poetry, drama, memoir, and fiction written in English all over the world. Beginning with Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and ending with Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, this advanced course examines the ends—the geographical and epistemological extremities, the economic and political intentions and purposes, the imaginative and material consequences, as well as the always-impending termination—of this empire on which the sun had once never set. The literature of this long twentieth century includes writing by Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, Raja Rao, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie, Kazuo Ishiguro, Benjamin Zephaniah, Alan Moore, and (not too many) more. This course will be taught in combination with undergraduate course ENGL 414-001.

**Chan****TR 12:30-1:45pm****Call #: 29351****ENGL 560-003****Special Topics: Modern Scottish Literature**

In the autumn of 2014, the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn (24 June 1314) in which Robert the Bruce vanquished the army of Edward II, Scotland will hold a referendum on independence from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This decisive choice comes at the end of a century of growing nationalism, including the founding in the 1920s of the National Party of Scotland by, among others, the poet Hugh MacDiarmid (Christopher Grieve). This course will look at modern Scottish literature from MacDiarmid through the present day, with an emphasis on studying the ways in which writers imagine the nation of "Scotland." Poets may include MacDiarmid, Edwin Muir, Norman MacCaig, Sorley MacLean, Liz Lochhead, Jackie Kay, Robert Crawford, W. N. Herbert, and Kathleen Jamie; fiction writers may include Neil Gunn, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Muriel Spark, A. L. Kennedy, Alasdair Gray, and Irvine Welsh.

**Latane****F 2:00-4:40pm****Call #: 29393****ENGL 570-001****Special Topics: Hard Science Fiction**

Contemporary film, television, digital and written examples of Hard Science Fiction, a genre that purports to incorporate "plausible" extrapolations from real contemporary science. We will ask questions about the suppositions informing the genre, while reading texts and watching a variety of media closely in cultural and formal terms. Our primary focus as always will be on the texts themselves,

but we will look for patterns and themes in the works as we analyze them. In two cases we will watch texts be transformed from novel to film (*Stalker*) and from novel to film to film (*Solaris*), in both cases including seminal films by the Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky. The course will be taught primarily via discussion. Texts by writers such as Lem, A. & B. Strugatsky, Benford and Brin; films such as *Aliens*, *Gattaca*, *Blade Runner*, and *Terminator*. Evaluation is by discussions, short papers, and a longer final paper. This course is synchronous with ENGL 481, GENRES: HARD SCIENCE FICTION. In addition to the requirements for ENGL 481, graduate students will additionally read some criticism and theory and offer an in-class presentation.

**Columbia**

**MWF 12:30-1:45pm**

**Call #: 29352**

**ENGL 570-901**

**Special Topics: Media Technologies in Contemporary American Novels**

This course will explore the presence of media technologies in contemporary North American novels, from handwritten note in Richard Powers' *The Echo Maker*, film in David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, cyberspace in Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash*, the body in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, to biotechnology in Nancy Kress' *Beggars in Spain*. This class will look at how our novels figure and imagine these mediating technologies, as well as how these media technologies shape and inform the novels' narrative structures. In addition to studying the technological imaginaries at work and at play in the novels, we will attend to the philosophical and social implications of these technologies with regards to our individual and collective subjectivities. Our engagement with these novels will take shape in direct conversation with theoretical texts by authors including Wendy Chun, Jacques Derrida, Alexander Galloway, Mark B. N. Hansen, Marshall McLuhan, Susan Squier, Eugene Thacker, and Michele White.

**Rhee**

**MW 4:00-5:15pm**

**Call #: 29081**

**ENGL 606-901**

**Literary Criticism**

This course offers a comparative study of current critical approaches to literary texts (reader-oriented, formalist, psychoanalytic, archetypal, structuralist, post-structuralist, feminist and gender-oriented, new historicist, multicultural, and postcolonial). These approaches, and the theories behind them, will be evaluated in terms of their capacity to address major components of the literary process (author, text, reader, history, culture). They will also be tested on selected literary texts by Shakespeare, Blake, Keats, Mary Shelley, Hawthorne, Melville, Henry James, Gilman, Dickinson, Joyce, Stevens, and Adrienne Rich. The goals of this course are twofold: (1) to expand our repertory of critical methods, grounding

our interpretive practice in a more coherent theory of literary signification; (2) to encourage us to examine the rhetorical strategies that literary texts employ to generate responses, and our own interpretive moves in response to their prompts.

**Cornis-Pope**

**MW 5:30-6:45pm**

**Call #: 25095**

**ENGL 611-901**

**Authors: Fitzgerald & Hemingway**

F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway met in April 1925 in the Dingo Bar, rue Delambre, Paris, just after the publication of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and shortly before the publication of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. The relationship that developed between them during the next fifteen years was important to both of them. In this course we will examine works by both of these authors, looking closely at the ways in which their stormy friendship influenced their writing and the direction of their literary careers. Our major objective will be to acquaint ourselves with the contributions to American letters of Fitzgerald and Hemingway through close reading and careful discussion of much of the fiction written by them—particularly of that fiction written during the time of their friendship, 1925-1940. Another main objective will be to familiarize ourselves with the major source material—biographical, bibliographical, and critical—for each author; and through the use of this material we will draw conclusions about their relationship to each other and to the time in which they wrote.

**Mangum**

**W 7:00-9:40pm**

**Call #: 25101**

**ENGL 614-901**

**Cultural Discourse: African American Poetry Since 1980**

This course will focus on the major figures and schools that have emerged in African American poetry of the past three decades, beginning with poets who began writing in the wake of the Black Arts Movement (Clifton, Knight), continuing with elder figures whose influence over younger poets has been considerable (Dove, Komunyakaa, Ai), and concluding with the generation of poets who developed partially as a result of the Cave Canum and Darkroom Collective movements (Young, Tretheway, Jackson, Hayes, Smith). We will also examine the work of writers who work outside of the prevailing styles—writers such as Reginald Shepherd, who aligns himself with a gay lyric in the mode of Hart Crane, or Harryette Mullen, whose allegiances are avant gardist. Our class meetings will consist largely of seminar style discussions of individual poets, but some class meetings will be devoted to workshops of students' imitations (original poems in the modes of the writers we will discuss). All students will be asked to make a substantial in-class presentations, and may choose one of the

following approaches for their scholarly or creative work: to write two short essays of 5-7 pages and a final essay of 15-20 pages; or two 5-7 page essays and six imitations.

**PROBABLE TEXTS:**

Ai, Vice: New and Selected Poems (Norton)

Lucille Clifton, Blessing the Boats: New and Selected Poems 1988-2000.

Rita Dove, Selected Poems (Vintage)

Terrance Hayes, Lighthouse (Penguin)

Major Jackson, Leaving Saturn (Georgia)

Etheridge Knight, The Essential Etheridge Knight (Pittsburgh)

Yusef Komunyakaa, The Pleasure Dome: New and Collected Poems (Wesleyan)

Harryette Mullen, Sleeping with the Dictionary (California)

Reginald Shepherd, Red Clay Weather (Pittsburgh)

Tracy K. Smith, Duende (Graywolf)

Natasha Trethewey, Native Guard (Harcourt/Houghton Mifflin)

Kevin Young, Dear Darkness (Knopf)

**Wojahn**

**R 4:00-6:40pm**

**Call #: 29093**

**ENGL 666-001**

**Creative Writing: Fiction: Novel**

Restricted to second- and third-year MFA students. A two-semester graduate fiction workshop in which participating writers will read and analyze the structure of novels in all genres while they draft novels of their own. Not for the faint of heart...since each member of the workshop will be expected to complete at least a book-length first draft by the end of the spring semester. Graduate writers planning to enroll should not enroll in other writing workshops.

**De Haven**

**F 2:00-4:40pm**

**Call #: 28656**

**ENGL 666-901**

**Creative Writing: Short Fiction**

Prerequisite: Graduate standing in the MFA Program, or permission of the Creative Writing Committee. This class is a graduate writing workshop in short fiction. Each student will be expected to produce a minimum of fifty pages of original short fiction for the class. Students will be expected to provide written critiques of all work submitted to the class by their peers. There will be additional reading assignments, as well.

**McCown**

**T 4:00-6:40pm**

**Call#: 21108**

**ENGL 667-901**

**Creative Writing: Poetry**

This course is a graduate workshop in writing poetry, admission limited to students in the MFA program (or by instructor's permission). Students will write and revise eight poems (or more) which will be submitted for workshop discussion. At the end of the semester, all poems produced during the course will be submitted in a final portfolio of revised works. Students also engage in energetic online discussions covering the assigned readings and related issues in poetics and aesthetics. Students are invited to meet with me at least twice during the semester for individual conferences. Final grades are determined primarily by the achievements in the poems of the final portfolio, but consideration is also afforded to the quality of both online and in-class discussion participation. Texts will include Paisley Rekdal, *Animal Eye*; Tom Sleigh, *Army Cats*; Mary Ruefle, *Selected Poems*; Norman Dubie, *The Mercy Seat*; David St. John, *The Auroras*; Pablo Neruda, *The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems*; Tomas Tranströmer, *The Deleted World*.

**Donovan**

**T 7:00-9:40pm**

**ENGL 670-901**

**Literary Editing and Publishing**

Please contact instructor for course details at [tndidato@vcu.edu](mailto:tndidato@vcu.edu).

**Didato**

**W 4:00-6:40pm**

**Call #: 26591**

**ENGL 672-901**

**Writing Nonfiction Workshop**

The last three decades have seen the re-emergence of nonfiction prose in this country. This workshop focuses on the craft of writing literary or creative nonfiction. We will read extensively in the genre, with particular focus on the essay. We will read extensively in the genre, primarily American writers after 1970. Workshop participants will also write extensively, working on the craft of nonfiction through drafting and significant revision, and responding carefully to each other's works in progress. May be repeated for credit.

**Hodges**

**M 7:00-9:40pm**

**Call #: 20496**

**ENGL 673-001**

**Teaching Creative Writing**

This course will focus on the teaching of creative writing at the introductory college level; while such techniques can be adapted for advanced high school students or other environments, the course will not be suitable for those intending to use it primarily as background for teaching grade-schoolers. In addition, I will assume that students have had some experience with creative writing workshops--or that students will be adventurous and flexible in undertaking class workshop activities even if they lack such experience. The course examines both philosophical and practical aspects of teaching creative writing, concentrating on the genres of poetry and fiction. After surveying

general approaches to teaching, as well as specific writing exercises and plans which have proven effective for others, students review current anthologies and textbooks, judging their usefulness. The course steadily moves toward becoming a student-run and student-directed enterprise. For example, students themselves may organize opportunities for fellow students to teach writing workshops in area schools, retirement homes, prisons, or other institutions, providing a chance for practical application of in-class learning--but only if students take the initiative. Writers such as Richard Hugo, Annie Dillard, and John Gardner, among others, provide portraits of the teaching writer's life, practical suggestions on running a writing workshop, as well as topics which spark debate. We will consider whether creative writing belongs in the university at all, the costs and the opportunities that setting affords, whether the teaching writer is too often simply saying, "Write like I do." Grades will be based on some or all of the following: written responses to samples of undergraduate writing; reports describing and critiquing the students' teaching experiences; written review of textbooks and anthologies; in-class presentations and participation; an essay aiming to definitively examine some aspect of the creative writing teaching process.

**Donovan**

**R 2:00-3:15pm**

**Call #: 12280**

**MATX 603-901**

**History of Multimedia and Interdisciplinarity**

Doctoral Students only. The first part of the course will be devoted to the history of disciplines and interdisciplinarity as well as ongoing debates about the viability of interdisciplinary endeavors. The second part of the course will look at the history of media, with particular attention to medium specificity, leading into a consideration of selected multimedia forms. Throughout, emphasis will fall on the implications for scholarly and creative practice of crossing boundaries between disciplines and media. The course will be taught as an advanced graduate seminar, with discussion of weekly readings and a major research project resulting in a formal twenty-minute class presentation and a twenty-page paper.

**Garberson**

**R 4:00-6:40pm**

**Call#: 17501**

**MATX 604-901**

**Workshop**

This course, exclusively for first-year MATX PhD students, provides opportunities for students to focus in on the research methods they intend to learn in greater detail for their doctoral work, and for students to work individually and in groups to develop the specific topics about which they plan to write their dissertations. We pay significant attention to preparing and



planning for the completion of the major milestones in the MATX PhD program.  
Project and individual work. Graded on a pass/fail basis.

**Columbia**

**T 4:00-6:40pm**

**Call #: 17499**