

**VCU DEPARTMENT
OF ENGLISH**

**GRADUATE
COURSE
DESCRIPTIONS**

Spring 2014

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. Does not count toward graduate degrees. Please contact instructor for course details at dlatane@vcu.edu.

Latane**MWF 1:00-1:50pm****CRN #: 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 the University College (for those working UNIV200).

Strong**TBA****CRN #: 28476****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 *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*). 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****CRN #: 29350****ENGL 560-002****Special Topics in British Literature: Booker Prize**

Televised live in Britain, complete with tuxes and red carpets, the Man Booker Prize is arguably the most prestigious honor a contemporary novelist writing in English can win. A prize that creates reputations and bestsellers, the Booker has a reputation for favoring the work of writers representing Britain's far-flung former colonies, including J. M. Coetzee, Arundhati Roy, and Salman Rushdie, whose work we will read, along with novels by writers less easily categorized, including Kazuo Ishiguro and Yann Martel. Because the largesse that created the prize in 1968 grew out of the Booker Company's holdings in the British sugar colony of Guyana, the prize seems unsettlingly to retrace this exploitative trajectory with cultural products, replacing the fruits of colonial manual labor with postcolonial intellectual labor, by importing the fictional refinements of

exotic lives abroad “back” to the former imperial center. Moreover, the prize’s prestige gives it an unusual influence in shaping an emerging canon of “postcolonial” fiction that privileges a postcoloniality translatable to metropolitan readerships. Along with our more conventionally literary explorations, this course will examine the history and apparatus of the Booker Prize to delineate major issues in postcolonial literature and theory. We will also track the gossip over the Prize’s shortlist and watch its award ceremony. [This course will be taught in combination with the undergraduate course ENGL 483-001.]

Chan

TBA

CRN #: 30129

ENGL 560-901

Special Topics in British Literature: Anglo Saxon

This course introduces Old English language, literature, and culture, with some attention to art/manuscripts/archeology as well as the linguistic and literary influences on early English. We’ll start with the earliest history, tales, and culture of the Anglo-Saxons, from their arrival in England to the time of the Viking invasions and the Norman Conquest. Participants will learn to read passages of Old English in the original language. Old English resembles German and the Scandinavian languages, but developed some peculiar features of its own, particularly as it became a written literary language. Readings (some in Old English, some in facing page translation) will focus on Anglo-Saxon imagery and rhetoric, and themes such as monsters and heroes in *Beowulf* and related sagas, saintly miracles and Christian identity, physical and emotional transformations in riddles and elegies, and especially the confluences of history and fantasy, spirituality and heroism, that make up the earliest written texts in English.

Shimomura

TR 4:00-5:15pm

CRN #: 30780

ENGL 570-901

Special Topics: Rhetoric & Public Life

Though it is often denigrated as a form of manipulation, rhetoric, the art of discovering the available means of persuasion, is essential in public life. It taps the wellsprings of common sense. It creeps into consciousness in artful ways. It suggests preferred ways of thinking and acting. No doubt this is why it is controversial: we don’t all drink from the same wellsprings. We don’t believe the same things or act on the same beliefs. But this is precisely why it is essential and why we need more of it—not less. Rhetoric is a tool for *developing* our common sense. It helps us widen the nets of our reasoning, enabling us to pull in more and more. This course teaches you how to use the tool as a writer in search of some strata of the public, some part of it you want to develop, some place where your word net can reach. *This class will be taught in conjunction with undergraduate course ENGL 491-002.*

Coogan

MW 4:00-5:15pm

CRN #: 30383

ENGL 570-902

Special Topics in American Literature: Joan Didion

This course will offer us an opportunity for close study of Joan Didion's nonfiction with attention to prose stylistics, narrative structure, rhetoric and social and journalistic relevance. We will read her work chronologically for the most part, starting with *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1968), *The White Album* (1979), and *Salvador* (1983), then moving to *After Henry* (1992), *Political Fictions* (2001), *Where I Was From* (2003), *Fixed Ideas* (2003), *The Year of Magical Thinking* (2005), and *Blue Nights*. Assignments will include stylistic and rhetorical analysis, critical response, and a final project on some aspect of Didion's work of your own choice. Scholarly criticism of Didion's writing has been, to date, limited; thus there are many possibilities here for publication.

Joan Didion is one of the most important writers of literary nonfiction, personal and journalistic, of the 20th and 21st centuries. This course promises to be an interesting, perhaps eye-opening experience of the nonfiction genre and an author well known for her personal essays and sociocultural criticism.

Hodges

MW 4:00-5:15pm

CRN #: 30545

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, among others, William Shakespeare, William Blake, Mary Shelley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson, James Joyce, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, and Adrienne Rich. The objective of this course is 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. The examination of various theoretical positions in contemporary criticism will be accompanied by practical applications that will put to test the interpretive frames and sets of expectations brought by each critical theory to a particular text.

Cornis-Pope

MW 5:30-6:45pm

CRN #: 25095

ENGL 614-902

Cultural Discussion: Authorship

The concept of a professional "author" is relatively modern, emerging in

England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries with the development of a commercial literary marketplace, the expansion of a literate populace, and the improved means of reproducing and distributing texts. In this environment, what constituted “authorship” (professional or not) was shifting, unstable, and permeable as writers sought new ways to market themselves and their texts in a literary marketplace. This course will look at how authors navigated the world of publishers and readers, patrons and customers; how they worked to acquire various kinds of material and symbolic currency that shaped the literary and cultural marketplace; and how they balanced the tension between high literary value, reputation, and prestige, and the desire to be popular and commercially successful. The course will work to gain a keen understanding of the dynamics of the marketplace, popular culture, and how “success” and “failure” (themselves relatively new concepts) were defined (and refined). We will be particularly focusing on how profoundly the concept of authorship was shaped by gender, class, and geography. We will be less concerned solely with “Authors” that literary history pronounced canonical (e.g. Pope, Swift, Johnson, Dryden), and more concerned with those writers whose success (or failure) was a bit more contingent – authors writing to stay out of debtors prison, to feed their children, or simply to sustain themselves. They wrote fascinating material (and in turn had amazing things written about them – reputation and celebrity are important) that often defies our expectations of what was read three-hundred years ago.

This course will read texts in multiple genres (prose fiction, poetry, biography, drama) across the scope of what’s called “the long eighteenth century” and also look at the cultural discourse surrounding authorship and the literary marketplace (advertisements, reviews, prefaces, dedications, etc.). In addition to primary texts of the eighteenth century, we will also read secondary material to provide the historical context and theoretical framework for these texts. Authors we will discuss may include but not be limited to Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood, Elizabeth Thomas, Richard Savage, Samuel Johnson, Alexander Pope, Anne Finch, Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Thomas Chatterton, Jonathan Swift, Mary Barber, Laetitia Pilkington, and Mary Shelley. We may read more women writers than male because their complicated relationship with the marketplace more dramatically reveals the tensions of this new literary environment. Course requirements will include short written assignments, oral presentation, focused research assignment, and a longer seminar paper. If you have questions about the course, please feel free to e-mail me at cingrass@vcu.edu.

Ingrassia

R 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 30131

ENGL 624-901**Texts & Contexts: *New Yorker* School**

The *New Yorker* short story probably "causes more debate, and results in more distemper, than anything else about the magazine," observes Dale Kramer in *Ross and The New Yorker*. One of the major reasons for this debate is the denial by many (among them *New Yorker* editors and staff members through the years) of the existence of "a *New Yorker* story." In this seminar we will read and discuss stories and poems by writers from each of these categories: (1) those whose work has appeared regularly in the magazine and who are by reputation *New Yorker* writers, (2) those who have published stories or poems in *The New Yorker* but who are not known as *New Yorker* writers, and (3) writers who publish regularly in the magazine but whose stories or poems seem at first glance odd choices for the magazine given its audience. Against these three groups we will place the fiction writers and poets whose work happens to appear in the current issues of *The New Yorker* during the semester. One major objective will be to determine if there is such a thing as "a *New Yorker* story" (or poem) and if it makes sense (particularly in light of recent and obvious changes in the magazine) to talk about *The New Yorker* school of fiction; in much the same way, we will also examine whether there is a *New Yorker* school of poetry, reading and discussing poems published in the magazine from 1925 to the present. In the course of the semester we will also be examining historical details about the magazine, including the editorial principles upon which Harold Ross founded it in 1925 and the degree to which William Shawn carried Ross's vision from 1952 into the 1980's. Our historical study will focus largely on the "old" *New Yorker* (1925-1987), but we will also consider changes that have been made as the magazine has evolved through the editorships of Robert Gottlieb (1987-1992), Tina Brown (1992-1998), and David Remnick (1998-present).

Mangum**W 7:00-9:40pm****CRN #: 30379****ENGL 629-901****Form & Theory of Poetry**

This course aims to enrich and expand your experience of reading poetry by viewing the genre through several renewed doors of perception. First, we'll encounter the proposition that *all writing is translation*, in part by reading *Is That A Fish in Your Ear: Translation and the Meaning of Everything* by David Bellos and then actually doing some translation, keeping in mind that equally provocative proposition by Grandpa Frost, *poetry is what gets lost in translation*. But what is that poetry? Two imaginative books by Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* and *The Poetics of Reverie* provide the next doors we'll enter. Many more doors will be opened by poems themselves, in several different forms, contained in two anthologies, *Models of the Universe: An Anthology of the Prose Poem* (ed. Friebert & Young) and *American Alphabets* (ed. David Walker), as well as two poetry

collections, *Bye-and-Bye: Selected Late Poems* by Charles Wright and *Holding Company* by visiting writer Major Jackson. Students will write responses to all assigned readings, whether in essay form or as poems, and post them to online forums. A final culminating essay will be created focusing on a contemporary poet, drawing on poetics and related concepts explored in course readings, writings, and discussions (the essay may be supplemented with poetry composed by the student as well).

Donovan

M 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 30130

ENGL 666-901

Creative Writing: Short Fiction

A workshop for students in the MFA program and sophisticated others who want to work on their short fiction, in a collegial setting and lively discussion of strengths and areas of improvement for each piece. Each student will also bring in an "inspiration text," a published work that has influenced his or her aesthetic. We will discuss one inspiration text and workshop two stories per session. Three new stories are required; depending on class size, it is likely that each person will have two workshops, with the third story discussed one-on-one with the instructor. One major revision will be part of the final portfolio.

Cokal

T 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 21108

ENGL 667-901

Creative Writing: Poetry

Graduate Poetry Workshop. This poetry workshop is for students in the MFA program in creative writing. Throughout the semester and according to a strict schedule, each participant will hand in a group of 3 poems to the workshop; everyone's work will be discussed three or four times during the semester, depending on the number of participants. The workshop will be run with a prescribed set of expectations and according to a code of manners designed to give respectful, timely, and efficient feedback to two participants' work each week. Everyone will also be responsible for preparing and giving oral and written comments on their peers' work. In addition to writing and revising a portfolio of 10-12 poems, students will read and discuss work by Ellen Bryant Voigt, Steve Scafidi, Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon, and Maurice Manning.

Emerson

T 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 17544

ENGL 672-901

Writing Nonfiction Workshop

This writing and reading course is conducted mainly in workshop format and will deepen your exploration of literary nonfiction, including new journalism, personal essay, memoir and lyric essay, with a particular emphasis on flash nonfiction in the second half of the semester. We will read extensively, both short-form and book-length works with an eye toward style, approach and

position of the narrative “I” toward its subject. Our readings will be drawn primarily from contemporary writers, but we will work to place those writers in a historical context. Workshop participants are expected to write extensively, revise extensively, and respond thoughtfully and respectfully to submitted work. May be repeated for credit.

Fletcher

M 7:00-9:40pm

CRN #: 20496

ENGL 673-001

Teaching Creative Writing

This course is specifically designed to support graduate student instructors of English 295 and is a practicum that is focused on useful concepts and successful techniques for teaching a course in the reading and writing of poetry and fiction at the introductory college level.

Donovan

R 2:00-3:15pm

CRN #: 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

CRN #: 17501

MATX 604-901

Workshop

This course, exclusively for first-year MATX PhD students, provides opportunities for students to focus 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

CRN #: 17499