

**VCU DEPARTMENT  
OF ENGLISH**

**GRADUATE  
COURSE  
DESCRIPTIONS**

**Spring 2016**

**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.

**Latane****TBA****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 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, 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 #: ?????****ENGL 611-901****Authors: Twain**

This seminar will be on Mark Twain's writings and recent scholarship on him and his works. The course will include several of his novels, including *Tom Sawyer*, *The Mysterious Stranger* and *Huckleberry Finn*, the latter being considered in its peculiar place in American literature as both idol and target. The just-completed *Autobiography of Mark Twain* and new books on the adult world seen through a child's (Huck's) eyes and on Mark Twain's brand of humor

in contemporary America will also be discussed. Classes will feature discussions and oral reports; a research paper will examine a topic in depth. Perhaps field trips featuring pool tables and accessories will be included.

**Oggel**

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

**CRN #: 33638**

**ENGL 624-901**

**Texts & Contexts: Antebellum Literature**

This course will be structured as a graduate survey of major literary figures, movements, and cultural productions in the United States between the years 1820 and 1860. Authors covered may include but are not limited to Cooper, Emerson, Fuller, Thoreau, Stowe, Douglass, Jacobs, Hawthorne, Whitman, and Melville. Major assignments will include a critical book review, conference paper, and final seminar paper.

**Harrison**

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

**CRN #: 33407**

**ENGL 624-902**

**Texts & Contexts: Medieval Poetry**

In this course, we will analyze the rich imagery and language that reflect and shape the roles of humans—individuals and heroes, women and men—within the shifting contexts of medieval society. Medieval texts reveal social tensions and obsessions through their intersections of religious and secular culture, fantastic and realistic worlds, oral and written culture, private emotion and public identity, and male and female perspectives. Both early English poetry and later medieval narratives frequently apply techniques such as imagery, alliteration, personification, and extended metaphors to develop themes of multiple perspectives, memories, and realities that define a complex world within which individuals must navigate social conventions, heroic loyalties, family responsibilities, and the pressures of an inner consciousness—whether a moral or social conscience. Readings include lyric poetry, Icelandic sagas, the Welsh *Mabinogion*, and alliterative courtly texts like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, alongside other genres prominent in or near the British Isles during the Middle Ages. Requirements include a willingness to delve into the cultural and literary mindsets of distant times and places, a researched presentation, shorter informal writing assignments, and either two shorter or one longer formal paper.

**Shimomura**

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

**CRN #: 33634**

**ENGL 629-901**

**Form & Theory of Poetry**

The so-called “Middle Generation” of American poets, those born between (roughly) 1905 and 1920, form a crucial link between modernist poetry and contemporary poetry, and the key figures of this group—particularly Bishop, Lowell, and Jarrell—continue to exert a considerable influence. I intend this course to be a study the middle generation’s major voices, but I also want us to

examine the work of some significant but overlooked figures. Among the issues we are likely to confront: the middle generation's general ambivalence toward the aesthetic principles of literary modernism; the impact of the era's significant historical events (particularly World War Two and the Vietnam War) on the writing of middle generation poets; confessional poetry and its complicated legacy. Given that this is a form and theory course, we will pay particular focus to matters of poetic craft and technique. Students may elect to either write a take-home midterm and final exam, or to submit imitations (original poems in written in the manner of the poets under discussion). Some of our meetings will be devoted to workshopping these imitations.

**Probable Texts:**

John Berryman: *Selected Poems*

Elizabeth Bishop: *Poems*

Robert Hayden, *Collected Poems*

Randall Jarrell, *Complete Poems*

Weldon Kees, *Collected Poems*

Robert Lowell, *Selected Poems*

Lorine Niedecker, *Collected Works*

George Oppen, *New Collected Poems*

Theodore Roethke, *Selected Poems*

Muriel Rukeyser, *Selected Poems*

Eleanor Ross Taylor, *Captive Voices: New and Selected Poems*

I will also ask you to purchase a course reader that I will compile.

**Wojahn**

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

**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 is a poetry workshop in for students in the MFA program in creative writing. Students in this class will have weekly assignments that require them to read and respond to an assortment of published poems and essays on various aspects of craft, form, and theory. Students are also required to produce a draft each week to be discussed by the group and to provide thoughtful, constructive feedback to the drafts of their peers.

**Graber**

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

**CRN #: 33801**

**ENGL 672-901**

**Writing Nonfiction Workshop**

This course is conducted mainly in workshop format and is intended to deepen your knowledge about the craft of literary nonfiction, including personal essay, memoir and lyric essay, with a particular emphasis on immersion 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 endeavor to place those writers in a historical context. Participants are expected to write extensively, read extensively, revise extensively, and respond thoughtfully and respectfully to published work and peer submissions.

**Fletcher**

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

**CRN #: 20496**

**ENGL 673-001**

**Teaching Creative Writing**

A course for graduate teaching assistants in the MFA Program who are assigned to teach or shadow ENGL295 or ENGL291. The course provides training, instructional support and professional development for graduate teaching assistants who are actively teaching ENGL295/291 and/or are in preparations to do so. A comparative analysis of different approaches to the teaching of creative writing. Attention will be paid to the different ways in which elements such as dialogue, sound pattern, scene development, line break, meter, voice and distance can be taught. Please coordinate enrollment with the MFA Program Director and Graduate Programs Advisor. May count as elective credit towards the MFA in Creative Writing degree.

**Graber**

**R 11:00-12:15pm**

**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 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. Projects and individual work. Graded on a pass/fail basis.

**Columbia**

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

**CRN #: 17499**

**MATX 690-001**

**Interdisciplinary Seminar**

*Topics- Deadly Devices: The Point-of-view-shot in Games, Sports, and Combat*

Many news outlets have remarked on a recent macabre phenomenon: terrorists now record their attacks with lightweight cameras that were initially designed and marketed for extreme sports. The affinity of extreme sports and terrorist attacks hardly needs to be pointed out: a fast-paced, dangerous, potentially deadly activity in a hostile terrain is recorded from the point of view of the participant bearing witness to the authenticity of an exhilarating experience. The exact way in which this device is deployed deserves careful analysis, as the graphic footage then finds its way into recruitment videos mostly aimed at disaffected young men and women in Europe, the United States and other developed and developing regions. This seminar will elucidate this particular challenge to our democracy by looking at the complex ideological underpinning of this narrative device, relating point-of-view-shots in video games, extreme sports and combat to a solid base of political philosophy.

**Work required:** Attendance and participation (including Blackboard posts about the required reading – one to two articles per week), presentation, one final research paper. A creative/production piece can be substituted for the final research paper: a video filmed with a GoPro camera, a First-Person-Shooter-Video game, etc...

**Enrollment:** The course is open to VCU graduate students with permission of the instructor. Contact Dr. Speck to request permission. Overrides will be processed by the MATX program.

**Speck**

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

**CRN #: 33640**