

**SPOTLIGHT ON ENGLISH ELECTIVES  
SPRING 2018**

**ENGL2482 African American Literature and the "Problem" MWF 2**

**Cross listed with AADS4410**

**Satisfies Cultural Diversity Core Requirement**

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois famously observes that to be black is to serially confront a question: "How does it feel to be a problem?" This course undertakes a survey of African American Literature as an ongoing mediation on the "problem" of being black, from the advent of racial slavery through to its contemporary afterlives. Reading broadly across a black literary tradition spanning four centuries and multiple genres, we will consider how black writers represent the "problem" of being black not merely as an unwelcome condition to be overcome, but an ethical orientation to be embraced over against an anti-black world that is itself a problem.

*Jonathan Howard*

**ENGL3331 Victorian Inequality MWF 11**

**Fulfills the pre-1900 requirement.**

From "Dickensian" workhouses to shady financiers, Victorian literature has provided touchstones for discussions of inequality today. This course will investigate how writers responded to the experience of inequality in Victorian Britain during an era of revolution and reaction, industrialization and urbanization, and empire building. Considering multiple axes of inequality, we will explore topics such as poverty and class conflict, social mobility, urbanization, gender, education, Empire, and labor. We will read novels, poetry, and nonfiction prose; authors include Alfred, Lord Tennyson; Elizabeth Gaskell; Charles Dickens; Elizabeth Barrett Browning; Mary Prince; Arthur Morrison; and Thomas Hardy.

*Aeron Hunt*

**ENGL4003 Shakespeare and Performance T TH 12**

**Fulfills pre-1700 requirement**

Although Shakespeare became "literature," people originally encountered Shakespeare's plays as popular entertainment. In this course, we will examine Shakespeare through the lens of performance, looking at how several key plays were produced in their own time and how they have been subsequently reimagined on stage and screen. We will rehearse and perform scenes in small groups and attend a local production (if available). Students will experiment with rehearsing Shakespeare the way his actors did, using individual "parts" rather than the whole script, as well as exploring theatrical practices like doubling and cross-gender casting. Students will get a taste of Shakespeare on their feet as well as on the page and get more comfortable with Shakespeare's language as a result. No previous performance experience is required, but enthusiasm is welcome.

*Andrew Sofer*

**A new elective of interest to Econ and International Studies students, as well as English majors/minors:**

**ENGL 4004 Boom, Bust, Austerity: Reading Ireland from The Celtic Tiger to Now  
MWF 12**

Ireland, in recent decades, has experienced the highs and lows of globalization and monetary crisis. The Celtic Tiger economy was the “fastest growing ... in Europe” from 1995-2005. Three years later, the country officially entered recession, ultimately requiring an €85 billion “bailout” from the EU and IMF. Before long, international news outlets lauded Ireland as “the poster-child for implementing austerity programs.” Is this the typical trajectory for a postcolonial nation still—almost 100 years after emerging from the British Empire—carving out its social and economic position in the new Europe and beyond?

This course focuses on recent Irish writers who engage these boom and bust years. It considers how literature represents a period of unprecedented economic, social and cultural transformation? It evaluates the creative and/or imaginative arts’ contribution to helping a society survive economic austerity? It examines representations of unemployment, personal debt, emigration, bankruptcy, depression, homelessness, drug and alcohol dependency, suicide, as well as resiliency, innovation, entrepreneurial spirit, faith and secularism, human rights, and community rebuilding. We read established writers like Roddy Doyle, Colm Tóibín and Anne Enright, but also the most exciting new voices on the Irish literary scene, including Kevin Barry, Paul Murray, Claire Keegan, Donal Ryan, Eimear McBride, Sara Baume, Claire Kilroy, Lisa McInerney and Colin Barrett. And, we engage economic analysis, journalism and cultural criticism by Fintan O’Toole, Peadar Kirby, Denis O’Hearn, and Morgan Kelly, among others.

Please feel free to email **James Smith** with questions: [smithbt@bc.edu](mailto:smithbt@bc.edu)

**ENGL4011 Faulkner to Beyonce: New South Aesthetics T TH 1 30**

Beyonce Knowles' 2016 audiovisual project, *Lemonade*, conjures a black southern experience from multiple places and modes--from memories and sounds of New Orleans pre- and post Hurricane Katrina, to the ancestral wisdom of grandmothers passed down through the generations. The course explores how *Lemonade* flips familiar cultural markers of southern identity into a meditation and manifesto about what it means to be black and southern now. We will ground our readings and discussions with question such as these: What type of South is *Lemonade* trying to get us to see and hear? What are the feminist frameworks, from Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* to filmmaker Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust*, that animate *Lemonade's* vision? And what exactly does it mean to "get in formation"?

*Angela Ards*

**ENGL4016 Reporting Civil Rights T TH 4 30**

Cross listed with AADS4016

**JOUR2016**

This course explores first-hand accounts from the front lines of movements to advance social justice, from the 1960s direct-action campaigns that toppled Jim Crow to broader issues such as education and labor, housing and prisons. Sample texts include the following: *Reporting Civil Rights*, Library of Congress; *Common Ground*, J. Anthony Lukas; *Nickel and Dime*, Barbara Ehrenreich; *American Hunger*, Eli Saslow; *Evicted*, Matthew Desmond; *New Jack*, Ted Conover; *13th*, dir Ava Duvernay.

*Angela Ards*

**ENGL4017 Black Nature: Race and Ecology MWF 10**

With a history that includes being drowned in the ocean during the trans-Atlantic slave trade or strung from trees in the American South, African Americans are entangled in nature in incredibly complex and precarious ways. This course is an opportunity to explore African American literary engagements with the natural world, through our readings of slave narratives, fiction, and poetry. Together we will ask: What stories do we tell about nature? How are the stories we are able to tell about nature informed by race? And how do these stories shape our understanding of what it means to be human?

*Jonathan Howard*

**ENGL4408 The New Woman in British and Irish Victorian Fiction T TH 9**

**Fulfills the pre-1900 requirement**

The late nineteenth century saw the flowering of the “New Woman” movement in fiction. It coincided to a degree with First-Wave feminism and the struggle for women’s suffrage. It had literary debts to contemporary writers such as the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen but also to women writers over the previous century from Maria Edgeworth to George Eliot. This course explores those roots while also attending to the work of some of the seminal New-Woman novelists themselves who came from Irish as well as British backgrounds. They include Olive Schreiner, Sarah Grand, Iota, Mona Caird and George Egerton.

*James Murphy*

**ENGL4509 Health Journalism W 4:30-6:50**

Does diet soda cause Alzheimer’s? Do blueberries prevent cancer? Responsible health writing is one of the most challenging, and important, forms of journalism. Done well, it can save lives; done poorly, it can cause harm. This course will teach students the basics of health journalism: how to conduct interviews, interpret study results, and translate jargon into clear prose. Equally important, students will examine how health reporting reflects broader societal issues like climate change, income inequality, and environmental justice. Students will leave this class as more critical producers and consumers of health journalism, with stronger writing skills and a sense of how news is made.

*Barbara Moran*

**ENGL4588 Business Writing M 4:30-6:50**

**For Carroll School of Management students, the course is also available as BCOM6688.**

This course is designed to expose students to the type of writing done on the job. It is a practical course where real-life examples are used to illustrate appropriate writing strategies, style, language and formats commonly found in a business setting. By the end of the semester, students will be proficient in producing business correspondence, instructions, reports, proposals, resumes, and presentation materials.

*Tim Gray*

**ENGL5002 ATS: Podcasting *Ulysses* W 10-12 30**

One astonishing book, one unforgettable experience, one seminar a week. Intermittently baffling, always fascinating, frequently hilarious, *Ulysses* provides the ultimate in street cred to all aspiring literati. Even you. Our intimate journey through the greatest of novels will also explore the role of podcasts in the classroom. Indeed, we'll make our own. Imagination, curiosity, and a sense of humor are the only prerequisites. *The demand that I make of my reader, Joyce wrote, is that he should devote his whole life to reading my works.* Don't wait. Start now. Only for the brave.

*Joseph Nugent*

**ENGL5517 Capstone: Love and Indoctrination: A Foundation for the Rest of Your Life**

**Cross listed with UNCP5517**

**Capstone classes may NOT be taken Pass/Fail. You may take only ONE Capstone class before graduation.**

In our world of political spin and fake news, the surveillance state and social media, the pressure to separate what's real and valuable from what's fake and mere propaganda (another way of saying "lies") is paramount, and critical for figuring out how to live, practically, spiritually, intellectually and psychologically.

In George Orwell's 1984, the affair of Winston Smith and Julia threatens the entire structure of Big Brother. Why? What is it about love that threatens large systems based on indoctrination? In this course we will explore and develop working definitions of both *love* and *indoctrination* in order to differentiate them.

*Thomas Kaplan-Maxfield*

**ENGL3353 Contemporary Literatures of Migration T TH 12**

This course will examine fiction and non-fiction by 21st-century writers who foreground themes of migration and immigration. Topics will include globalism, exile, choice, national and trans-national identities. Looking closely at language itself, we will ask what means for some of these writers to write in a second language. Readings may include work by Edwidge Danticat, Junot Diaz, Anne Fadiman, Eva Hoffman, Gary Shteyngart, Andre Aciman. Writer Viet Viet Thanh Nguyen will visit campus. Requirements include several essays, weekly reflection posts, and a video interview with an immigrant or refugee.

*Elizabeth Graver*

**ENGL4533 ACNF: Writing About Place TH 9-11 25**  
**Submission Deadline – Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Enrollment by permission of instructor. Interested students should have taken a previous college level writing workshop (beyond FWS). To request admission to the course, e-mail Professor Graver (graver@bc.edu). Include a list of relevant coursework and writing experience and a 7 page (double-spaced) writing sample (preferably creative non-fiction, but fiction acceptable too. Sample may be a fragment of a longer piece). Students will be notified about admission by the first day of pre-registration.**

Through the reading and writing of creative non-fiction essays, we will explore, chart, interrogate and depict various places in the natural and built world. Students will write and revise three ambitious, sustained essays over the course of the semester: the first about a place in nature; the second about a place with strong personal associations; and the third--a reported piece of immersion journalism--about a community or subculture in the Boston area. Readings will include work by Annie Dillard, Wendall Berry, Joy Williams, John McPhee, Joan Didion, Jamaica Kincaid and Viet Thanh Nguyen, who will visit campus this term.

*Elizabeth Graver*

**ENGL4550.01 ACNF: Writing for Magazines T 11:30-1:55**  
**Submission Deadline—Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>**

*Permission of instructor required for admission.*

Students in this course will be selected on the basis of manuscript submission. Please submit up to 10 double-spaced pages of writing, which can be an entire piece, part of a longer piece, or a compilation of shorter ones. You can explain the nature of what you have submitted in an accompanying note. Be sure to include your name and email address. Materials should be submitted to Carlo Rotella via email ([rotellca@bc.edu](mailto:rotellca@bc.edu)) as soon as possible. Students will be notified by email as to whether they have been admitted to the course.

*Carlo Rotella*

**We will also offer 2 ONE CREDIT courses:**

**ENGL3316 Incendiary Poetics: Whitman and Ginsberg (W 2)**

**(1 credit course)**

Incendiary Voices: Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Ginsberg's *Howl*. This seminar will focus on the long poems of Walt Whitman and Allen Ginsberg, whose work arguably changed the course of American poetry. We'll look at the structure and content of the poems through close reading, with additional short readings to provide context and demonstrate both how revolutionary were the poems themselves, and the ways they continue to talk to each other about American ideals and exceptionalism. Students will be expected to lead discussions on self-selected topics, and to participate fully in dialogue about the poems, the poets, and their times. Short papers, one longer final paper of 5-7 pages.

*Susan Roberts*

**ENGL3324 Great Adaptations**

**This course runs on Wednesday afternoons from 3-4:20 and concludes on April 18, well before your final projects in other classes.**

**(1 credit course)**

How does a writer make a new story out of someone else's old story? And why? Shakespeare did it, and James Joyce, and the author of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies*. TV and film studios do it constantly. Adaptations, versions, retellings with a different angle or flavor: what are the delights, and dangers? This one-credit course will center on Dickens's *Great Expectations*, move to Peter Carey's "Neo-Victorian" adaptation *Jack Maggs* (1997), which features a version of Dickens himself as a character, and conclude with Alfonso Cuarón's Americanized 1998 film of *Great Expectations*, which echoes both its source – and Huckleberry Finn. We'll familiarize ourselves generally with Dickens's biography and read a few pieces of his journalism to see what he uses, and transforms, in his novels, and what license this gives to "adapting" artists as well. Writing: two short papers, a few in-class exercises to facilitate discussion, and two take-home essay questions as a final exam.

*Judith Wilt*

**The English department will offer two courses open to graduate and undergraduate students.**

**ENGL6003 – American Modernisms**

**Grad/Undergrad Course**

This grad/undergrad seminar will explore strategies employed by American writers between the first and second world wars to construct the modern subject in a world threatened by literal and metaphorical violence. We will focus on issues including trauma, sexuality, domestic space, technology, popular culture, race, bodies and objects. Along the way we will explore: 13 ways of looking at a blackbird; how to build a coffin

in 13 steps; how Chanel No. 5 relates to Wallace Stevens's poems; the "dream dump" of Hollywood culture; the dark landscapes of modernism (gangsters, waste lands and whorehouses); racial homelessness and exile; the trauma of modern warfare (or, how to get blown up while eating cheese); pregnancy, childbirth and abortion; dirt and desire.

Possible literary texts include novels by Hemingway (*A Farewell to Arms*), Fitzgerald (*The Great Gatsby* or *Tender is the Night*), Faulkner (*As I Lay Dying* and *Sanctuary*), Larsen (*Quicksand*), Hurston (*Their Eyes Were Watching God*) and West (*The Day of the Locust*), as well as poetry by Williams, Stevens, Eliot and others. A series of student presentations on cultural texts of other forms – films such as Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* and Tod Browning's *Freaks*, photography by Walker Evans, paintings by Edward Hopper and Marcel Duchamp, Josephine Baker's "Banana Dance" -- will supplement our analysis of the literary works we will study by providing a sense of the way that the cultural tensions of the early twentieth century are represented in non-literary genres. We will also read and analyze selected works of literary criticism, with the goal of engaging in fruitful critical dialogue with existing scholarship in the final seminar paper, the culminating assignment of the course.

The course will be run as a seminar in which all members of the class contribute not only by responding to questions but by raising issues that relate to their own interests and expertise. Like any successful seminar, this one will require intense commitment, ranging from attendance every week to careful reading of texts and contribution to in-class dialogue. Because of the collaborative nature of the class, its success will also depend on our ability to support one another with respect and in good humor. Each student will be responsible for a 15 minute in-class presentation on a cultural text and a related short essay, as well as a 7 - 8 page critical essay demonstrating close analysis skills and a final 15 - 20 page seminar paper. Undergraduates interested in the class should have completed most of their major requirements, should have an average grade of A- or above in English courses, and should welcome the challenge of reading literary criticism as well as literature, writing an article-length seminar paper, and engaging in rigorous weekly intellectual workouts. Passion, curiosity, humility, and a willingness to think outside the box are recommended prerequisites for participants at every level.

Undergraduates who meet these criteria should email Professor Tanner for permission to enroll. Students outside the major are welcome to apply via email by sending an informal degree audit and a brief description of their interest in the class.

*Laura Tanner*

## **ENGL6004 – Environmental Humanities** **Grad/Undergrad Course**

There has been growing scholarly interest within the humanities in thinking in a sustained and systematic way about the environment. This interest emerges from an active engagement with the present, when ecological concerns increasingly demand urgent attention, and with movements within the humanities itself for new accounts about our ability to know the physical world. This course charts the development of this interest

and considers how it intersects with concerns that have been long-standing preoccupations for the humanities. Race in particular will remain an important feature of our discussions. Readings will include scholarly writings alongside important nonfictional and fictional works.

*Min Song*