ENGL6004 Environmental Humanities (Fall: 3)
Grad/undergraduate course.
Entanglements. Assemblages. Precarity. As discussions about the environment run into the fact that the boundaries between humans and nature are hopelessly muddled, scholars and writers are in the process of developing a field of study that's been called "environmental humanities." Those working in this emerging field are coming up with original ways of thinking about our relationship to the world around us. This course seeks to make sense of the concepts they are developing and apply them to the interpretation of literary texts and to our understanding of everyday experiences. The readings for this course are a mix of scholarly writings, journalism, and novels.

Min Song

ENGL6017 Chaucer and Gower (Fall: 3)
Fulfills pre-1700 requirement for undergraduates.
Grad/undergraduate course.
In fourteenth-century London, Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower were "frenemies." Chaucer was the upwardly mobile bureaucrat, ready to poke fun at everyone; Gower was the well-heeled and straitlaced lawyer. Their bodies of poetry, spanning four decades and three languages, influence and respond to one another. We will read the two poets side by side, with attention to topics of mutual relevance such as multilingualism, politics, literary form, source study, and social status. This seminar has minimal overlap with the syllabus of ENGL3393: Chaucer. No prior knowledge of Middle English required. Gower's French and Latin texts read in translation.

Eric Weiskott

ENGL6025 Atlanta and the Black Atlantic (Fall: 3)
Grad/undergraduate course.
Though conceived before the COVID-19 crisis, this course proceeds with a belief that in this pandemic, Black America, to quote W.E.B. DuBois, “has a message for the world.” Focusing on DuBois’ beloved Atlanta and black communities along the Atlantic coast, we will listen for the potentially instructive message black cultural texts offer. We will study both what these texts reveal about the history and politics undergirding the particularly racialized effects of the COVID crisis and what they might teach us about living amid fears of there being no “return back to normal.” For to enter black study is to enter an ongoing study about possibilities: the possibility of living in the wake of the impossible-to-imagine rupture of every structure of normalcy; the possibility of living, suddenly without space or time, as other—as less but also more—than oneself; the possibility of living still and living, nonetheless, abundantly.

Allison Curseen

ENGL6027 Seminar: Historical Fiction (Fall: 3)
Grad/undergraduate course. Fulfills pre-1900 requirement for English. Fulfills Seminar requirement for English.
What is at stake in reimagining history through fiction? In this course, we consider the development of historical fiction from the eighteenth century to the present. We will investigate important settings for historical novels, likely including: the Middle Ages as seen through
Arthurian legend, the Jacobite uprisings in the Scottish Highlands, the French Revolution, and American slavery. Topics will include: the claims of realism and the powers of fantasy, the relationship of space to time, the rise of nationalism, and the power of fiction itself to shape history. Theories of genre, historicism, and historiography will guide our conversation.

Maia McAleavey

ENGL6029 The Modern Novel (Fall: 3)
Grad/undergraduate course.
What is distinctive about the novel genre in and after modernism? Beginning with Henry James, we will read a series of major novels, written in English between about 1900 and about 1960, seeking to describe what is significant about narrative voice, point of view, style, narrative structure, characterization, plot, and other aspects of their language. The novels' formal and linguistic innovations will lead us to consider their representations of politics (including race and gender), desire, psychology, and epistemology. Writers will include some of the following: James, Woolf, Joyce, Beckett, Ford, O'Brien, Conrad, Faulkner, Barnes, Hurston, Nabokov, Baldwin, Ellison, and Gaddis.

Kevin Ohi

ENGL 6601 Holocaust Literature: History, Memory, Legacy (Fall: 3)
Cross-listed with: HIST4294, SLAV6060
A brief overview of the history and legacy of the Shoah (Holocaust) followed by an examination of the variety of literary responses by witnesses and survivors, as well as by writers removed from the wartime horrors by distance, time, country, and language. Questions of ideology, metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, memory, and cultural theory as formulated and debated in poetry, fiction, nonfiction, journalism, and discursive writings. The readings include works originally written in Russian, Yiddish, Polish, German, Italian, French, and English by Ilya Selvinsky, Vasily Grossman, Avrom Sutzkever, Tadeusz Borowski, Paul Celan, Primo Levi, Theodor Adorno, Elie Wiesel, Vladimir Nabokov, Hannah Arendt, Arthur Miller, W.G. Sebald and others. All the readings will be in English translation.

Maxim Shrayer

ENGL7023 Tragedy on the Early Modern Stage (Fall: 3)
Offered Periodically
Combining lofty rhetoric, gender and sexual politics, philosophical inquiry, broad comedy, and spectacular violence, tragedy was the most vivid and popular theatrical genre in Shakespeare's England. It was also central to early modern poetics. Developing our own poetics of tragedy with the help of theorists from Aristotle to Eagleton, we will read representative tragedies by Kyd, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Middleton, Webster, and others, plus at least one comedy (Tom Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead). We will also consider contemporary film adaptations by Julie Taymor and Alex Cox. The course contains graphic material.

Andrew Sofer
ENGL7700 English Language Training for Graduate Level Students: Focus on Speech and Presentation Skills (Fall: 0)
Offered Annually
Limited to 12. Non-credit, free of charge. Department permission required.
Designed for graduate students whose first language is not English, this course will emphasize the speech and presentation skills required for success in graduate work. Students will hone their speaking and listening skills through group discussions, presentations, and targeted practice in pronunciation, stress, and intonation through the reading of poetry, tongue twisters, and shadow talking exercises. In addition, we will explore effective teaching practices for those who will take on responsibilities as instructors at BC. Students who enroll in the course are expected to attend all classes and complete short writing assignments weekly.

Lynne Anderson

ENGL7732 Contemporary Irish Fiction (Fall: 3)
Mary Robinson, in her inaugural speech in 1990, hoped that her presidency of Ireland would "promote the telling of stories, stories of celebration through the arts and stories of conscience and of social justice." Concentrating on contemporary Irish fiction, this course examines the confluence of "stories" representing Irish society since the late-1980s. We will consider this (re)-emergence in the 1990s of the novel as Ireland's dominant cultural form and question what that means in terms of cultural aesthetics. We will examine how these texts represent significant cultural shifts in Irish society and attempt answers to ongoing cultural questions. These include the relationship between tradition and innovation in ‘Celtic Tiger’ Ireland, the role of national identity in an era of globalization, the uses of memory, history, and the past in these novels, the representations of trauma and survival, cultural responses to economic boom, bust and austerity, the emergence of popular genres, and issues related to gender, sexuality and ethnicity in the “new Ireland.” Authors include Patrick McCabe Roddy Doyle, Seamus Deane, Colum McCann, Colm Tóibín, Anne Enright, Emma Donoghue, Sebastian Barry, Kevin Barry, Eimear McBride, Donal Ryan, Sara Baume, Lisa McInerney and Tana French.

James Smith

ENGL7749 Poetics (Fall: 3)
This course traces the development of poetics from the mid-twentieth century to recent attempts at revival. We'll read Aristotle's Poetics as a "pre-text," followed by key essays in Russian and Prague school poetics, responses by the Bakhtin group, and examples of the transition from Slavic to French structuralist poetics. We then review the poststructuralist critique of structuralist poetics before considering the return of poetics in cognitive poetics and the New Formalism. Although the readings could be described as "theory," most of them are concerned with questions of literary methodology, often illustrating their claims in relation to specific poetic texts.

Alan Richardson

ENGL7752 Live Contemporary Theorists (Fall: 3)
Fulfills the Theory requirement.
An interdisciplinary field, Contemporary Theory enhances sophistication in interpreting just about anything: literature, films, all art, in fact, but also your self, relationships, the political world, the international world. Theory enables one to have a sense of what to look for in
analyzing a text, rather than stumbling across whatever might strike your fancy. It is important to be conscious of what assumptions one is making about what is valuable when analyzing a text. Are you a feminist, psychoanalytic, deconstructionist, cultural, queer, post-colonial critic? Theory is pleasurably informative in drawing in the arts, history, theology, political thought, etc. You might be reading Kristeva, and suddenly you are engaging a painting of Saint John the Baptist’s head on a platter; or you might be studying Agamben and finding yourself confronted with issues of biopolitics or the relation of people to their animality. Theory leads to what is fascinating as you learn to read awry. (It can even serve as an anti-depressant.) An excellent stepping stone to graduate study or further graduate study, this course exposes students to major figures of a second wave of contemporary theory—thinkers who are alive today. It will provide an introduction and a substantial experience. We will focus on Badiou, Nancy, Ranciere, Agamben, Kristeva, Zizek, and possibly Sloterdijk, Butler, Copjec, Moten, Spillers, Bhabha, Zupancic. Formerly titled: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory.

Frances Restuccia

ENGL8887 Introduction to Advanced Research (Fall: 3)
This course will acquaint you with the resources to carry out the central tasks of literary scholarship. Bibliography (studying the production, dissemination, collection, location, and identification of literary artifacts and versions) forms the dynamic basis for scholarship and criticism of all kinds, just as critical sensibility guides our choice of what to look for. You will be guided through the reference works and databases in the Boston College library and elsewhere, discuss the goals, purposes, and future of the field of literary studies, explore the phenomenon of digital humanities, and produce an original project based on archival sources.

James Najarian

ENGL9007 Ph.D. Seminar: Global Crossroads (Fall: 3)
In this class, we will examine how British writers engaged questions of globalism and transnationalism during an era when the cultural understanding of both Britain and the world were changing. The reading list includes works by Aphra Behn, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Johnson, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Dean Mohamet, and Ignatius Sancho. The secondary material for this class comes from a variety of critical perspectives, including postcolonial and global theory, ecocriticism, geocriticism, and posthumanism/new materialism. We will discuss the different theoretical and political stakes these approaches bring to how we conceptualize the global as literary scholars and cultural critics.

Rebekah Mitsein