ENGL 501: HISTORY OF LITERARY AND CULTURAL THEORY: Professing Literature: Reading, Writing, Theorizing and Surviving
Hilary Schor, Mon., 2:00-4:20 pm Course Number 32770D

There are two standard jokes about the first year of graduate study in English: one is that it is the year in which you forget all the reasons you wanted to study or write literature in the first place; the second is, that it should consist entirely of courses so awful that at least the “first year class” bonds over their shared misery. English 501, the introduction to graduate study in the USC Department of English, has one goal and one goal only: to help you to prepare yourself for further study in our department, without making you hate literature, graduate school, each other or (quite frankly) me. Easier said than done?

I think not! Our goals in the class will expand ever so slightly, though not quite so wide as the “history of literary and cultural theory” might suggest. We will not be surveying all of critical theory, only a subset of it that will remind us why the study of literature and culture continues to have value – and also continues to be fraught with serious and interesting arguments about what “value” means. We will engage in serious conversations about what it means to be a “professor” of literature (or, in Philip Roth’s memorable reworking of the phrase, a “Professor of Desire”) and how you can locate yourself within “the profession.” And along with exploring some of the professional tasks that await you (writing critical essays; attending conferences; preparing lectures and pursuing a career) and some of the resources of graduate study at USC, we will be practicing these skills and cutting our critical teeth on some profound literary and cultural texts. We will take as our test subjects such texts as The Odyssey (no, not all of it!), Hamlet, “A Christmas Carol,” The Passion and “Vertigo”; we will explore the relationship between practicing art and practicing criticism; we will engage with faculty from within USC and from the Outside; and above all, we will learn to talk to each other with intelligence, grace and gentleness. If we can blend the joy of literary study with the acuity of critical practice and a modicum of mutual respect, we will have introduced ourselves well to the profession of literature, and I look forward to joining you in your explorations. And yes, just to reassure you, we will read such critics as Foucault, Derrida, Judith Butler, Theodor Adorno, Sadiya Hartman, Heather Love and Friedrich Kittler; we will discuss the future of the humanities; we will all write a critical bibliography, a report on a journal in our field, and a conference-style (short) paper; and we will read and argue about literature – and there will be a constant array of snacks. Wine may also appear, along with distinguished visitors and office supplies. Welcome to the profession!
ENGL 502: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: Mimesis, Echo and The Crisis of the Copy in (Contemporary) Critical Theory
Karen Tongson, Wed., 4:30-6:50 pm Course Number 32771D

This course revisits foundational debates in literary and cultural studies—about the status of representation, and our critical methods for evaluating a range of representational techniques and apparatuses—through a contemporary critical framework focused on copies, replication and distribution in the post-digital age. How has our scholarly engagement with reading, watching and listening shifted from aesthetic and philosophical rubrics of “perception,” to market-driven models of consumption in the so-called “Age of New Media?” One of our seminar’s primary objectives will be to re-familiarize ourselves with literary historical and philosophical genealogies of audiovisual mimesis: from Plato, Rousseau and Kant, to Pater, Wilde and Nietzsche; from Benjamin, Fanon and Arendt, to Butler, Taussig and Zizek, etc. In retracing our steps through these canonical genealogies, we will also pursue divergent pathways carved out by scholars with an interest in reframing representability (or a lack thereof) through the politics of queer, racialized, gendered, postcolonial and classed critical perspectives, including figures like Lorde, Grahn, Sedgwick, Muñoz, Ahmed, Sandoval and Spivak among many others. Special attention will be paid to the sonic or auditory dimensions of these critical conversations—particularly notions of the “echo” as it has, repeatedly, of course, made itself heard in critical theory from Ovid, to Lacoue-Labarthe, to contemporary media and popular music studies about citation, sampling, covering etc. (see D. Brooks, Rose, Vazquez, among many others).

Students will be expected to write bi-weekly responses, collaborate on presentations in pairs, and to submit final research projects of no more than twenty pages.

Sample Texts - Please note that this is simply a sample of the materials we will be covering in the course. The final reading list will be determined by July, 2014.

Aristotle’s Poetics
Auerbach’s Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature
Barthes’ Mythologies
Butler’s Bodies that Matter and Excitable Speech
Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks
Lacoue-Labarthe, Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics
Muñoz, Cruising Utopia and “The Brown Commons”
Mirzoeff, The Right to Look
Ovid’s Metamorphosis
Plato’s Republic and Symposium
Sedgwick’s Touching, Feeling
Taussig’s Mimesis and Alterity
Ugresic’s, Karaoke Culture
Vazquez’s Listening in Detail
ENGL 536: Literature and Cultures of the Victorian Period: Victorian bestsellers
Kate Flint, Tues., 2:00-4:40 pm Course Number 32882D  VKC 379

What do we mean when we speak of “bestsellers” in Victorian Britain? Do we limit ourselves to books, or might we include other commodities as well – from prints to soap? In this course, we will examine the literary marketplace between 1850-1900, and its relationship to other forms of commercial popularization. We will consider the qualities that appear to have made a range of books – belonging to different genres – appeal to large numbers of readers, and how this appeal was constructed from both within and outside the texts. Among the topics that we’ll cover will be serialization, magazine publication, and book distribution; suspense, sensation and the thrills (and concomitant anxieties) associated with particular works; the inscription of affect, including grief, mourning and consolation; literature as consciousness-raising device and as a factor in campaigning on social issues from slavery to animal welfare; the growth of self-help and instructional manuals, and advertising and authorial (self) promotion. Our historically situated readings of texts both verbal and visual will be supplemented by material concerning commodity culture and the culture industry; the concepts of “the masses,” cultural elitism and the nature of taste; reading and readerships, and, of course, plenty of discussions about what might turn something into a bestseller, and about the attitudes, values, and stereotypes that such a bestseller promotes and, on occasion, launches into being. Our major literary texts are likely to be Charles Dickens, David Copperfield; Wilkie Collins, The Woman in White; Samuel Smiles, Self Help; Mrs Beeton’s Cookery Book and Household Guide; Alfred Tennyson, In Memoriam; Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin; Anna Sewell, Black Beauty; George du Maurier, Trilby; Marie Corelli, The Sorrows of Satan; George Gissing, New Grub Street, and a number of Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories.
ENGL 580: 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURES AND CULTURES  
John Carlos Rowe, Wed., 5:00-7:20 pm Course Number 32786D

This seminar looks at canonical and non-canonical U.S. literature and culture as a response to U.S. imperialism in the period of nation-building. The paradox that U.S. nationalism is deeply transnational is explained simply by the fact that the United States legitimated itself as a nation by immediately turning to a wide variety of colonial projects inside North America and on a global scale that by the end of the century, marked by the Spanish-American and the Philippine-American wars, had been systemized into what we term “imperialism.” The seminar will provide excellent coverage of the main nineteenth-century literary classics – selections from Emerson, Margaret Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun*, Whitman’s poetry (selected), Mark Twain’s *Following the Equator* – and consideration of lesser known works that will transform our understanding of these canonical authors and texts – Martin Delany’s *Blake, or the Huts of America*, John Rollin Ridge’s (Yellow Bird’s) *Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*, and selections from Erika Lee and Judy Yun’s *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* and from Marlon Hom’s *Songs of Gold Mountain: Cantonese Rhymes from San Francisco’s Chinatown*. We will use several sustained scholarly studies of nineteenth-century U.S. literature: Anna Brickhouse’s *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (2004), Robyn Wiegman’s *Object Lessons* (2012), and my new book (not yet published) *The Ends of Transnationalism and U.S. Cultural Imperialism*. Requirements: each seminar participant will lead the discussion in one part of a seminar, present an in-seminar proposal for the seminar essay/project, and complete a seminar essay/project (20-25 pp. or equivalent).
ENGL 640: INDIVIDUAL WRITERS: Returning in, to, with, and through Shakespeare  
Bruce R. Smith, Mon., 4:30-6:50 pm Course Number 32798D

*King Lear*, a script first performed toward the middle of Shakespeare’s career, will provide the entry point for an exploration of “the motif of the return” in Shakespeare’s plays as well as for a consideration of “the return” as a motive in contemporary criticism, with respect not only to Shakespeare but to objects in all periods and cultures. We shall consider “the new philology” (words and syntax as indices of cognitive functioning), “the new bibliography” (the political, economic, aesthetic, and cognitive implications of different forms of media), “the new materialism” (Marx without the promised revolution), “the new phenomenology” (he universalizing assumptions of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty adjusted to historical and cultural differences), and “the new poetics” (aesthetics informed by materialism, cognitive theory, and phenomenology). Articles in special issues of *PMLA* (125.4, 2010) and *Criticism* 54.3, 2012 will help us find our bearings. Although play scripts and poems by Shakespeare will provide test cases for this exploration of new critical practices, participants with interests in other periods and authors will have the opportunity to pursue those interests in their final projects.
ENGL 660: STUDIES IN GENRE: Modernist Poetry & Poetics: Women Poets & High Modernism
Susan McCabe, Wed., 5:00-7:20 p.m. Course number 32800D

This course will examine the careers of four American women poets in the context of the genesis of high modernism: H.D., Stein, Moore and Loy. While the course will primarily focus upon H.D.’s poetic achievement and with questions of form, poetics and gender raised by her writings and by other modernist women poets, we will try to locate these women poets in relation to their immediate contemporaries (Pound, Eliot, Williams and Toomer) as well as within their literary, political, economic and cultural backgrounds. We will begin with students reading and reporting on one of the digitized little magazines appearing in the Modernist Journals Project. Students will present a longish oral report on one poet and an approach, and there will be a final paper due at the end of the seminar. Diligent attendance required.

Tentative REQUIRED TEXTS:
H.D. Collected Poems, 1912-1944 (New Directions)
---. Helen in Egypt (New Directions)
---. Majic Ring (FUP)
---. Notes on Thought and Vision (City Lights Books)
---. Tribute to Freud (New Directionspress)
---. Trilogy (New Directions)
Borderline. (film with H.D., Bryher and Macpherson directing)
Close Up: Anthology of Film Articles 1927-33.
T.S. Eliot,. Prufrock and Other Observations (PG)
---. “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (MJP: The Egoist 6.4-6.5 [1919]) and other essays
Mina Loy, The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
Marianne Moore, The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore (Penguin)
Selected Letters and Prose of Marianne Moore.
Ezra Pound, The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry (Modernist Journal Project)
[MJP]: Little Review; Project Gutenberg [PG])
---. Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (PG; http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Pound.php)
---. “A Few Don'ts by an Imagist" Poetry: A Magazine of Verse 1.6 (March 1913) (MJP)
---. “Small Magazines.” The English Journal 19.9 (Nov. 1930) (MJP)
Gertrude Stein, Tender Buttons (Claire Marie; PG)
---. “If I Told Him: A Completed Portrait of Picasso” (http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Stein.html); “Composition as Explanation” (Poetry Foundation: http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/essay/238702)
Jean Toomer, Cane
William Carlos Williams, Spring & All
ENGL 696: GRADUATE POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP: "Cloud Corporation: Growing the Book"
Carol Muske-Dukes, Tues., 4:30-6:50 p.m. Course Number 32803D

Students will attempt to assemble a book-length manuscript of poems - or a nucleus of "related" poems. Manuscripts are not expected to be complete or finished - we will discuss the process of completion and ideas of a "whole". Manuscript order, titles, sections, "arc" - and the ongoing growth of each poem will be addressed along with ideas for revision. Several contemporary collections will be assigned reading, including Jane Mead's Money Money Water Water, Kevin Young's Book of Hours and Lucie Brock-Broido's Stay, Illusion - along with scheduled presentations of individual poets and their work - as well as the history of "the book" itself. Professor Muske-Dukes
ENGL 697: GRADUATE FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP  
Aimee Bender, Thurs., 7:00-9:20 p.m. Course Number 32804D

697 is the graduate fiction workshop. Students will be required to turn in fiction on a regular basis, including one or two specific assignments. We will also read various short stories, a couple short novels, and occasional essays. Possible TBD readings from: William Maxwell, Jesse Ball, Alice Munro, Deborah Eisenberg, Helen Oyeyemi, Haruki Murakami.