

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FALL 2011 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENGL 501: HISTORY OF LITERARY AND CULTURAL THEORY
Bruce R. Smith, Monday, 4:30-6:50 pm Course Number 32770D

“He sent thither his Theôry, or solemn legation for sacrifice, decked in the richest garments” (George Grote, *A History of Greece*, 1853). A deft hand with the sacrificial knife is not required for this course; only two feet and a peripatetic itch. *Theors* in ancient Greek were people sent out from the city to perform religious rites. Fundamental to the idea of theory (from the Greek *θεᾶσθαι*, to look on, to view, to contemplate) is stepping back and taking the long view. What do we see when we walk away from modes of reading and interpretation that are already familiar to us? Inevitably the view from the outside changes the view from the inside, from the position of one’s habitation as a reader. What can we *do* with the knowledge that the outside vantage point gives us? This course will survey the major ways in which writers and readers have made sense of the long view—rhetoric, philology, phenomenology, structuralism, poststructuralism—and the kinds of judgments they have made using these strategies of reading. We shall pay particular attention to four newer vantage points: ecology, cognitive theory, historical phenomenology, and presentism. For each of these methodologies we shall read and discuss theoretical writings as well as trying our hands at specific applications, using as reference points three imaginative texts about islands: Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Blake’s *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, and Gary Pak’s *A Ricepaper Airplane*. You will be asked to write up a summary of one of the theoretical readings and to pose discussion questions about one of the three imaginative texts. To see how critics have deployed these methodologies, you will be asked to search out an article in an academic journal and subject that article to your own critique. Toward the middle of the session you will have the chance to put together a critical manifesto that announces your goals for the rest of the seminar and details the particular critical strategy (or strategies) that you will use to pursue those goals. The last third of the seminar will be devoted to presentations of each participant’s work using texts of his or her own choosing. A final paper, due one week after the presentation, will incorporate class discussion provoked by the presentation.

Recommended texts: William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Peter Hulme and William Sherman (Norton); William Blake, *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (Kessinger); Gary Pak, *A Ricepaper Airplane* (U Hawaii); Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, eds., *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed. (Wiley Blackwell).

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ENGL 520: RENAISSANCE ENGLISH LITERATURE AND CULTURES: Conceptions of Tyranny

Rebecca Lemon, Friday, 2:00-4:20 pm Course Number 32780D

And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain.
Shakespeare, *Richard III*

The sovereign, who freely consented to donning the executioner's clothes, is now finally manifesting his originary kinship with the criminal.
Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End*

Renaissance dramatists conceived of multiple forms of tyranny: usurpation, luxury, heresy, insanity. On one level, dramatists represent tyranny as a political or social act of conscious villainy: Shakespeare's Richard III, Macbeth and Claudius murder their way to the throne; Marlowe's Edward II and Jonson's Tiberius ignore good counsel. On another level, however, tyranny signifies often uncalculated, or uncontrollable, behavior: tyrants experience forbidden desire (*Edward II; Measure for Measure*); rulers suspend the law to protect the state, inviting rebellion instead (*Richard II; Coriolanus*). Entangling issues of agency, law and cultural normativity, representations of tyranny on the Renaissance stage resonate with vociferous continental debates on resistance and tyrannicide (by writers including Beza, Bodin, Calvin, James, Machiavelli, Mornay Parsons, and Ponet). Renaissance stagings also anticipate explorations of the state of emergency by modern theorists. Writers such as Giorgio Agamben, Carl Schmitt, and Michel Foucault grapple with states of exception, when rulers suspend laws in order to protect the state but in doing so veer towards tyranny. How do Agamben's notions of biopower and sovereignty, Foucault's preoccupation with enclosure and power, and Schmitt's theory of the exception help us understand Renaissance emergencies? This course offers, then, an introduction both to English Renaissance literature, particularly drama by Shakespeare, Marlowe and Jonson, and to contemporary theories of sovereignty and tyranny. We will begin the course through a philosophical engagement with modern notions of sovereignty and tyranny (including, most likely, selections from Agamben's *State of Exception*, Arendt's *On Violence*, Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, and Schmitt's *Political Theology*); we will then pair early modern articulations of tyranny (including Mornay's *Vindiciae, contra tyrannos*, Bodin's *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, James VI's *Basilicon Doron*, and Machiavelli's *Discorsi and/or Il Principe*) with Renaissance drama (including Shakespeare's *Richard II, Richard III, Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Measure for Measure, Macbeth*; Marlowe's *Edward II and Tamberlaine*; Jonson's *Sejanus* and *Catiline*). Assignments will include one presentation, including annotated bibliography; several short response papers; one long paper (20-25).

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ENGL 536: LITERATURES AND CULTURES OF THE VICTORIAN PERIOD: Material Fictions

Kate Flint, Tuesday, 2:00-4:20 p.m. Course Number 32882D

This course explores the idea of “materiality” in relation to Victorian fiction in two ways. First, we will consider various aspects of, and influences on, the production, appearance, circulation and reception of texts. We will look at modes of publication, whether in serial or part form, in three-deckers, single volumes, or as short stories, and consider how writing for certain formats affects both the style of texts, and the ways in which they were distributed, borrowed, purchased, and transformed through various types of subsequent revision. Looking at the appearance and availability of fiction will lead us to ask questions about conditions of authorship and writing as a profession; about accompanying written and illustrative material (whether directly referencing the content of a text, or appearing alongside it); and about readership and reception. We will consider what kinds of knowledges about the material production of texts and their surrounding contexts are important to our historical interpretation of these works, and how these may best be incorporated in modern editions. Each member of the class will be asked to choose a lesser-known Victorian work of fiction – one which has not been re-issued in a modern scholarly edition – and make a presentation exploring the materials which they would find essential to the production of such a volume.

Second, we will consider not just the literal materiality of Victorian fiction, but also the material world as it is represented within this writing. Topics to be covered will include the presence and deployment of things, and their affective implications (including theories of commodification and commodity fetishism; tangibility, visibility, and the relationship of the senses to the perception of the material world); conspicuous consumption; the clue; the museum, the collection, and the archive; craft work; the material conditions of literary production; ideas about possession; and the implications of confusing and conflating animate and inanimate persons and things.

Texts to be studied are likely to be (in chronological order of study) Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*; Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*; George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*; Mary Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*; Henry James, *The Spoils of Poynton*; Amy Levy, *The Romance of a Shop*; Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*; George Gissing, *New Grub Street*; H. Rider Haggard, *She*; William Morris, *News from Nowhere*; Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*. Theoretical readings will be taken from Karl Marx, Theodore Veblen, Pierre Bourdieu, Roland Barthes, Henri Lefebvre, Bill Brown, Elaine Freedgood, John Plotz, and others.

Requirements: active class participation, including leading one seminar discussion; a mid-term presentation (with bibliography for circulation), and an 18-20 page final paper (which may be a development of the earlier presentation, or may represent a fresh piece of critical thinking and writing).

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ENGL 580: 19th CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURES AND CULTURES: The Nineteenth-Century U.S. Imperial Imagination

John Carlos Rowe, Wednesday, 5:00-7:30 PM; Ide Room (THH 420) 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 *Benito Cereno*, Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun*, Whitman’s poetry (selected), Mark Twain’s *Following the Equator*, selections from Henry Adams (*The Education and Tahiti*) – 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*, Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don*, and selections from Sui Sin Far. We will use at least two sustained scholarly studies of nineteenth-century U.S. literature: Anna Brickhouse’s *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (2004) and my *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism: From the Revolution to World War II* (2000). Requirements: each seminar participant will lead the discussion in one part of a seminar, submit a 3-5 pp. proposal for a seminar essay, deliver a brief progress report on the seminar essay, and complete a seminar essay (20-25 pp.).

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ENGL 630: STUDIES IN GENDER: Feminism and the Law: The Way We Live Now
Hilary Schor and Nomi Stolzenberg, Wednesday, 12:15-3:15 p.m. Course number
32797D

From the birth of the modern woman in the 19th century to birth control and abortion on demand to “Knocked Up” and “Juno”; from 19th century debates over religious freedom, the Constitution and Mormon polygamy to hippie communes to “Big Love”; from the closet to the bath house to gay marriage and “Modern Family”: how did we get here? And where, exactly, are we? This course looks at the inter-weaving of the culture wars, feminism and law, with a particular focus on questions of choice, marriage, and the family, and with an eye towards understanding not only what the central debates are but how they came to take the particular forms they have taken in contemporary culture. Particularly given the uncanny resurrection of traditional ideas in their seemingly revolutionary dress (African-American women adopting polygamy to deal with the man shortage; gay activists shouting for the right to swear love everlasting; the invisibility of abortion on the silver screen; the return to consciousness of the Moynihan report on race, the family and the “culture of poverty”) it is worth returning to these earlier debates over choice, individualism and equality to understand the way we live now, and the role that law in particular plays in this fascinating history.

This class will draw equally on feminist and queer theory, legal theory and legal history, Anglo-American contemporary fiction, and popular culture, film and television. It will be cross-listed in the USC Gould School of Law and offered in conjunction with the Center for Law, History and Culture’s workshop series on “Rethinking Feminism, 1970 to the present,” which will bring featured speakers to campus. These speakers, who may include scholars such as Catharine MacKinnon, Reva Siegel, Robin West, Richard Banks, Naomi Mezey and Lee Edelman, will participate in our seminar as well as the public workshop, an amazing opportunity for graduate students.

Among the possible literary texts are Margaret Atwood, The Handmaid’s Tale, Anzia Yezierska, Bread Givers and Alix Kates Shulman, Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen, as well as short fiction by David Leavitt, Alice Munro, Alice Walker, John Updike and others.

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ENGL 660: STUDIES IN GENRE

Joseph Boone, Monday, 2:00-4:20 p.m. Course number 32800D

This course will use the motif of “waste” (in all its connotations from destruction to nihilism and detritus to nothingness) to explore the literary and cultural movement known as modernism. We will be canvassing many examples of works that have been canonized as high modernism—the poetry of Eliot, the fiction of Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett—but we will simultaneously be examining works and art forms less easily embraced by traditional modernist labels, from novelists whose stylistic transparency has excluded them from prior definitions of modernism (such as Cather) and writers whose minority or non-normative affiliations may have excluded them from the mainstream (Toomer, Barnes) to artifacts of popular culture (such as popular cinema). In the process we will be participating in the theoretical redefinitions of the field—and examining the political implications of those redefinitions—that have given rise to the use of the term “modernisms” rather than the singular “modernism” over the past two decades.

The primary load for this seminar is heavy, and deliberately so; its goal is to provide the beginning graduate student with a broad survey of the modernism movement in all its complexity and variety, and it does so by focusing first of all on primary texts, which will be supplemented by ancillary criticism throughout.

Primary texts will be selecting from among the following: Eliot’s “The Waste Land,” Conrad’s *Nostromo*, Ford’s *The Good Soldier*, selections from Joyce’s *Dubliners*, Yeats’s poetry (and Noh drama), Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room*, selections from Sassoon’s war journals, Toomer’s *Cane*, Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*, Cather’s *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*, Rhys’s *Good Morning Midnight*, Waugh’s *A Handful of Dust*, Barnes’ *Nightwood*, Brecht’s “Mother Courage,” Woolf’s *Between the Acts*, Freud’s *Civilization and its Discontents*, Beckett’s *Molloy*, and Freyn’s “Copenhagen.”

Film texts may include: “The Jazz Singer,” “Metropolis,” “The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari,” “Triumph of the Will,” and “The Sacrifice,” and (filmed creation of) “Le Sacre du Printemps.”

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ENGL 696: GRADUATE POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP
Carol Muske-Dukes, Thursday, 4:30-6:50 p.m. Course Number 32803D

I've previously titled this workshop "The Cloud Corporation", not so much "in honor of" a distinguished contemporary volume of poetry (Timothy Donnelly), but as a useful working description of the process of selecting, ordering and completing a manuscript of poems for publication. We will also be reading selected poetry collections and analyzing their structure/order and aesthetic "argument" as well as glancing at poetry in translation.

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ENGL 697: GRADUATE FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP
T.C. Boyle, Monday, 2:00-4:20 p.m. Course Number 32804D

This course provides a forum for writers to present their work for class interpretation and to assess the effects of their techniques on an audience of willing and engaged readers. Depending on the size of the class, each student will have the opportunity to present from two to three original works of fiction per semester—either short stories or chapters from a longer work—according to an agreed-upon schedule. All students will be required to read and comment in writing on the workshop pieces. During the class sessions, we will examine student work with the same interpretive rigor we will devote to the readings from professional writers; the hope is that the student writer will be able to learn something of the effects of his/her work on an audience, with an eye to improving it. Our readings will be in contemporary fiction, both the short story and novel.

Book list:

The Road, Cormac McCarthy
Fiskadoro, Denis Johnson
Doubletakes, ed. T.C. Boyle

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**ENGL 700x: THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT I
Bruce R. Smith, Wednesday, 4:30-6:50 p.m. Course Number 32806D**

As a component in the English graduate program's series of professionalization courses, this two-unit workshop is designed to provide models, guidance, resources, feedback, and encouragement to students who are in the process of consolidating their course work, deciding on a dissertation topic, preparing a bibliography for the qualifying examination, formulating a dissertation proposal, and putting together a committee for the exam and the dissertation. Although these strategic challenges will occupy the foreground, a larger framework will be provided by relationships between dissertation topic and job placement, potential for development of a topic into articles and a book, and groundwork for future research and publishing beyond a first book. The workshop will proceed in three phases: (1) Get Ready (rethinking course work, isolating potential topics, formulating a theoretical strategy, laying out a research agenda), (2) Get Set (carrying a reading list and a dissertation proposal through multiple drafts), and (3) Go (using the reading list and the proposal to compose a 12-page draft toward a first chapter).

Graded CR/NC. Not available for degree credit.

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**ENGL 701x: THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT II
David Lloyd, Day and Time TBA, Course Number 32807D**

This two-credit course helps ABD students craft their professional identities and placement materials as they make the transition from graduate school to their academic position.

Graded CR/NC. Not available for degree credit.