



**GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS** 



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# Medieval English Literatures and Cultures:

The Salutary Voices of Satan in Middle English Literature

#### Rollo, David

W | 5:00-7:20P.M.

At a critical juncture in The Book of Margery Kempe, Jesus appears and delivers the following reassuring news to the protagonist: "Daughter, yow now know it was no Devyl that spoke to yow."

On more than one count, this obliging denial of deviltry on the part of the Divine can only give pause. First, it appears 210 pages into the modern printed edition, and this self-identifying non-devilish Son of God has by this time, among other things, assured that Kempe will be a bornagain virgin in heaven (despite the fact that she has already given birth to at least twelve children), proclaimed (with some help from Julian of Norwich) that her tears will guarantee salvation to hundreds of thousands of souls, and, most egregiously, encouraged her to get in bed with his Father, the Godhead, and intimately acquaint herself with His body in the ultimate act of Divine matrimony. There is, then, something decidedly odd about this unduly belated assurance that all that has so far exhaustively preceded is indeed legitimate. Also, Kempe's entire narrative of madness and redemption begins with the voice of the Devil himself explaining that the protagonist needs no confessor because her own personal commitment to penance will be sufficient. In other words, The Book of Margery Kempe begins with all that Jesus later professes not in fact to have been all along attempting to persuade Kempe that she should be a good Lollard, a member of a contemporary and flourishing proto-Protestant sect.

The course will consider precisely this ambiguous Divine/devilish narratology of the late Medieval text, particularly in the light of the Wycliffite and Lollard writings

of the late fourteenth century and the attendant movement toward vernacularity over Latinity and the widespread criticism of the epistemological tyranny of the Church.

**SECTION: 32778** 

The term will be divided into three parts. The first will be on Kempe, Julian of Norwich and the exploration of the personal dialogue with the Divine and the accompanying anxiety over devilish machination. This will be followed by five weeks devoted mainly to Chaucer. We shall begin with The Man of Law's Prologue and Tale, and look at the way in which Constaunce, the protagonist (if such is the apposite term for someone who never really does anything), contrives to be at one and the same time one of the most unremittingly boring characters in the literature of the Middle Ages and manages to say one of the most incisive things ever scripted during the period: "Wommen are born to thraldom and penance,/ And to been under mannes governance." The power that subordinates women in this way is God himself, who persistently saves Constaunce from hardship in order, with apparent sadistic pleasure, to plunge her into a new cycle of torment (invariably, if oddly, at the hands of crazed, incestuously driven mothers-in-law).

This tale of hyperbolically masculinist Divine law and true Christianity gone underground (and the suspicion of hearing "a Lollard in the Wind" which serves as an epilogue to the Man of Law's performance) will act as an introduction to Chaucer's two favored ecclesiastics. The first is the Pardoner, self-identified charlatan, performer of all that seems unnatural (but ends up not being the very opposite),

and, rather like Chaucer himself, masterful storyteller who potentially receives material reward for making illusion into reality. This charismatic purveyor of productive falsehood will be analyzed alongside that most excruciatingly dull of all ecclesiastical hacks, the Parson, who, undeniably blinkered adherence to convention notwithstanding, nonetheless brings The Canterbury Tales to a pious but daunting endpoint by reminding the reader of his or her duties to the teachings of Christ and to those who would interpret his words. This call to Christianity ends up being all the more challenging in the light of Chaucer's own Retraction to the Tales themselves: Are we really to reject the profitable and eminently enjoyable fictions that have preceded because, implicitly following the Parson's stipulations, we should be exclusively attentive to the Divine word? Or are we left as adherents to the Pardoner's performance of all we are told we should not be or do?

The last third of the term will be on the Arthurian romance, with an initial emphasis on Malory's late-medieval/ early-Renaissance Le Morte D'Arthur, a compendium of medieval lore printed and published during the first year of the Tudor dynasty and couched in a transitional idiom between late Middle- and early-Modern English, Galahad, a consummate prig who rivals even Constaunce as a mindless pawn of Divine stricture, will be the focal figure of attention. After having spent three quarters of the text riding around the Waste Land reprimanding people for their sinful ways and professing to be so much better than everyone else, this most Perfect of all Knights shockingly ends up actually saying something sensible. After hacking a couple of dozen woefully overmatched knights to pieces. he, Percival and Bors pause to consider the carnage they have just wrought and to countenance the possibility they have just committed cold-blooded murder. Bors attempts to explain everything away by arguing that God wouldn't have allowed it to happen if He hadn't wanted it to. Galahad, however, begs to differ: "Yee say nat so. First, if they mysseded avenst God. the vengeaunce ys nat owris, but to hym that hath power thereoff." Galahad in fact has a good point: How do we know any longer what God permits, especially when the Kingdom of Logres is populated by ecclesiastics who, it turns out, are as often as not demons in disguise committed to

perverting humanity through perverting the word of God? Or, to rephrase Galahad's question: How do we any longer know if it is God or the Devil who speaks to us through the mediating figures representing the authority of the Church? And, if we don't know, why don't we all just become Protestants and circumvent suspect intermediaries altogether?

Finally, we shall consider a text that anticipates and answers these anxieties. Composed far from the urban/courtly centers of the South East, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight offers a synthesis of the magical and the miraculous that presents Christianity in curious co-operation with supernatural forces that seem antithetical to it and perhaps offers, in Morgan Le Fay, the master of social change later generations of writers seem so anxious to promote.

Texts will include all of those already mentioned. We shall make brief forays onto the continent to consider, during our study of The Man of Law's Tale, Christine de Pizans' open denunciation of a masculinist God from The Book of the City of Ladies, in addition to a couple of her Saints' Lives in which she exemplifies the lack of empathy toward women she ascribes the traditional Godhead, and, in tandem with the Pardoner, the sermon Jean de Meung (according to recent studies, Archdeacon of Orléans in the 1270s) scripts for Genius, sacerdotal assistant to Nature, who preaches that the best way to get to heaven is to have as much sex as possible. Secondary sources will include: Jeffrey Burton Russell, Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages, Robyn Malo, Relics and Writing In Late Medieval England, John A. Arnold, Belief and Unbelief in Medieval Europe, and R.N. Swanson, Indulgences in Late Medieval England. Attention will also be given to more general studies of medieval literature by Carolyn Dinshaw, Alastair Minnis, Paul Strom and Lee Patterson. Students will do the reading, attend class, give a class presentation, and write a paper of fifteen to twenty pages.

# Restoration and 18<sup>th</sup> Century British Literatures and Cultures

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Anderson, Emily

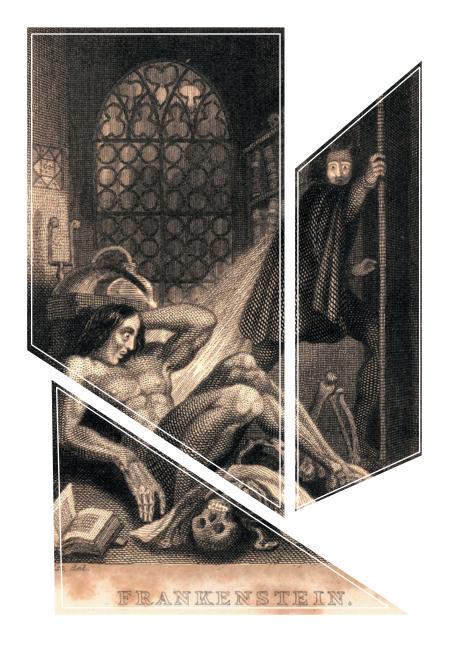
M | 2:00-4:20P.M.

Structured as a broad overview to the eighteenth-century novel and its associated criticism, this seminar also notes and interrogates the autobiographical and biographical elements that exist within these works. How do we identify these elements, and what are the implications of their inclusion? What historical factors might account for the interplay between fiction and personal reference, and how has this interplay been noted and accounted for in contemporary criticism? The course will be structured in four units to address these questions, each anchored by a specific text from the long eighteenth century: Aphra Behn's Oroonoko, Laurence Sterne's Tristram Shandy, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, and Jane Austen's Emma. Within these units, students will be exposed to both older and more recent criticism on these works: they will also have a chance to link these critical topics to contemporary debates (about cultural appropriation, approaches to celebrity culture, the impact of the environment on the

individual, and trajectories in feminism, in light of the recent #metoo movement).

**SECTION: 32600** 

Assignments will include assembling an annotated bibliography of current criticism on a given primary text and presenting to the class one article selected from this bibliography; a written book review of a recent (last ten vears) monograph on the eighteenth-century novel; a mini-conference presentation; and a final, article-length seminar paper with appropriate bibliography. Students will also take turns leading part of selected class discussions, as inspired by an individual passage chosen from that day's primary text. The seminar will provide students with a thorough grounding in eighteenth-century studies on the novel, and it should also appeal to students interested in theories of fiction and its development, fiction-as-craft. and strategies of self-fashioning and self-representation.





## 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Literatures and Cultures

Flint, Kate

T | 5:00-7:20P.M.

This course offers the opportunity to read closely a range of Virginia Woolf's writings: novels, short stories, essays, autobiographical materials, letters, and journals. It starts from the premise that she was surrounded by artists and writers on art - notably her sister, the painter and designer Vanessa Bell, together with Clive Bell, Duncan Grant, and Roger Fry – and that the proximity to visual creativity had a profound effect on her own experiments with form and representation. We will consider the part played by visual effects in her work, including her interest in light and color; her engagement with material culture, museums and galleries, design, and décor; her treatment of point of view, angles of vision, and multiple perspectives; her responses to Victorian and modernist aesthetics; and her understanding of the role played by the visual in memory. Necessarily, the senses do not work independently of each other, and the course will further explore the relationship of sight to touch, smell, sound, and taste - and to the harder-to-localize power of affect. Additionally, we will consider Woolf's interest in photography and

in the cinema (she was an early critic of the medium). Furthermore, we will consider how Woolf and her writings have been visualized by others, whether via translation to film (Colin Gregg, To the Lighthouse, 1983; Sally Potter, Orlando, 1992) or in other media, including painting and ballet.

**SECTION: 32780** 

Assessment will be based on class participation (including weekly contributions to a class blog,) and – above all – a final research paper or piece of creative work combined with a critical commentary.

This course will be eligible to count towards the VSGC.

Texts: (all by Virginia Woolf): The Voyage Out; Night and Day; Jacob's Room; Mrs Dalloway; To the Lighthouse; Flush; Orlando; The Waves; The Years; Between the Acts; Complete Shorter Fiction; selected letters and journals; Roger Fry: A Biography. Secondary reading will be made available on Blackboard.

## 20th Century American Literatures and Cultures

### Braudy, Leo

TH | 2:00-4:20P.M.

This course explores the cultural shape of a crucial period in American life through the mediation of film, "popular" fiction, and "serious" fiction from the end of World War Two to the election of John F. Kennedy in 1963. We will be reading essays, poems, plays, and novels by writers such as James Baldwin, Gwendolyn Brooks, William Burroughs, Albert Camus, John Cheever, Ralph Ellison, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Heinlein, Ernest Hemingway, Jack Kerouac, Robert Lowell, Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller, John O'Hara, Sylvia Plath, Theodore Roethke, J. D. Salinger, Mickey Spillane, Lionel Trilling, and Tennessee Williams. Filmmakers represented will include Robert Aldrich, Walt Disney, Howard Hawks, Elia Kazan, Joseph Mankiewicz, Anthony Mann, Christian Nyby, Nicholas Ray, Frank Tashlin, Billy Wilder, and William Wyler.

We will also consider some of the political and social problems of America in the 1950s, to which many of these works responded and out of which they emerged. These include the paranoia induced by the military

and political threat of the Soviet Union, the efforts to define American and "unAmerican" values, the rising political consciousness of African Americans, the supposed threat of juvenile delinquency, the changing social and sexual relations between men and women, and the expanding consumer economy that promised so much to so many, while often delivering only to a few. Throughout the course we will also discuss more general theoretical issues-- the nature of a cultural period (and "culture" as a concept), as well as the various interpretations that have been made of the period along with their ideological bases and biases.

**SECTION: 32788** 

Requirements are two medium-length papers (12-15 pages) and an oral presentation on a background topic of general interest.

#### **Books:**

Baldwin, James. Go Tell It on the Mountain.

---. "The Black Boy Looks at the White Boy" (Blackboard).

Bentley, Eric, ed.: Thirty Years of Treason (Selections from testimony before the House UnAmerican Activities Committee) (Blackboard).

Brooks, Gwendolyn. Selected Poems (Blackboard)

Burroughs, William. Naked Lunch.

Camus, Albert. The Stranger.

Cheever, John. Short Stories [Selections to be announced].

Ellison, Ralph. Invisible Man.

Ginsberg, Allen. Howl.

Heinlein, Robert. The Puppet Masters.

Hemingway, Ernest. The Old Man and the Sea.

Kerouac, Jack. On the Road.

Lowell, Robert. Selected Poems (Blackboard)

Mailer, Norman, The Naked and the Dead.

---. "The White Negro" in Advertisements for Myself (Blackboard).

Miller, Arthur, Death of a Salesman.

O'Hara, John. Ten North Frederick.

Plath, Sylvia. The Bell-Jar.

---. Selected Poems (Blackboard)

Roethke, Theodore. Selected Poems (Blackboard)

Salinger, J. D. The Catcher in the Rye.

Spillane, Mickey. I, the Jury.

Trilling, Lionel. The Liberal

Imagination.

Williams, Tennessee, A Streetcar Named Desire.

#### Films:

Atomic Cafe (1982).

The Best Years of Our Lives (1946).

Kiss Me, Deadly (1955).

The Thing (1951).

On the Waterfront (1954).

Rebel Without a Cause (1955).

No Way Out (1950).

The Girl Can't Help It (1957).

Bend of the River (1952),

Some Like It Hot (1959).

Written on the Wind (1956).

Viva Zapata! (1952).

Beaver Valley (1954).

The Manchurian Candidate (1962).

# Practicum in Teaching English and Narrative Studies

#### Freeman, Chris

T | 5:00-6:20P.M.

English 593 is a course designed to help advanced PhD candidates with their teaching and with their shift from graduate school to first job. We will do some reading and discussions around those issues, but we will spend more time talking about your teaching and your work as a scholar. You'll observe members of the English department, watching them teach from your point of view as a TEACHER, rather than as a student. The course will be a workshop on the profession; we will have guest speakers who will also share their wisdom. The class will meet approximately a dozen times during the semester.



# Studies in Gender: Queer/Normativity

#### Tongson, Karen

тн | 4:30-6:50Р.М.

In the penultimate season of 30 Rock (2012), the sitcom's resident kinkmeisters and genderqueer lovers, Jenna and Paul, are faced with a profound sexual crisis: after chatting about their day, they pass out fully clothed, nestled beneath an afghan. Unable to accept this egregious lapse into normalcy as a simple result of long-term companionship, they conclude that "normaling" must be a "whole new fetish," a heretofore-undiscovered playground of genuine perversity. As cultural texts like 30 Rock make apparent, all the hoopla in the last decade about purportedly "new" varieties of normalcy are bound up with the sense that queer lives have been absorbed into the matrimonial and reproductive matrix.

By 2016, however, the politically unthinkable happened. Reality TV star and failed real-estate mogul, Donald J. Trump defeated Hillary Rodham Clinton in the national election, thus ascending to the presidency of the United States with a minority of the popular vote. In short, the carefully crafted narratives that soared with drama, sentiment and acceptance on TV networks and streaming platforms favored by blue.

and "creative class" regions across the country came painfully at odds with reality (as a genre, and as lived experience) in the rustbelt environs that propelled Trump to his electoral college victory. As scholars of gender, sexuality, race, and culture entering the second decade of this millennium, we assumed our problem would be to remain trapped between the "posts"—the post-racial, post-gay, post-identitarian, post-everything. We thus increasingly, if sometimes secretly, reinvested in the "normal" in strange ways, ogling at it with an intensity and a perverse sort of prurience. Even now, the sector of the electorate and general public have harnessed the anti-Trump rallying cry, "THIS IS NOT NORMAL," as if to insist the "new normal" we became accustomed to at the height of neoliberalism across the double-Bushes, Clinton and Obama from 1989-2017. successfully obliterated the racist, homophobic, white supremacist. laissez faire capitalist, anti-"liberal" forms of normalcy Ronald Reagan reanimated in the early 1980s.

**SECTION: 32797** 

This graduate seminar revisits the relationship between queer texts and norms since the academic institutionalization of queer studies in

the early 1990s, while taking a closer look at the transmogrifications to the concept of "normalcy" in recent cultural and political discourse. Queer and feminist scholars such as Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson, have called for a sustained attention to norms. In the process they eschewed the "anti normative" stances they claim nearly everyone else in queer studies has adopted. A lot of ink has been spilled about this inside baseball debate between some of the contemporary players in queer studies, including tag-team responses from Bully Bloggers Jack Halberstam and Lisa Duggan, among others. This set of conversations that has animated the field of queer studies—one that has resurfaced perpetually since Foucault, and in the more recent past. since Michael Warner's The Trouble with Normal (1999)—is but another iteration of the national attention to norming, normaling and normcore aesthetics, which this seminar will also explore in depth. In addition, we will consider the possibility of queer ambivalence, in order to re-enliven the reparative, and disidentificatory practices of queer spectatorship we tend to lose amidst firmer agendas that require we pick teams, and draw hard lines.

## Required texts include, but are not limited to:

Lauren Berlant, Desire/Love (PDF) Hanne Blank, Straight Joshua Chambers-Letson, After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life

David Eng, The Feeling of Kinship

Michel Foucault, Abnormal: Lectures at the College de France
José Esteban Muñoz,
Disidentifications
Maggie Nelson, The Argonauts
Dean Spade, Normal Life
Michael Warner, The Trouble with
Normal
Robin Wiegman and Elizabeth
A. Wilson, special issue of differences on "Queer Theory without

## Antinormativity"

Media:

thirtysomething (1987-1991)
Parenthood (2010-2015)
This is Us (2016-present)
The Slap (U.S. version, 2015)
Transparent (2014-present)
True Blood (2008-2014)
Gilmore Girls (2000-2007) and Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life (2016)
The Fosters (2013-2018)

#### **Course Requirements:**

- Rotating bi-weekly responses
- One individual presentation
- One individual writing workshop presentation
- A final project that may take one of the following forms: a conference presentation, a review essay, a piece of public scholarship, or a book review for submission to an academic journal.

# Graduate Non-Fiction Writing Workshop

Treuer, David

TBD | TBD SECTION: TBD

Course description not available.

## ENGL-695

# Graduate Fiction Form and Theory

**Everett, Percival** 

M | 4:30-6:50P.M. SECTION: 32834

We will examine notions of form in fiction. What are the necessary and sufficient conditions that must be satisfied before we call a work of prose a work of fiction? Are there any? Is there such a thing as conventional fiction? Is experimental fiction possible and what does that mean? We will take stories apart and rebuild them, retell them by doing "violence" to the stories' constituent elements.

# Graduate Poetry Writing Workshop

St. John, David

T | 2:00-4:20P.M.

This workshop will focus on your manuscript and/or chapbook collections of poetry. We will discuss the architecture and construction of poetry collections while reading and considering a stylistic range of recent contemporary books of poetry, including: the sensational sonnet sequences by both Terrance Hayes (American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin) and Katie Ford (If You Have To Go); the new eco-poetical lichen notebooks of Brenda Hillman (Extra Hidden Life, among the Days); the most recent Francophile-inflected work of Angie Estes (Parole), our Magill Visiting Poet this spring; USC grad Jennifer Kwon Dobb's often harrowing new book (Interrogation Room): Fiona Sze-Lorrain's (she also writes in French and Chinese as well as English)

exquisite recent book of poems (The Ruined Elegance); and lastly Brandon Shimoda's latest collection (The Desert). This is a wildly eclectic group of texts. Aesthetic assumptions will be confiscated upon entry.

**SECTION: 32835** 



# Graduate Poetry Form and Theory

Muske-Dukes, Carol

W | 2:00-4:20P.M.

"The Ekphrastic Poem", graduate poetry seminar with workshop aspects. The focus will continue as a dialogue between Art & Poetry, but students will write original poems in the workshop, as well as "in the field".

The "field" for this course is the new Broad museum, which again invites students into its spectacular galleries of post-war paintings, photographs, sculpture and video installations. In workshop, we will seek inspiration in our study of the ekphrastic poem, its history and aesthetic influence re literary realism then compose poems in response to the prompts of individual imagination. In the field, at the museum, students will write poems inspired by particular works of art – culminating in an invited audience reading (& perhaps a more "public" reading) hosted by the Broad at semester's end. The Broad has now established a tradition of also publishing a chapbook of "Tour

of the Imagination" student poems, designed by the museum staff.

**SECTION: 32805** 

The USC Office of Communications featured a former student reading at the Broad on its site – here is a link to the article:

http://dornsife.usc.edu/news/ stories/2354/a-tour-of-the-imagination-art-inspires-graduate-poetry-at-the-br/

From Homer's poetic hymn to Achilles' shield to Keats' Ode on a Grecian Urn to Terrance Hayes', "How to Be Drawn" - we will investigate the sources of visual representation in art and the ekphrastic connection to the poet-psyche.

#### **Books:**

David Salle, How to See: Looking, Talking, Thinking About Art, Comparative Perspectives, Schulz Susan Sontag - On Photography TBA **ENGL-700** 

# Theories and Practices of Professional Development I

Anderson, Emily

MWF | 8:00-8:50A.M.

This 2-unit class is designed for

graduate students in the literature and creative writing tracks of the English Ph.D. program who have completed coursework and are preparing to take their qualifying exam. The majority of our meetings are focused on familiarizing ourselves with and executing the different components of the dissertation prospectus. Students will be given a chance to study completed prospectus documents in a variety of subfields (both critical and creative), to meet with students who have successfully navigated the qualifying exam process, and to workshop their own exam materials as they prepare them. This course also contains various professionalization exercises that students will need as they advance to candi-

dacy: grant writing and academic

C.V. preparation among them.

We will have **seven** group meetings in total during the semester, at a time mutually agreed upon by those who register for the class.

**SECTION: 32606**