



SPRING 2021

GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

USCDornsife
Department of English



ENGL-520

Renaissance English Literatures and Cultures:

Poetic License: the Politics of Invention in Renaissance English Poetry

James, Heather

M | 2-4:20P.M.

SECTION: 32755

The painter and the poet claim,
by old enrollment,

A charter to dare all without
controlment.


— Sir John Harington

This course is about the relationship of the liberty of speech to the outpouring of innovative poetic forms in the English Renaissance. Modern criticism often treats the concept of “poetic license” in terms of relatively minor and harmless violations of realism and verisimilitude. Renaissance writers, by contrast, more often thought of it in terms of the ancient liberties of subjects and especially the liberty of speech. To take liberties with poetic forms — adapting and transforming rather than rotely imitating — was to engage and

extend the ancient liberty of poetry to take risks and break rules boldly, without fear, and in the name of truth-telling. English poetry at its most inventive creates a space for engaging and influencing politics and moral philosophy.

This is also a class about the relationship of Ovid, the boldest poet of Augustan Rome, to English poetry from the rise of lyric eroticism in the late 16th-c to the rise of libertinism in the later 17th-c. Ovid's poetic example permeated the educational curriculum, models of rhetoric, concepts of gender and sexuality, and theories of the material world as well as poetry and poetic forms. It is hard to think of a classical writer who wields more influence than Ovid over the habits of thought, innovations in thinking, and changes of mind that characterize early modern England.

Readings include poetry, drama, and prose fiction by John Lyly, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Milton, and such women writers as Isabella Whitney, Lady Mary Wroth, Hester Pulter, Jane Weston, Anne Wharton, and Aphra Behn. While primary readings are placed in the forefront, we will also work with modern criticism and key pieces of theory (Derrida and Foucault).





ENGL-580

19th Century American Literatures and Cultures

Rowe, John Carlos

TH | 5-7:20P.M.

SECTION: 32789

BLM, #metoo, #NoDAPL (No Dakota Access Pipeline), LGBTQ+ have their sources in nineteenth-century activism by abolitionists, women's rights' activists, and indigenous rights' activists. In response to the current crises involving these and many other communities in the U.S., we will study these central political debates and the role of literature in the formative years of U.S. nationalism. The seminar will provide excellent coverage of the main nineteenth-century literary classics

and some lesser known works focusing on the issues of race, indigeneity, gender, and sexuality: selections from Emerson, Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Poe's *Pym* and early poetry, the fugitive slave narrative (Douglass, Jacobs, and Delany), Melville's *Typee*, Whitman's poetry (selected), and Sarah Winnemucca's *Life among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*. Requirements: Lead a seminar discussion, seminar essay proposal, and seminar essay (20-25 pp.).

ENGL-593

Practicum in Teaching English and Narrative Studies

Freeman, Chris

T | 5-6:20P.M.

SECTION: 32793

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 seven or eight times during the semester. You'll keep a journal based on your teaching, our sessions, your reading, etc. There is one main text, *THE ACADEMIC SELF* by Donald E. Hall.

Literature and Interdisciplinary Studies:

Time, Memory, and the Use of Materials in Painting, Poetry, and Performance Art

Irwin, Mark
Martinez Celaya, Enrique

T | 2-4:20P.M.

SECTION: 32820

The internet and electronic media continue to change our notions of spatial and temporal forms in the visual arts and poetry, forcing interruptions and reconstructions. How do artists such as Julie Mehretu, Cai Guo-Quiang, Mary Corse, Mark Bradford, Enrique Martinez Celaya, Anselm Kiefer, Gerhard Richter, and Marina Abramovic use innovative materials to convey new aspects of time and memory in their work? How do poets (including Tranströmer, Pasternak, Milosz, Szymborska, Merwin, Ashbery,

Komunyakaa, Levis, Graham, Carson, Estes, Gander, Sze, and Gizzi) manipulate imagery, metaphor, diction, perspective, and syntax in order to protract, collapse, or accelerate memory and time?

Note: Hybrid Class (Masks Required)

Two or three of these classes (depending on local CDC & USC guidelines) will be held in the large painting studio of Enrique Martinez Celaya, located at 11240 Playa Court, Culver City, CA 90230.

Studies in Gender:

Queer and Feminist Theory Through Hitchcock

Modleski, Tania

W | 2-4:20P.M.

SECTION: 32857

Some of the foremost feminist and queer studies scholars have formulated their theories around the films of Alfred Hitchcock. In this course we will test many of the theories proposed by D. A. Miller, Lee Edelman, Patricia White, Tania Modleski, Susan White, Alexander Doty, David Greven, Edward Schantz, Robert Allen, Rhona Berenstein, and many others, testing them by reading each alongside some Hitchcock films. Thus, to paraphrase Slavoj Žižek paraphrasing Woody Allen paraphrasing Dr. David Reuben, this course will seek to provide “everything you wanted to know about queer and gender theory (but were afraid to

ask Alfred Hitchcock).” Readings include: Robin Wood, Hitchcock’s Films Revisited; Lee Edelman’s No Future; D.A. Miller’s Hidden Hitchcock, Jonathan Goldberg, Strangers on a Train (as well as the Highsmith novel on which Hitchcock’s film was based), Tania Modleski, The Women Who Knew Too Much, Patricia White Rebecca (if permission is granted) and essays and book chapters by a host of critics. And of course we will be viewing many Hitchcock films at the same time. Requirements: one oral report and a final paper of 20-25 pages.



ENGL-640

Individual Writers:

The Work of Edward P. Jones

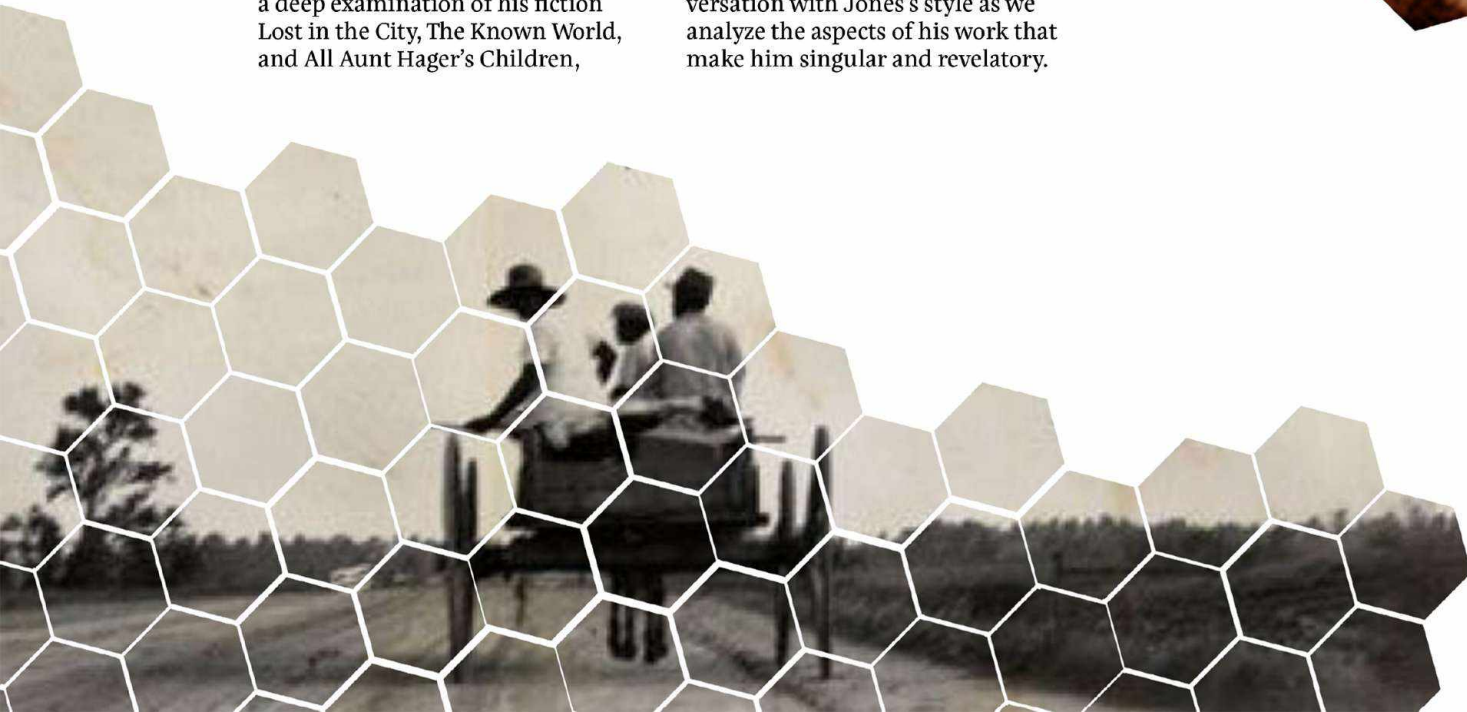
Johnson, Dana

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

SECTION: 32814

Edward P. Jones is one the most important and awarded American novelists and short story writers. He is also, arguably, one of the most underappreciated and under read writers today. This course will be a deep examination of his fiction *Lost in the City*, *The Known World*, and *All Aunt Hager's Children*,

where we will study his craft, technique and subject matter, and trace the trajectory of his oeuvre. We will also produce weekly responses, a critical paper and workshop two short fiction pieces that are in conversation with Jones's style as we analyze the aspects of his work that make him singular and revelatory.





ENGL-660

Studies in Genre:

Narrative Theory and the Making of Fiction: Bleak House, or The Novel, Again, After All, Even Supposing –

Schor, Hilary

T | 4:30-6:50P.M

SECTION: 32860

It is one of the minor wonders of the world that people go on not only writing but reading novels –

long novels, short novels, old novels, new novels, good novels, bad novels. They watch films and binge-watch TV shows and read graphic novels and comic strips and when in doubt, they tell stories, and not all of them are lies. Why? This seminar takes the question of the novel, novelistic form, the social uses of fiction and the vast expanse of narrative theory seriously. It does so unexpectedly by devoting an enormous amount of its energy to a single novel, Charles Dickens's Bleak House

(1852-3), which we will read twice: once, quickly, all the way through, and the second time slowly, as it was originally written, in number parts. Accompanying this experiment in serial fiction will be a series of other kinds of reading, including such classic narrative theorists as Roland Barthes in his masterpiece, S/Z, Gerard Genette's Narrative Discourse and Peter Brooks' Reading for the Plot; recent rethinkings of the structuralist tradition by critics like Kent Puckett (writing on "eccentric" narrative theory) and Brian Richardson ("unnatural narratives"); feminist critics and queer theorists, including Teresa deLauretis, Nancy Miller,

Susan Winnett, Sianne Ngai and Heather Love; theorists of objects and desires, most prominently Susan Stewart; and recent works on narrative theory and probability, narrative and games of chance, coincidence and counterfactuals, temporality and the end of history. All of these things are in Bleak House too, of course, as are dinosaurs, decaying bodies, bastard daughters, orphans, drug addicts, adulteresses and vampires. Out of the miasma of Victorian publishing history, the novel of the streets, the funeral pyre of the law and the pencil scribbles of lost women, we will attempt to generate our own ideas of why fiction matters – and to illuminate this quest, we will also immerse ourselves in contemporary re-workings of Dickens, including television adaptations; filmic reimaginings (Krzysztof Kieslowski's The Double Life of Véronique); Kate Atkinson's brilliantly layered narrative experiment, Life After Life; Ali Smith's game of temporal displacement and artistic creation, How To Be Both; a collection of fairy tales (Angela Carter's The Bloody Chamber); a graphic novel (Alison Bechdel's Fun Home); a memoir

(Carmen Maria Machado's In the Dream House); Sarah Moss's uncanny novel The Ghost Wall; and the most lonely orphan novel ever written, Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go. This class is designed for any writer or reader of fiction, for people who want to discover the ways literary theory illuminates not only the forms of fiction but the dark corners of our own lives, and for people whose idea of fun is being lost in an alternative reality invented by an uncanny genius who has been dead for 140 years, but who comes to life like the unconscious or like your own story coming back to you whenever you turn a page of this book... London, Michaelmas term lately over, and The Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall... Begin the world again, meet a megalosaurus in the streets, read a great novel, think about why fiction matters, or just learn some cool new facts – this is a seminar that will be very much what you want it to be because, like Bleak House the house and Bleak House the novel, it will have a little bit of everything in it, and it will surprise all of us collectively at every turn.



ENGL-693

Graduate Nonfiction Form and Theory

Dyer, Geoff

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

SECTION: 32873

John Berger (1926-2017) wrote on so many different subjects, in such a variety of forms, that many readers encounter him in just one or two of his multiple incarnations: as art critic and theorist, as Booker Prize-winning author of the novel *G*, as author of the documentary studies *A Fortunate Man* and *A Seventh Man*, as essayist, as... Add to this his ground-breaking TV series *Ways of Seeing*, his life-long engagement as a public intellectual and activist, his collaboration with Theatre de Complicité and screenwriter on three of Alain Tanner's best films, and we are faced not only with the task of assessing his work but of reflecting on how the mechanisms of literary reputation function.

In this course we will cover the full range of Berger's work, investigating his formation -- historical, cultural and political -- and considering the extent of his ongoing influence and legacy. But since it would be inappropriate just to study Berger we will also use his example as an incentive for creative collaboration and an inspiration for formal experimentation.

ENGL-695

Graduate Fiction Form and Theory

Everett, Percival

TH | 2-4:20P.M.

SECTION: 32875

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 Form and Theory: *Poetry After the Séance: Writing in the Ruins*

McCabe, Susan

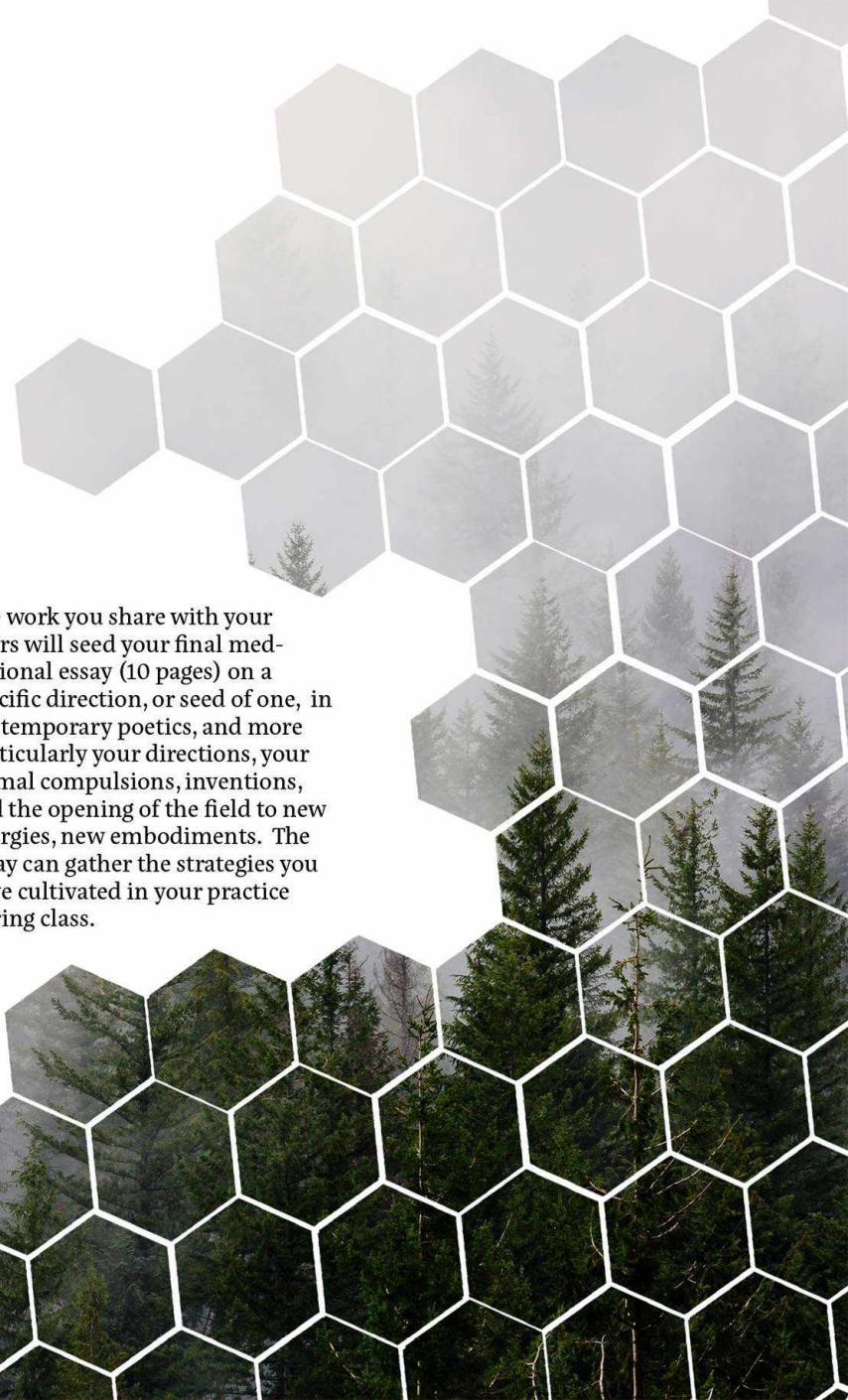
TH | 4:30-6:50P.M

SECTION: 32878

Who or what do we write from? What are the difficulties in writing with “ancient rubrics” (H.D.’s phrase in her *Trilogy*) when the rubrics are broken, partial, or smudged--obliterated? How does the contemporary poet find anchorage, or unmooring? How might new forms emerge through exploring the breakdowns as well as new connections occurring across cultural life? What would such uniquely inevitable forms of expression look like? You will write poems inspired by the poets we read as well as two short meditative essays on poems as well as exemplary creative prose work on poetics, among them, Du Bois’s

classic exploration of “double consciousness,” Edmund Wilson’s *Axel’s Castle*, H.D.’s *Notes on Thought and Vision*, Eliot’s essays (several), *Waste Land* & *Upanishads*, excerpts from Pound’s *Spirit of Romance*, excerpts from Rukeyser’s *Life of Poetry*, Rich’s “Writing as Re-Vision,” from Cixous’s *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, from Moten’s *In the Break*, Inger Christensen’s, *The Condition of Secrecy*, Forché’s *What You Have Heard Is True*, and finally Sebene Selassie *A Call for Connection: You Belong* (*Nerdy Black Immigrant Tomboy Buddhist Weirdo*). These texts subject to change, and addition.

The work you share with your peers will seed your final meditative essay (10 pages) on a specific direction, or seed of one, in contemporary poetics, and more particularly your directions, your formal compulsions, inventions, and the opening of the field to new energies, new embodiments. The essay can gather the strategies you have cultivated in your practice during class.



ENGL-700

Theories and Practices of Professional Development I

Boone, Joseph

TBD | TBD

SECTION: 32890

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. Your prospectus will undergo successive levels of writing and workshoping throughout our group meetings. I've found that participants inevitably benefit from the input of their peers as we talk about your aims, your audience, your methodology, and the structure of

your project; indeed a majority of students who opt to take the workshop tend to win various dissertation fellowships. Hence, time permitting, we will practice fellowship grant writing--condensing the "meat" of the prospective down to 3 pages. We will hold roughly seven group meetings during the semester, at a time mutually agreed upon by those who register for the class.

ENGL-701

Theories and Practices of Professional Development II

Román, Elda María

TBD | TBD

SECTION: 32891

This 2-credit seminar is a practical workshop for the genres, codes, and strategies that will help advance your career as a researcher and writer after finishing your Ph.D.

Topics: application materials including the job letter and c.v., genres of the interview and presentation and how to prepare for them, sample teaching documents, writing samples, letters of support, job market analysis, the difference between liberal arts and R1 institutions, the difference between postdoc and job applications, and above all: how to cope with the stress of the market and to support each other.

The seminar will meet on a bi-weekly basis, and in addition, will be expected to participate in periodic mock interviews and job talks. The placement director will also meet with each of you individually to review materials and discuss your strategy on the market.

