

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FALL 2012 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENGL 501: HISTORY OF LITERARY AND CULTURAL THEORY
John Carlos Rowe, Wed., 5:00-7:20 pm Course Number 32770D

What do you need, what do you want, and what do you know? We will do a broadly based “survey” of modern and contemporary literary and cultural theories, together with their pertinent backgrounds and pretexts, including readings of theorists suggested by members of the seminar. The core of the seminar will be readings of theorists representing the following broadly defined schools or movements: Marxist and neo-Marxist; Postmodern and Poststructuralist; New Historicist; Feminist; Cultural Studies; Critical Race Studies; Queer; Postcolonial and Transnational; New Media. Each member of the seminar will suggest one short reading (representing a movement/school with which he/she identifies his/her work) and lead the seminar discussion of that work. Each member of the seminar will propose a seminar project in which his/her position is developed clearly and exemplified by some relevant case study. The seminar project will be submitted as a fully developed “position paper” (20 pages) at the end of the semester.

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**ENGL 503: THEORIES OF HISTORY, IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS
Anthony Kemp, Monday, 4:30-6:50 pm Course Number 32772D**

This is a course in the theories of human culture that have developed from the enlightenment to the present. The last third of the course, approximately, will deal with what is usually thought of as postmodern theory; the first two thirds will analyze the foundational modern theories of the meaning of culture, without a knowledge of which, I believe, the postmodern is incomprehensible.

The modern is distinguished by the conjunction of three unprecedented modes of thought: the historicist, the ideological, and the revolutionary.

Historicism sees the world—biological and social—not as a system that is, but as an onward rush of becoming. No object can be known or described in its current state, but can only be understood through the historical conditions and process of its emergence. A sub-species of historicism is the genealogical method: the true meaning of an institution, idea or condition is found in its origin, its *archae*; the task of the genealogist is to retrace the process of becoming to its root, which, when known, will reveal a real meaning behind and beneath the apparent contemporary meaning. The ultimate aim of historicism is to arrive at a totalizing theory that comprehends the universal process of becoming, from which no particularity can escape, that can predict the necessary shape of the future.

Ideological thought posits that the conscious and semi-conscious idea-systems of a society are manifestations of false-consciousness. Commonly-accepted ideas are lies that provide a covering, concealing, mystifying, containing screen (the matrix) that conceals the reality of social relations. Ideas exist in order to serve privileged, exploitative interests of material and economic power.

The revolutionary mode of political thought brings into consciousness a profound suspicion of the existent social world, and a more-or-less constant theory and practice of revolution as the necessary *telos* of history. The revolutions called for are either egalitarian (Marx) or elitist (Nietzsche).

The conjunction of these three can be said to constitute the master-narrative of the modern; they form the categorical base of its philosophy, its psychology, its literary and artistic representations. They determine its demystifying hermeneutic dichotomies of surface and depth, manifest and latent. This convergence of historicism, ideology, and revolutionary politics is what the modern, in all its aspects, is fundamentally about.

We will begin with the project of the Enlightenment, and with Rousseau's genealogies of the social and of inequality, and go on to look at their political materialization in the French Revolution. We will examine the development of the genealogical hermeneutic in Marx's attack on idealism, in Nietzsche's attack on the ethics of pity, and in Freud's excavation of the unconscious. We will examine structuralism (in both linguistics and ethnology), and situationism. Finally, we will follow postmodernist ramifications of all these theories to the present situation. I would like to use student reports to bring in more peripheral areas to the central core of texts and discussion.

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So, yes, there are a lot of abstract terms here, but I promise that it will all make sense, and be fun. If you've ever been baffled by "theory," then this is your guide for the perplexed.

Texts:

Rousseau, Discourse on Inequality

Schama, Citizens

Marx, The German Ideology, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844

Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy

Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, The Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist, "Truth and Falsity in an Ultra-Moral Sense"

Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, Dora

Levi-Strauss, The Savage Mind

Lacan, Ecrits

Foucault, Discipline and Punish

Debord, The Society of the Spectacle

Nicholson, The Second Wave

Jameson, Postmodernism

Weil, Oppression and Liberty

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ENGL 520: RENAISSANCE ENGLISH LITERATURE AND CULTURES: Poetic inspiration in Elizabethan England: pagan revival in the age of reform
Heather James, Tuesday, 2:00-4:20 pm Course Number 32780D

Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare knew at least two textual authorities by heart. One was their Bible, which had undergone many transformations in Tudor England, and focused on the incarnate Christian God. The other was Ovid, the great love poet of ancient Rome, who was most famous for his *Metamorphoses*, an epic poem about the transformation of human bodies to stone, tree, mineral, bird, beast, flower, and star—and every other element of the physical world. Although medieval thinkers solved the problem of Biblical and pagan forms of knowledge and truth, English poets such as Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare grew up in a world that doubted and debated the viability of pagan inspiration and yet they found themselves, time and again, unable to give up the extraordinary powers of inspiration to be found in Ovid. This course traces the struggle of three major English poets as they decided how, precisely, they were to account for the pagan sources of poetic inspiration and found themselves torn between competing models and modes of knowing the world and the word.

We will place our texts—Shakespeare, Marlowe, Spenser, and Ovid—in a variety of contexts: history (ancient and early modern), education, book history, art history, religion, history of science, translation and adaptation, and theory (chiefly aesthetics, reception, and deconstruction).

The required texts for this course are as follows:

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Arthur Golding (1567)
Spenser, *Faerie Queene* Books I-III (Norton Critical Edition)
Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays* (Oxford World Classics)
----- Edward II
----- *Hero and Leander*, with the continuation by George Chapman
Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*
----- *Titus Andronicus* (Arden3, ed. Jonathan Bate)
----- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oxford UP, ed. Peter Holland)
----- *Romeo and Juliet* (Bedford, ed. Dympha Callaghan)
----- *Hamlet*
----- *The Tempest* (Oxford UP, ed. Stephen Orgel)
1560 Geneva Bible
Online Bible Commentaries of Calvin College

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**ENGL 540: 19TH CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURES AND CULTURES
Joseph Boone, Thursday, 4:30-6:50 p.m. Course Number 32884D**

Course description not available.

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ENGL 620: LITERATURE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES: The Scholarly Interface: theory & practice of multimedia scholarship

Alice Gambrell, Thursday, 2:00-4:20 pm Course Number 32796D

<http://www.writingiswork.org>

gambrell@usc.edu

A small number of print-based formulae for scholarly publication – the single-author book, the refereed article, the edition, the review – are firmly established in contemporary academic practice, providing scholars with vehicles through which knowledge is disseminated, expertise is affirmed, and credentials are acquired. During the last two decades, however, an array of new formal and technological possibilities has arisen alongside the increasing accessibility of digital authorship tools, and scholars are currently in the process of assessing the impact of these forms – which are still in their infancy – upon the knowledge professions. In this course, we will look at expressive technologies through which scholarly knowledge has been and has yet to be contained and communicated. Along the way, we will also perform some scholarly experiments of our own.

How does the complicated, raucous history of learned publication inform contemporary experiments in the art and craft of the scholarly interface? To what extent can we (or should we) draw clear, clean distinctions between scholarly and creative modes of expression? What mechanisms determine whether particular forms of knowledge will be included within (or excluded from) the category of the “scholarly”? To what extent do the forms that scholarship assumes, and the processes through which those forms are consolidated, either enable or disable intellectual innovation? These are some of the questions we will be asking and beginning to answer in “The Scholarly Interface.”

This course will provide students with an introduction to theories and practices that are taking shape beneath the conceptual umbrella of the “digital humanities.” In it, we will combine more-or-less traditional discussion of literary and theoretical texts with hands-on interactive design practice. (We will actually make things.) We will also have a chance to meet with LA-based innovators in the field of scholarly multimedia, and to view a wide range of recent digital-scholarly work. Term projects will consist of works of scholarship (roughly equivalent to a 20-page essay) presented in a multimedia format chosen by the student. No prior experience in digital authorship is expected, and there are no technical prerequisites for the course: we will start from scratch, work (and play) hard, and produce examples of scholarly expression that are as informative and critically engaged as they are beautiful, affecting, and surprising. Please feel free to e-mail me or to stop by office hours (M/W, 11:30-12:30) if you have any questions.

Although I haven’t finalized the syllabus, the following readings are likely to be included:

Fiction:

Vladimir Nabokov, *Transparent Things*

Jeanette Winterson, *The PowerBook and Art Objects*

Digital Artworks (including games and tools):

Peter Brinson and Kurosh ValaNejad, *The Cat and the Coup*

Tracy Fullerton and Bill Viola, *Night Journey*

George LeGrady, *Making Visible the Invisible*

Golan Levin, *The Dumpster*

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John Maeda, Reactive Books
Casey Reas and Ben Fry, Processing

Criticism and Theory by Wendy Chun, Mary Flanagan, Katherine Hayles,
Friedrich Kittler, Alan Liu, Jerome McGann, Franco Moretti, Lisa Nakamura, Rita Raley

Writings on Design Practice by Anne Balsamo, Johanna Drucker,
Ellen Lupton, Donald Norman, Edward Tufte, Eric Zimmerman and Katie Salen

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**ENGL 660: STUDIES IN GENRE: Modernist Forms of Temporal Imagination:
Flashback, Recurrence, Amnesia and the Problem of History
Susan McCabe, Tuesday, 4:30-6:50 p.m. Course number 32800D**

"Let me recite what history teaches. History teaches."--Stein

What does the study of modernism teach us about what and how history teaches? What are the ways that "history" is taught through literary texts? Where does modernist history begin? This seminar will re-examine where modernism as a literary and historical movement might productively find a genesis. What defines the relationship between genre and period? I anchor the readings of this course in two divergent figures of the 19th century, Anthony Trollope (particularly *The Way We Live Now* 1873) and the more predictable precursor, Charles Baudelaire, especially as Walter Benjamin describes his poetry, persona and play between voluntary and involuntary memory. Primarily, then, we will examine the differing enactments of time played out in these texts (philosophical, scientific, genealogical, subjective, historical), relying heavily on Benjamin's notion of "dialectical materialism" in forecasting modernist time and a methodology of jump-cuts between unlikely texts. Benjamin's status as theorist, poet and philosopher make him particularly amenable to the seminar's focus. Along with Benjamin, we will read Freud's *Civilization & Its Discontents* (1922) as well as Edmund Wilson's *To The Finland Station* (1940) depicting the textual and material pressures leading to 1917. These are lenses for the lineage or time-travel the seminar supports and questions. The modernist novel /text / poem purportedly "makes it new," yet is riddled with the stresses of nostalgia, dread, sporadic amnesia, and obsessive and recursive memory.

Against the backdrop of the Decadent *Fleurs du Mal* (1857) and Trollope's "historical" novel(s) as well as the emergent Theory of Relativity, we read five modernists, first Henry James' *Wings of the Dove* and then concentrate on four women modernists and their myriad formal experiments. Each modernist—Stein, Woolf, H.D. and Elizabeth Bowen—produces work in several genres, and the slippage from novel, poetry, autobiography, essay, memoir provoke temporal and formal re-adjustments. We will read Stein's *Three Lives*, her essays on repetition and history along with her memoir, *Wars I Have Seen*; Woolf's documentary-essay *Three Guineas*, her mock-biography *Orlando* and the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. With Woolf's acknowledged debt to Trollope's ironic handling of, character and institutions in mind, how might the temporal form of her multiple genres shift? For our third case-study, we read H.D.'s memoir *Tribute to Freud*, her film essays, her genealogical *The Gift*, and her poem *Helen in Egypt*; we conclude with Elizabeth Bowen, her introduction to a Trollope novel and her peculiar anti-narrative novel, *Eva Trout*. These works as a whole derive much of their thematic and stylistic "newness" from flashbacks of 19th century narrative and poetry, not as oppressive forebears but rather as models for pursuing subjects as diverse as changing gender and sexual possibilities, the breakdown of empire, the unclear distinctions between immigrant and "insider," the questioning of authority, the loss of division between subjective and "objective", the expanding metropolis, burgeoning technologies, the imaginary nature of money itself, and the unsteady exuberance of the new. Along with our "primary texts," we will read contemporary critics, including Marjorie Perloff, Martin Jay, Eduard Cadava and Garrett Stewart.

Each student will give two presentations on a critical problem posed by a text or work of criticism in relationship to temporal divagations. A final paper will also be required along with unflinching attendance and active participation. Interested students should contact me for a list of suggested preparatory readings at mccabe@usc.edu.

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**ENGL 695: GRADUATE FICTION FORM AND THEORY
Aimee Bender, Monday, 2:00-4:20 p.m. Course Number 32802D**

Course description not available.

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ENGL 696: GRADUATE POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP: "Enlarging the Temple"
Mark Irwin, Tuesday, 4:30-6:50 p.m. Course Number 32803D

"Reason forgets, the imagination never," Peter Handke said. In this course we will chart the imagination and the notion that new content requires new form. Using contemporary models, including those of John Ashbery, Anne Carson, W.S. Merwin, Jorie Graham, James Tate and many younger poets, we will engage new poetic strategies and risks in our own work. Critiques will focus on how subject finds form, and how surprise and tension are often found in both language and concept. We will set individual goals and new objectives by risking more of "the self" in the poem, and we will ask how artists distort the world in order to make it more vivid. Memorability, imagination, and emotional amplitude will be stressed, and several examples from contemporary painting and music will be applied. Numerous essays on craft and form will also be discussed, and rewriting will play an integral part of this workshop.

"If you find that you no longer believe,
try enlarging the temple." --W.S. Merwin

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ENGL 697: GRADUATE FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP
David Treuer, Wed., 2:00-4:20 p.m. Course Number 32804D

Effective fiction writing requires several things: inspiration, creativity, a sense of craft, and knowledge of the world of literature into which you write. Only the last two can be learned (in class). Therefore, this class will focus on making you better readers, critical readers, and on sharpening the skills you have been acquiring over the years you have been devoted to the process. In this course we will do four things. We will read and we will write and we will edit and we will discuss. We will read various approaches to the craft of short and long fiction and provide critiques and discuss. We will workshop our fictions with an eye toward perfecting them and then work on redrafting the pieces we submit. At times we will focus on specific elements of the craft (pace, structure, characterization) and at others we will work more holistically. Ideally, our work here will lead us not to the perfection of a piece or pieces of writing (which is one thing) but to the development of a certain skill-set that will help you as grow as a writer.

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**ENGL 698: GRADUATE POETRY FORM AND THEORY: BREAKING THROUGH
GENRE (Poetry/Music, Poetry/Film, Poetry/Science, Poetry/Translation)
Carol Muske-Dukes, Thursday, 4:30-6:50 p.m. Course Number 32805D**

This course will examine evolving definitions of “genre”, its opportunities and its limitations – and the thrill of the “breakthrough”. With Poetry (and the “language” of Poetry) as our point of genre-origin, we will witness the testing of (and test ourselves) literary assumptions about genre through close reading of authors and texts, through viewing of films and attention to poems as musical composition, as “science/poetic experiment” and in translation from various languages. Writers, film-makers and scientist/philosophers’ work examined will include Gertrude Stein’s masterpiece of verbal Cubism, *TENDER BUTTONS*; Virginia Woolf’s *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE* and *THE WAVES*, Blaise Pascal’s *PENSEES*, Stanislaw Lem’s *SOLARIS*, (as well as at least one of the film adaptations of *SOLARIS*), the film *POETRY* from Korean director, Lee Chang-dong; settings of poems as musical compositions (with class visits by two composers), Rudolf Arnheim’s *FILM AS ART* and translations of poems from the Russian, German and Chinese. Other texts: *WOMEN OF COLOR: Subversion through Cross-Genre Writing* and *SAPPHIC PRIMITIVISM* by Robin Hackett.

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ENGL 701x: THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT II
Karen Tongson, 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.