

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
SPRING 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**ENGL 520: Renaissance English Literatures and Cultures: “Reading toward Voice”**

**Bruce R. Smith Wednesday 5:00-7:20 p.m. Number: 32778D**

Since the advent of Modernism in the early twentieth century, *silent* reading has been the default mode both in critical studies and in what readers of poems and prose fictions tell themselves they are doing. What writers have thought they were doing is another matter, and so are practices of social reading aloud that were common into the twentieth century. This course will attempt to *locate* voice in a range of medieval and early modern written texts, with feelers toward texts from later periods. We shall end with texts chosen by the seminar members themselves, including creative work they may be pursuing. Three sets of readings will help us get our bearings: Charles Fernyhough’s book *The Voices Within: The History and Science of How We Talk to Ourselves* (2016), the short articles on voice collected in *Keywords in Sound* (2015), and Roland Barthes’ seminal essay “The Grain of the Voice” (1972). From there we will turn our attention to a range of medieval and early modern texts to test out what we’ve read and discussed: the confessional *Book of Margery Kempe*, lyric poems by Sir Thomas Wyatt, passages from the King James Bible and *The Book of Common Prayer*, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, excerpts from Thomas Shelton’s 1652 translation of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, and Aphra Behns’ novel *Oroonoko*. Later texts may include, according to the seminar members’ wishes, excerpts from an epistolary novel like *Pamela*, a first-person autobiography like Benjamin Franklin’s, lyrics by Romantic poets like Keats, silent films like Lois Weber’s *Shoes*, and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. Members will be responsible for a brief response paper on one of the medieval or early modern texts (along with a brief oral presentation), a medium-range response paper on one of the later texts (along with a more formal oral presentation), and a longer final paper (with a work-in-progress presentation to the seminar).

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
SPRING 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**ENGL 530: Restoration and 18<sup>th</sup> Century British Literatures and Cultures  
Leo Braudy Thursday 2:00-4:20 p.m. Number: 32600D**

In the middle of the seventeenth century, England experienced the first modern revolution. It began with the beheading of Charles I and the reign of Oliver Cromwell and continued even after the Restoration of Charles II to the throne. This political upheaval set the stage for a host of cultural changes that indelibly marked the transition from the Elizabethan world of courts and courtiers to the modern world of politics and public opinion. Assumptions about class and gender, as well as the relation of religion to politics, and a host of other beliefs that had hardly varied since the Middle Ages were abruptly, and very openly, up for discussion and change. In this course we will look at the period stretching roughly from the English Civil Wars to the death of Alexander Pope in an attempt to understand the complex interplay between its literature and its politics (public and private), its economics, and its cultural values.

We will begin with Marvell and Rochester, two poets who were not interested in being thought professional literary men but yet who clearly placed themselves in relation to a literary tradition. Dryden and Pope will be the other main poetic figures—with their comparatively new assertion that the poet is particularly equipped to tell his readers what to believe about the world and to help them deal with it. Another important focus of the course will be the theatre of the Restoration period, the birthplace of a new conception of acting, the actor, and the idea of performance itself in the plays of Aphra Behn, Dryden, Sir George Etherege, George Farquhar, Thomas Otway, and William Wycherley. In addition we will read poems and prose by Mary Astell, Behn, Daniel Defoe, Anne Finch, John Locke, and Jonathan Swift.

The course will be conducted in the second floor conference room of the William Andrews Clark Library on Adams Boulevard. There we will be able to draw upon the Clark's extensive and virtually unique collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts and thereby get a keener sense of what it was like to live in the cultural and material milieu where these works appeared. There will also be ample time to consider the visual culture of the period--paintings, sculpture, engravings, frontispieces--using the Clark's resources.

Three pieces of work will be required in the seminar: two papers approximately 12-15 pages in length on topics developed in consultation; and an oral report (including annotated bibliography) on a topic in political, economic, or social history relevant to the general reading for the week and drawing upon the Clark's resources.

Students interested in the course are encouraged to e-mail me <braudy@usc.edu> if they have any general questions. Our first class will begin with a tour of the Clark and its research facilities.

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
SPRING 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**ENGL 591: 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Literatures and Cultures  
William Handley Thursday 4:30-6:50 p.m. Number: 32788D**

What do Sherman Alexie and Jerry Bruckheimer have in common? Not much -- and a lot. That question and its nonsensical answer speak to the difficulty and challenge of studying the U.S. West and its cultural representations in the past century. Haunted by imperial and settler-colonial history and popular cultural stereotypes and formulas, western U.S. fiction, historiography, and film exhibit a broad range of aesthetic and political responses to the questions of how and why the past and its ongoing legacies are represented.

The burden of writing about the U.S. West in the nineteenth century was to give readers what they wanted: something authentically real. Yet the West in the twentieth century inspired terms such as the "simulacrum" and the "hyperreal" in the work of European postmodernist theorists Jean Baudrillard and Umberto Eco. We will explore these seeming contradictions about representations of the West after the formula Western, along with such topics as "postindian simulations," ecocritical literature, Los Angeles and postmodernist theory, noir as invisible history, and the ongoing frontiers of race and sexuality in the post-frontier West.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
SPRING 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**ENGL 600: Publication in Humanities Journals**  
**Susan Green Friday 2:00 – 4:20 p.m. Number: 32789D**

Publishing an article in a refereed periodical is one of the best ways to engage with the research in your field – both intellectually and professionally. This seminar will focus on developing essays into successful submissions. Class members will send the instructor a draft of an essay they propose to submit to a periodical — ideally in December 2017 for the seminar beginning in January, or no later than the second session of the seminar.

One goal of the seminar will be to survey the current state of refereed periodical publishing in the humanities, including the shifting relations between print and digital publication. Not all refereed periodicals appear in print (some are “born digital”), and almost no surviving periodicals are “print only.” Digital technology has streamlined the production of periodicals and greatly improved access to them; the impact on refereeing and editing is less clear. The main objective of our work will be mastering the steps of editorial review in the digital environment, while we will also consider the resources of “digital humanities” more broadly, as tools for research.

We will begin with a survey of about twenty periodicals to open discussion on current trends in method and approach. Class members will also introduce to the seminar several periodicals that interest them, accompanied by detailed analysis of particular articles. Readings in the seminar will chiefly include published articles introduced by class members and the instructor, as well as style guides treating the mechanics of preparing articles for refereeing.

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
SPRING 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**ENGL 610: THEORY AND CRITICISM: Hope and Fear: A Theory and Criticism Seminar**

**Maggie Nelson Tuesday 2:00-4:20 p.m. Number: 32772**

Hope and fear—or, you could say, optimism and pessimism—swirl at the core of many discourses these days, likely reflecting a widely-felt confusion as to how to organize our moods, lives, and collectivity in the face of overwhelming phenomena such as climate change, global capitalism, accelerating technology, racism, neo-fascism, and more. Is ricocheting between hope and despair—both of which have severe drawbacks—our only option? If not, what are some alternatives? What’s in between; is there an outside? “Hope and fear is a feeling with two sides,” writes Buddhist Pema Chodron. “As long as there’s one, there’s always the other. This is the root of our pain.” How might we lessen this pain while still remaining engaged? Can theory or criticism help? What is the relationship between so-called individual orientation, outlook, or predilection, and the (re)creation of the social? This course will examine such questions via recent debates about optimism, pessimism, futurity, accelerationism, and more in the distinct but related spheres of black studies, queer studies, technology studies, and ecological studies. Our movement will be swift and wide, though we will take time along the way to explore our own lived experiences of anxiety, despair, pleasure, impotency, agency, and so on, as we ask open questions about the relationship of such affects/ habits of heart & mind to our work, each other, and the world. Likely texts: Donna Haraway, Fred Moten, Saidiya Hartman, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Calvin Warren, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Andrew Culp, Derek Jensen, Sara Ahmed, Timothy Morton, Nick Land, Lee Edelman, Mel Chen, Junot Diaz, Jonathan Lear, Tiqqun, material from Standing Rock, Black Lives Matter, Occupy, and more. There will be short writing assignments along the way and one final paper. Arrive ready to head into the trouble and stay there awhile.

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
SPRING 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**ENGL 612: HISTORY OF THE BOOK AND MATERIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Joseph Dane Mondays 2:00-4:20 p.m. Number: 32770**

Doheny Special Collections/Clark Library

The course will focus on physical aspects of books and the use of primary materials in literary research. We will meet at Doheny Special Collections and (when possible) at the nearby Clark Library (we'll figure out transportation for anyone needing it). Weekly meetings will be based loosely around basic topics in bibliography: material aspects of books such as paper, binding structures, typography; and more abstract issues such as provenance, editorial matters, digitization. Students will be free to work on any area of interest: beyond basic participation, there will be no required seminar papers or lengthy presentations. Please do not be mis-led by the 600-course number: there are no prerequisites; all students are welcome, from first year to diss.-level students.

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
SPRING 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**ENGL 620: LITERATURE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES: WRITER & COMPOSER**

**David St. John Tuesday 2:00-4:20 p.m. Number: 32769D**

**Location: MUSIC 102B**

This course will be team taught by David St. John and Professor Frank Ticheli of the Thornton School of Music. This course provides a series of structured collaborations between composers and poets. Activities include fundamentals of poetry, comparative analysis of poem/song settings, and creative projects. There is also a class of graduate singers from Thornton attached to our class to allow for the workshopping of all student projects. We hope that this course can foster long-term collaborative relationships between composers and writers. The course is designed for graduate students in Music Composition and English/Creative Writing (Poetry). However, other graduate students may enroll with the permission of the instructor. Be warned: this is all about collaboration in the arts. If you think of yourself as a lone wolf artist, this course may not be for you.

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
SPRING 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**ENGL 695: GRADUATE FICTION FORM AND THEORY**  
**Percival Everett Monday 4:30-6:50 pm Number: 32834D**

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.



**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
SPRING 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**ENGL 696: GRADUATE POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP: “The Ekphrastic Poem”(a.k.a. “A Tour of the Imagination”)  
Carol Muske-Dukes Wednesday 2:00-4:20 pm Number: 32835D**

This course, originally designed as a graduate “special topics” elective, has now evolved into “The Ekphrastic Poem”,

the graduate poetry workshop. 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.

The USC Office of Communications featured last year’s 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.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
SPRING 2018 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**ENGL 697: Graduate Fiction Writing Workshop**  
**Geoff Dyer Monday 4:30-6:50 p.m. Number: 32838D**

This will be a traditional graduate fiction workshop, concentrating on voice, characterization, style, setting and so forth. Experimentation with form will be encouraged. Participants will be required to hand in three submissions of 15-20 pages during the semester. In addition, there will be revisions of a scene or scenes from one of each participant's workshopped submissions at the end of the semester. We will also be reading two novels: *Voyage in the Dark* by Jean Rhys and, hopefully, *The Sparsholt Affair* by Alan Hollinghurst if that seems viable (the UK edition is available now but is not out in the US till March so this might change) and various short stories to be announced at the beginning of the semester.