

Fall 2024 Special Topics and Themed Courses

Course descriptions for all other courses can be found at the [NCSU Course Catalog](#)

ENG 362: Studies in the Nineteenth-Century British Novel: Novel Contrasts - Dr. Gibson

This course will introduce you to the British novel in the nineteenth century by examining a series of pairings and oppositions in and between novels by authors including Jane Austen, Emily Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, and Robert Louis Stevenson. We'll consider how contrasts between opposing forces or categories function as the central tropes of our novels, from the pairing that structures the title of *Pride and Prejudice* to the geographical opposition of *North and South*, and from the uncanny repetitions of *Wuthering Heights* to the split personality of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. We will also ask what it means to craft our own juxtapositions between these novels, for instance by reading the anonymous *The Woman of Color* in response to Austen's marriage plot. As we explore the doublings and repetitions, the collisions and comparisons, that these novels generate, we'll consider the nineteenth-century contexts that underpin them: empire and race; industrialization, urbanization, and environmental change; class and poverty; and changing gender roles.

All: Core - British Literature

All: Literature elective OR English elective

ENG/COM 395: AI, Large Language Models, and Writing - Dr. Rieder

This course will be a project-based introduction to text-based and multimodal Large Language Models (LLMs). The focus will be on the ways in which LLMs are transforming writing practices. A question we'll ask an answer several times is how we might incorporate LLMs into our future work in writing and persuasive/rhetorical communication. I want to emphasize that this is an introductory course. You do not need any prior knowledge or technical experience to enroll, albeit curiosity and an interest in learning some hands-on, technical methods for working with LLMs is important. Project-based topics that we'll cover will include the following: various strategies for writing effective prompts, aka prompt design and -engineering, including RAG; the basics behind fine tuning an LLM and creating a simple dataset; exploring AI-driven creative writing apps like SudoWrite and NovelCrafter; developing your own Custom GPT (OpenAI) w/Zapier; exploring HuggingFace's open-source hub of models; using Google Bard/Gemini and Google apps; working individually or collaboratively on a final project. The focus is on hands-on learning as well as on individual and collaborative projects.

All: Core - Rhetoric

All: English elective

LWR/RWP: Methods

ENG 395: Teaching Machines to Write & other AI Adventures - Prof. Rinaldi

What is a writing machine, and what does it mean to create and interact with one? These are the core questions this course seeks to explore. Through discussions and workshops on histories of writing hardware and software such as the keyboard and word processors, to the art of cryptography, to the development of interactive and robotic composition through chatbots and generative text AI, we will trace the discourses and engineering practices that have shaped

mechanical apparatuses of composition and determine their consequences for our rhetorical practices and understandings of language and meaning. No previous coding experience is required.

All: Core - Rhetoric

All: English elective

LWR/RPW: Methods

ENG 420: The Importance of Being Ernest (Hemingway) - Dr. Dudley

This course will expose students to a myriad of texts, both short and long, by one of America's most renowned and influential modern writers. Ernest Hemingway contemplated and wrangled with ideas relating to selfhood and individual identity his entire literary career, from his relatively humble beginnings to his final years enmeshed in and, some would argue, eclipsed by his celebrity. The texts for this course will explore this life-long exercise on the part of an artist in-the-making. More specifically, we will attempt to show how these texts in turn define a world as Hemingway saw it, thought it, and/or hoped it to be. Sometimes that self-discovery necessarily invests itself in definitions of a national nature, sometimes the lens is gendered, and sometimes the lines of demarcation are racial; but every time, the exploration is an exercise in self-discovery for both the author and by extension, the reader. Indeed, the name "Ernest Hemingway" is one that, even a half-century after his untimely death, still elicits a nod of recognition from most who hear it. However, recognition is not knowledge; few who hear the name truly know the artist, an artist whose complexities have been, until recently, shrouded by a deceptively simple style. And that's where our course begins. The format of the course will consist of occasional lectures to provide some literary/historical context and, of course, much class discussion, during which time each of you will contribute to our literary investigation.

All: Core - American Literature

All: Literature elective OR English elective

LLT & TED: Author/Genre

ENG 453: Victorian Media Studies - Dr. Fyfe

With its dramatic changes in telecommunication technologies, steam printing, and photorealistic images, the nineteenth century invented modern ideas about media. In this course, we will investigate Victorian reactions to media change, spanning the telegraph, steam press, railway, telephone, photography, photographs, and radio. We will also reflect on contemporary representations of these historical mediums, as in the subgenre of steampunk. Whenever possible, we will experiment with the historical technologies in question, including workshops with typewriters, reading by candlelight, making an optical telegraph, &c. Across the semester, students will develop a critical vocabulary for literary and media analysis, and be responsible for sustained reading, written workshop reflections, and a final project.

All: Core - British Literature

All: Literature elective OR English elective

ENG 455: Literacy in the United States - Dr. Anson

At this moment, highly complex processes are at work as you read, interpret, and reflect on

these words. On a basic level, you’re making use of abilities that you have been practicing most of your life, through formal schooling, through family educational practices, through work-related experiences, through your own self-sponsored activities (including online interaction), and through daily routines. More broadly, you bring to your reading tacit assumptions about the role of literacy in your development and in a society that demands higher literacy and uses it to establish criteria for your success. In a course that focuses on literacy, reading the very word literacy calls into play many beliefs about our class system, economic and political structures, educational institutions, cultures, and media. In this course, we’ll explore the personal functions of literacy but soon extend them to wider dimensions of literacy in our society and in our educational institutions, including questions such as these: What are the competing theories about how best to teach literacy? What actually happens when we read? How is technology affecting literacy? What’s the relationship between reading and writing? Why are 21% of adult Americans illiterate and why do 54% read below a 6th-grade level? Has the pandemic affected child literacy? How can we use literacy in the service of social justice? Projects include a literacy autoethnography, a literacy-focused teaching strategy, a “design-your-own” literacy inquiry, and interactive comments on readings.

All: Core - Rhetoric

All: English elective

ENG 491: Rhetoric at the End of the World - Dr. Beare

In this seminar-style course, we will examine the functions of rhetoric and rhetorical criticism in response to potentially catastrophic crises and existential threats facing humanity. 20th and 21st century rhetoricians have largely theorized “rhetoric” as communicative responses to “exigent conditions” or situations of urgency and emergency that necessitate action (Bitzer, 1968). What does it mean, then, to theorize and examine rhetoric at a historical moment dominated by overlapping messages of crisis and emergency—connected to climate change, global pandemics, nuclear proliferation, the collapse of democracies, exhaustions of natural resources, among others? Over the course of the semester, we will explore how crises and emergencies are defined (and by whom), and we will examine rhetorical responses (from governments, scientists, cultural critics, artists, and individuals on social media) to issues presented as crises and emergencies. We will discuss the communicative challenges of representing complex information, inspiring change and social action, and navigating the politicization of crises. We will question what “effective” communication is when addressing these issues, the affordances and constraints of various media and genres, and the challenges presented by counter discourses and misinformation. At the same time that we will explore rhetorical action inspired by these crises, we will also consider the role of rhetorical critics and the ways in which they function as both participants in and commentators on discourses of crisis.

I have attempted to design the course and choose readings and texts for analysis that cross the areas of concentration within our English major, and whether you are a student interested in rhetoric and professional writing, literary and artistic production, creative writing, film and media studies, linguistics, or language-arts education, I hope you will find ways of connecting with the course material and incorporating your sub-disciplinary expertise into our class conversations over the course of the semester.

Restricted to English Honors students

All: Core - Rhetoric
All: English elective

ENG 492/592: Rendering Worlds: Digital Media, Animation & FX - Dr. Johnston

This course will explore the history, theory, and aesthetics of contemporary digital media technology, with an emphasis on animation, games, and special effects. Recent cinema has become more reliant on special effects and though these have been utilized since the medium's origins, the development and use of CGI algorithms have changed film's contours along with media like video games and animation. We will examine the historical creation and rise of CGI, rendering engines, and other technologies that wind through a broader media landscape, paying attention to creative applications, expressive potentialities, and the interaction of spectacle and narrative that frame and create worlds. The class will engage with a variety of screen-based media, such as contemporary games and consoles, Star Wars in the 1970s to its contemporary incarnations, and home video play of Atari 2400 games in the 1970s to Google's DeepMind AI playing them today.

All: Core - Rhetoric
All: English elective
All: Core - Film
All: Arts & Letters

ENG 517/798: Advanced Technical Writing, Editing and Document Design - TBA

Advanced study of technical communication practice, including content management, document design, and technical editing and usability. For students planning careers as technical communicators.

All: Core - Rhetoric
All: English elective

ENG 519/798: Online Information Design and Evaluation - Dr. Pigg

Concepts and practices related to multimedia information design, information architectures, human-computer interaction, and genre for complex websites.

All: Core - Rhetoric
All: English elective

ENG 539: Global Anglophone Modernisms, Race, & Nation - Dr. Walsh

This course examines twentieth-century literary, filmic, and artistic movements in a global context, paying particular attention to how modernist literature and culture responded to questions of race and nation. The traditional story of modernist literature focused on Anglo-European literature produced between 1914-1945 with an oversized dose of Irish and American expatriate writers in the mix. In this sense, migration and movement have been an established part of the conversation about modernist expatriate writers and artists. But in recent years, the fields of cultural studies, postcolonial studies, political theory, and cultural geography have helped modernist studies become more responsive to the dynamics of colonization and imperialism, to race, and to ideas about nation and sovereignty. The result has been an expansion of modernism's geographic borders (to imagine "modernist literature" to

mean more than texts produced in Paris/London/New York) as well as expanding its temporal borders (as one scholar has put it, to assume modernism exists between the two world wars is like one hand clapping).

This course will explore an array of non-western and Anglo-European modernist texts spanning the globe, some of which will be familiar and some less well-known. The main emphasis of the course will focus on the first half of the twentieth century but the last portion of the course will push beyond this. Alongside primary texts, we will read some scholarly texts that address race, empire, cosmopolitanism, globalization, translation, diaspora, inter-imperiality, and planetarity from an intersectional perspective.

All: Literature elective OR English Elective

LLT: Globalization

LLT: Capstone

ENG 558: Shakespeare and Community - Dr. Crosbie

Shakespeare wrote during a period known for its consolidation of English national identity, a fraught movement that has occasioned much scholarly inquiry into the boundaries between state apparatus and the individual. The playwright, however, also frequently took up borders of a different kind: namely that between the various communities in which a single individual might simultaneously take part. The central action of Shakespeare's plays consistently draws attention to the existence of multiple forms of micro-communities that overlap, interpenetrate, and/or exist in tension with each other. Present across genres – think of the tavern and court of 1 Henry IV; the mechanicals, aristocrats, and fairies of *Midsummer Night's Dream*; the conspirators and loyalists in Shakespeare's civil war plays such as *Julius Caesar* or *Richard II* – Shakespeare's interest in the permeable boundaries of community – and the force various communal attachments exert -- persistently invites us to consider how social networks give shape to the kinds of ethical questions one asks and the solutions to moral quandaries one offers.

Curiously, though, Shakespearean denouements tend to be understood, popularly and in scholarly literature, as attempts to reintegrate a sense of communal repair or continuance. Where, then, does the marked awareness of multiple, simultaneous communities go amid these apparently autocratic dramaturgical resolutions? And what ethical work happens as Shakespeare's plays conclude and as certain communal ties receive affirmation, while others recede into the background? With attention to case studies across major genres, this course will consider the interpenetrating nature of micro-communities on the Shakespearean stage – itself a space situated across the border of the Thames that also generates new, freshly configured communities with each performance – to ask whether Shakespeare's theatrical resolutions attend to, or conversely eclipse, the concerns of variously constituted communities represented throughout the plays' main action. We will read 5-6 plays, a mix of biblical, classical, and contemporary paratexts for those plays, and contemporary theorists writing about Shakespeare and community today. Robust discussion, a midterm exploratory project, and a short final paper are the main course requirements.

All: Core - British Literature

All: Literature elective OR English elective

LLT: pre-1800 co-req

LLT & TED: Author/Genre**LLT: Capstone****ENG 571: 20th-Century British Poetry - Dr. Chakraborty**

Despite its title, this course surveys Anglo-American and Anglophone poetry of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. (It will still have a substantial enough roster of twentieth-century British poets to satisfy the associated requirement.) The boundaries between nation-states—and the relations between those nation-states and their artists—become increasingly complex, multiple, fragmented, and indeterminate with modernism, and continue to be so into the present day. We will situate our readings of the course's poets within the period's historical and theoretical contexts to explore a variety of narratives regarding the poetic developments of the period, and we will also read literary criticism that outlines, analyzes, and complicates our understanding of the relevant literary movements. Poets will include W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, H.D., Mina Loy, W. H. Auden, Kamau Brathwaite, Seamus Heaney, Derek Walcott, Agha Shahid Ali, and Lorna Goodison. No prior knowledge is required, and students from all concentrations and programs are most welcome.

All: Core - British Literature**All: Literature elective OR English elective****LTT: Diversity****LLT & TED: Author/Genre****LLT: Capstone****English 577: Twentieth Century American Prose -Dr. Orr**

This course focuses on long fiction of the 20th century (one novella and several novels), to ground us in significant literary, social, and political experiments of the period. Rather than prioritize the “greatest hits” of the century (Wharton, Hemingway, Morrison), the reading list focuses on a range of brilliant but perhaps less visited works by American writers. These include Nella Larsen, *Passing*; Carson McCullers, *Ballad of the Sad Café*; John Williams, *Stoner*; Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping*; and Ernest Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying*. The one more predictable novel we will read is Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Two major writing projects allow students to draw from disciplines related to or tangential to literary study. Students may try writing a short story or a set of poems from a neglected point of view in one of the novels; or a linguistic analysis; or a teaching module; or, of course, a traditional literary analysis focused on historical/cultural contexts and/or employing theory.

All: Core - American Literature**All: Literature elective OR English elective****LLT & TED: Author/Genre****LLT: Capstone****ENG 582: 21st-Century American Novel - Dr. Bennett**

Includes the best of American Novels in the past 24 years, including award winners and new voices.

All: Core - American Literature**All: Literature elective OR English elective**

LLT & TED: Author/Genre**LLT: Capstone****ENG 582: The Epic in English: Beowulf to Milton - Dr. Knowles**

How do you write an epic? Easy. Invoke the muse ("Sing Goddess!"). Announce the epic theme ("Rage!"). Introduce the epic hero ("Tell me about a complicated man"). Begin the story in the middle of things. Use a lot of similes. By the time the Christian poet who composed Beowulf sat down to work in the middle of the 8th century, in England, to tell the story of a pagan Danish hero who lived long ago and far away, the origins of the epic conventions catalogued above were obscure. The formal qualities of the so-called "northern" epic, of which Beowulf is one example, seem to bear little resemblance to the high classical traditions of Homer and Virgil. On the other hand, one can argue that the Beowulf-poet's chief concerns are essentially the same as his Greek and Roman precursors. What are these concerns? War-fighting. Elite masculinity. Social bonds. Good kingship. The founding of dynasties. The unraveling of dynasties. The relations between humans and their gods (how to "justify the ways of God to men" as Milton would later put it).

We will begin the course by trying to establish some baseline definitions of what an epic is and what it isn't. What is the English epic's relation to chivalric romance, or to the *chanson de geste*? Is there such a thing as an anti-epic? We will read selections from Virgil's *Aeneid* (Latin, 1st century BCE) and from Dante's *Commedia* (Italian, 14th century). From there, we will focus on the English tradition with selections from Layamon's *Brut* (early Middle English, 12th c), Chaucer's *Troilus* (Middle English, late 14th c), Langland's *Piers Plowman* (Middle English, 14th c), Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* (15th c), and Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (16th c). The course will culminate in a close and intensive reading of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667-74), a poem which very self-consciously and belatedly attempts to break the classical mold of the epic genre and recast it in a Christian (Protestant) shape. Selections from non-English texts will be read in translation.

Students' final projects may explore a text or texts not on our syllabus, according to their own interests and expertise. For example, literature MAs working in other periods may choose from those traditions. Creative Writing students may choose a translation project.

All: Core - British Literature**All: Literature elective OR English elective****LLT: pre-1800 co-req****LLT & TED: Author/Genre****LLT: Capstone****ENG 585/798: Vulgar Media - Dr. Stadler**

Vulgar media inundate us, from the shocking fabrications of reality TV to the violent visualizations of body horror and the secondhand embarrassment of cringe comedy. But where do these iterations of so-called "lowbrow" content come from, and what might their aesthetic, cultural, and political intonations tell us about the production of taste? Why do we love to watch that which goes too far and says too much? What is enjoyable about awkwardness, shame, humiliation, explicitness, embarrassment, the grotesque, etc.? Tracing a variety of media forms (cinematic traditions like camp, exploitation, body horror, and hard core; televisual

genres like reality TV, cringe comedy, soap opera, etc.), this class interrogates vulgarity through the lens of excess, affect, normativity, and bodily incitement. For as reprehensible and distasteful as such media may be, they often serve as the limit by which the tasteful and representable come into view. This class, then, serves to contextualize and give nuance to that vexed relationship by thinking deeper on vulgar media's status and function within a broader media ecology.

All: Core - Film

All: English elective

ENG 587/798: Methods and Theories in Media Studies - Dr. Thapa

This seminar will explore key theoretical and methodological issues in media studies. We will discuss approaches, paradigms, as well as discourses about media landscapes and objects in order to prepare students to engage in various forms of research. Topics will include historiography, media archaeology, ethnographic approaches to media, cultural hierarchy and taste, formalism and aesthetics, feminist theory, and analyses of political economy and media institutions. We will engage with a variety of media, from broadcast television and cinema to mobile technologies and social networks. By the end of this course, students will have a thorough understanding of the approaches covered during the semester with an ability to engage with new approaches encountered later in their scholarship and research. Approaches to various texts and social institutions will be discussed in classes and will be used by students in a research project completed by the end of the semester.

All: Core - Film

All: English elective

ENG590: The Practice of Poetics - Dr. Day

This course will serve as the companion to ENG590: The Craft & Theory of Poetics. In addition to a survey of elements of craft, this course will focus on becoming a working poet via the craft essay, the artist statement, the historical & ongoing role of public engagement, & the ordered, made artifact of the chapbook, the broadside, & the book.

All: English Elective

CRW: Advanced Creative Writing Elective