

Spring 2025 Graduate Courses

ENG 751: Studies in 19th C American Lit: The Neurodiverse Nineteenth Century – Ben Reiss

Tuesdays, 10:00AM-12:45PM

Description:

The term “neurodiversity” arose from within the autistic advocacy movement of the 1990s to redescribe conditions viewed as medical abnormalities and illnesses as instead part of a spectrum of “infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning within our species.” The term can also illuminate aspects of cultural production and reception more generally by recovering the phenomenological experiences and cultural meanings associated with mental styles and experiences that have traditionally been pathologized. The nineteenth-century U.S. witnessed the rise of professional movements and organizations that contributed powerfully to that pathologization: superintendents of insane asylums (the forerunners of psychiatrists), craniologists, phrenologists, and – later – eugenicists all drew firm lines between normal and abnormal mental functioning, with profound social consequences. Yet some stigmatized conditions, such as visionary or “waking” dreams, hallucinations, extrasensory perceptions, melancholy, and so-called “feble-mindedness” retained older associations with prophecy, creativity, and spiritual insight or innocence. Such states of mind drove some of the most powerful literary work of the period. In this seminar, we will investigate theories of neurodiversity and mental (or socio-cognitive) disability, readings in the social and medical contexts of the nineteenth century, and works by writers such as James Fenimore Cooper, Sarah Bradford/Harriet Tubman, Thomas Gray/Nat Turner, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Jane and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Herman Melville, and George Lippard.

ENG 789-1: Special Topics: Indigenous Masculinities in Abiyala– Emil’ Keme

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:30PM – 3:45PM

Description:

Indigenous Masculinities in Abiyala (SAME AS ENG 789-1) Through a critical examination of novels, short stories, creative nonfiction, other artistic expressions (film, mass media), this course will explore the representation of masculinities in indigenous literatures in Abiyala (of the Americas). Among other topics, we will examine questions of family and domesticity; reservation and/or communal life; Indigenous sexual diversity in diverse social contexts (rural, urban, reservation, etc.); labor and activism; politics and aesthetics of masculinity. Our discussions of the literary and artistic production will be complemented with historical and theoretical scholarly works from prominent Indigenous studies scholars. Required texts:

Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration Ed. By Warren Cariou, Daniel Heath Justice, et.al., Drowning in Fire by Craig Womack, Time Commences in Xibalba by Luis de Li3n, Jonny Appleseed by Joshua Whitehead.

ENG 789 – 2: Special Topics: Early Modern Travel Drama - Knecht, Ross

Wednesdays, 4:00PM – 6:45PM

Description:

Representations of the East in Early Modern English Drama Following a tentative alliance between the English queen Elizabeth I and the Ottoman sultan Murad III predicated on their mutual opposition to Spain, the English stage saw a profusion of plays set in or adjacent to the Islamic world. This course will examine a range of such plays written between roughly 1580 and 1700, including Marlowe's Tamburlaine; Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra; Daborne's A Christian Turned Turk; Dekker's Old Fortunatus; Day, Rowley, and Wilkins's Travels of the Three English Brothers; and Dryden's Aurung Zebe. Readings will also include selections from contemporary histories and travel narratives. We will consider post-colonial perspectives on these texts and the question of whether or to what degree such frameworks need to be adjusted when analyzing English colonialism in its early stages (a period that some scholars have termed "proto-colonial" or "para-colonial.")

ENG 789 – 3: Special Topics: The Black Left – Marina Magloire

Thursdays, 10:00AM – 12:45PM

ENG 798: Special Topics: Seminar in Pedagogy & Professionalization – Pat Cahill

Thursdays, 1:00PM – 3:45PM

Description:

The seminar will provide you with multiple opportunities both to reflect on your own training and professionalization and to prepare for teaching a literature course in your fifth year. Drawing on LGS resources, you will spend time identifying your transferable skills beyond the professoriate; assessing your professional goals; and committing to taking concrete steps that support them. On the pedagogy front, you will focus on course design; inclusive teaching; active, student-centered learning tools and techniques; and assessment, including un-grading. You will also prepare workshop syllabi and teaching statements.