Fall 2026 Graduate Courses

ENG 789 1 / Special Topics In Literature: Novel Theory -- Emma Davenport

Thursdays, 1:00PM-3:45PM

Description:

Through readings of literature, literary and cultural theory, and criticism, this course explores novel theory: its history and trajectory, its major figures and concepts, its long-running and recent debates. Our literary readings will be drawn from Britain during the Victorian era (1837 to 1901), when the novel became the ascendant popular literary form and proliferated among a wide variety of sub-genres. Our theory and criticism will encompass the nineteenth century through the present, focusing on foundational twentieth-century approaches to the genre. Throughout our study, we will evaluate how novels themselves shape their own theories and how, in doing so, they actively create a world they are sometimes thought passively to represent.

The aims of this course extend beyond familiarizing you with Victorian fiction and theories of the novel: this course will equip you with a set of theoretical models, interpretive methods, and practical skills that you will be able to adapt to other historical eras and literary forms. You will be able to carry this analytical toolkit to your future coursework, research, and teaching, enabling you and your students to examine texts with a sensitive, discerning, and creative eye.

Assignments will include a midterm conference-length paper and a choice of final project (a seminar-length paper; a syllabus with assignments; a digital or public humanities project; or equivalent options).

ENG 789 3 / Special Topics In Literature: Surviving the Textpocalypse -- Lauren Klein & Sarah Salter

Tuesdays, 10:00AM-12:45PM

Description:

The advent of generative AI has been described as a "textpocalpyse," with chatbots producing content ranging from "AI slop" to missile target suggestions. As literary scholars and as people in the world, how do we survive? This course, paired with an advanced undergraduate data science seminar, will explore this question through theories of resistance, refusal, and reimagining; and through practice by gaining knowledge about how genAI works. Our goal is to implement strategies of survival and worldbuilding.

ENG 789 4 / Special Topics In Literature: Introduction to Derrida -- Geoffrey Bennington

Thursdays, 1:00PM-4:00PM

[Cross-listed with CPLT 751R 1, WGS 730 1, FREN 780 1, RLR 700 10, PHIL 789 2]

Description:

The course will be based on readings of some of Derrida's earlier work (broadly speaking up to 1972), and attempt to come to as clear an understanding as possible of some basic Derridean terms and concepts (trace, writing, differance, deconstruction, iterability, metaphoricity, signature, quasi-transcendental...). We will also look in some detail at Derrida's polemical exchanges with Foucault, Lacan, and Searle.

ENG 789 5 / Special Topics In Literature: The Human in AH and Humanities -- Susan Elizabeth Gagliardi

[Cross-listed with ARTHIST 789R 1]

Thursdays, 10:00AM-12:45PM

Description:

Where is the human in the humanities? Kathleen Fitzpatrick argues that humanities in universities have prioritized the individual and their acclaim over shared understandings developed through compassionate listening, careful reflection, and thoughtful exchange. Suzanne Hudson asserts that the discipline of art history has encouraged "experts" to disavow their own humanity while making claims about the intentions and thus the personhood of the artists they study.

In this seminar, we will consider whether and how art history and the humanities more broadly can embrace the human in their practices. We will experiment with ways to recognize and honor our individual and shared humanity. We will also focus attention on the human in our objects of study, reflecting on the personhood of each author and that of the people who create or otherwise contribute to the works that humanists study.

Assigned materials will offer us opportunities to engage with an array of scholars and other professionals. Students will also have a chance to recommend readings later in the semester. At the end of the semester, we will reflect on how and why arts, humanities, and the human may be as important as ever in the age of social media and artificial intelligence. For the final project, students will create hand-rendered field guides to a topic within the humanities of their own choice with the aim of bringing rigorous research to curious but uninformed audiences in thoughtful, fun, and engaging ways.

ENG 791 / Composition Pedagogy -- Vani Kannan

Tuesdays, 1:00PM-3:45PM

Description:

Required seminar for graduate students preparing to teach first-year writing courses.

ENG 791 / Survey of English: Histories, Theories, Methods -- Deepika Bahri

Tuesdays, 1:00PM-3:45PM

Description:

This seminar is designed to introduce first-year graduate students to:

- key theories and methods in the discipline of English literary studies
- the historical trajectory of debates central to English studies today (These include the value of literature; the particular province of aesthetics; theories of taste, art and material culture; art as an agent of social change; and how to read. We will pursue these questions through writing by Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant, Adorno, Fanon, Derrida, Spivak, Hartman, among others.
- ways of reading older canonical theory from the standpoint of current theories and methods
- hands-on assignments to help plan a successful passage through the doctoral program.
-information on professional address, when to publish, ethics of submission (eg. When should I start to Publish? Can I send in the same article to multiple journals?)