Spring 2027 Graduate Courses

ENG 711R / Shakespeare: Hamlet: Race, Texts, & Afterlives -- Patricia Cahill

Tuesdays, 10:00AM-12:45PM

Description:

Why has Hamlet so often been treated as Shakespeare's most universal play and Hamlet as the exemplary figure of modern consciousness? This graduate seminar takes that critical history as a problem rather than a premise. Beginning with Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, we will situate *Hamlet* within a theatrical tradition of revenge, violence and uncertain justice before turning to the play's textual forms, performance histories, critical traditions, and afterlives. Ian Smith's work on racial literacy will provide a central methodological framework for the course. We will ask how race shapes the play's representations of revenge, embodiment, violence, interiority, and interpretation, while also engaging textual scholarship, psychoanalysis, feminist and queer criticism, and premodern critical race studies. Later adaptations and reimaginings, such as Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet* and James Ijames's *Fat Ham*, will allow us to consider how Hamlet's inheritances are preserved, revised, and refused.

ENG 789 1 / Special Topics In Literature: Black Women in the Archive -- Marina Magloire

Wednesdays, 1:00PM-3:45PM

Description:

The scholarly narrative around Black women in the archive has often been one of absence, erasure, and silence. Far less attention has been paid to the methodology of writing about and engaging with Black women's presence in the archive as collectors and stewards of their own legacies. This course uses the archival works of Black women whose collections are currently held by the Rose Library to encourage a robust scholarly engagement with existing archives of Black women's cultural production. We will focus on the archives of many canonical Black artists and thinkers of the twentieth century, including Lucille Clifton, Alice Walker, Carolyn M. Rodgers, and Josephine Baker. We will also explore lesser-known figures, like the organizer Doris Derby, the artist Mildred Thompson, and the spiritual figure Mamie Wade Avant. Using these archives, we will discuss the politics of remembrance through multimodal assignments that ask students to account for both the lacunae and the abundance within Black women's material afterlives. Assigned readings for the course will include published works by authors represented in the archive and Black feminist archival theory by scholars, artists, and memory workers.

ENG 789 2 / Special Topics In Literature: Toni Morrison -- Dan Sinykin

Thursdays, 1:00PM-3:45PM

Description:

This course reads a selection of novels by Nobel laureate Toni Morrison alongside new book-length criticism by Namwali Serpell (*On Morrison*, 2026) and Dana Williams (*Toni at Random*, 2025). These two books and earlier scholarly essays on Morrison will help us situate her among post-1945 American literary history, black history, and book history. Students will write regular close readings of Morrison's fiction and a longer final essay. We are likely to read *Sula, Song of Solomon, Beloved, Paradise*, and *A Mercy.*

ENG 789 3 / Special Topics In Literature: Postcolonial Environments -- Nathan Suhr-Sytsma

Thursdays, 10:00AM-1:00PM

Description:

How do anticolonial and other freedom struggles relate to environmental justice? How have writers from the Global South imagined human entanglement with more-than-human environments? Amidst climate crisis, how might literary criticism attend not just to the globe or the world but the planet? This seminar is inspired by the turn to environmental concerns in literary and cultural scholarship such as Rob Nixon's *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011) and Jennifer Wenzel's *The Disposition of Nature: Environmental Crisis and World Literature* (2020). Alongside postcolonial ecocriticism, we will likely read novels by Sol Plaatje and Bessie Head; drama by Wole Soyinka; nonfiction by Amitav Ghosh; and poetry by Tjawangwa Dema, Craig Santos Perez, and Tishani Doshi, among others. Seminar participants will have opportunities to practice critical writing through weekly reading responses, a close reading assignment, and a conference-style presentation revised into an essay.

ENG 789 4 / Special Topics In Literature: The End(s) of Work -- Irving Goh

Tuesdays, 1:00PM-4:00PM

[Cross-listed with CPLT 751R 1, HIST 585 4, and WGS 730R 1]

Description:

CPLT 751R 1, HIST 585 4, and WGS 730R 1)

(In the wake of the "Great Resignation" and "lying flat" movements during pandemic times, and in response to recent writings in Marxist feminist and cultural studies circles on "postwork

imaginaries," "breaking things at work," "doing nothing," or being "counterproductive," this seminar questions if there can ever really be an end to work. What does it take to effectuate such a radical promise or hope? Or is existence hopelessly shackled to work until retirement, if one can ever really be an end to work. What does it take to effectuate such a radical promise or hope? Or is existence hopelessly shackled to work until retirement, if one can ever be free from such an ineluctability even then? This seminar will examine such questions through the lens of contemporary literary texts (Ottessa Moshfegh's *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, Raven Leilani's *Luster*, Hilary Leichter's *The Temporary*, and Adelle Waldman's *Help Wanted*) alongside critical theories of work (Marx, Lafargue, Barthes, Weeks, Han, Gregg, Sharma, etc.).

ENG 789 R / Seminar in Pedagogy and Professionalization -- Patricia Cahill

Thursdays, 1:00PM-3:45PM

Description:

The course prepares students for teaching a literature section in the fall or spring of their fifth year. Students will gain experience in preparing documents for fellowship applications and the job market, such as cover letters, curriculum vitae, teaching, diversity statements, writing samples, and interpretations of job and postdoctoral ads. The seminar will also investigate careers beyond academia, in coordination with the LGS Asst. Dean for Prof. Dev and Career Planning, allied PhD pgms, the Alumni Office, the CFDE, and other relevant programming.

This seminar will provide opportunities to reflect on your graduate training, clarify your professional goals, and prepare to teach a literature course in your fifth year. Drawing on resources from the Laney Graduate School, you will identify the transferable skills you have developed through graduate study, explore career possibilities within and beyond the professoriate, assess your professional priorities, and take concrete steps toward your goals. On the pedagogy side, we will focus on course design; inclusive and equitable teaching; active, student-centered learning; and approaches to assessment, including ungrading and other alternatives to traditional grading. You will develop and workshop materials for the academic job market and for your own teaching practice, including a syllabus and teaching statement.