Dr. Hollis

ENGL 525T: "Nevertheless, They Persisted": 20th Century British Literature

This course will combine the canonical authors that might immediately jump to mind when thinking about 20th Century British Literature, including Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, and E.M. Forster, and authors that are not always considered under this heading, but who have been impacted by the British Empire’s history of colonization.  Alongside those authors that meet the narrow stereotype of what is means to be British, we will read authors from former British colonies in order to challenge and redefine the term “British.”  Thus, we will also look at authors from countries such as Ireland, India, Nigeria, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and New Zealand.  Authors from these countries will include James Joyce, Chinua Achebe, Jean Rhys, Derek Walcott, and Salman Rushdie.  The class will include one creative project as well as a seminar paper.

Dr. Dalley

ENGL 525T: “Victorian Literature: Victorian Transgressions”

Victorians have a formidable reputation; they were stodgy, formal, sexually repressed, orderly, and rule-bound. The men wore top hats to breakfast and the women were careful to never show their ankles. The literature was polite, and so were the people . . . or so the story goes. In this graduate seminar, we’ll explore Victorians who transgressed established boundaries, closely examining behaviors and attitudes that were considered “transgressive” at the time. We’ll read texts that embrace Victorian transgressions and texts that warn about the dire dangers of transgressing social norms. By the end of the course, students will have a better understanding of how Victorian thought about and represented transgressions, and of Victorian literature and culture, more generally. Course texts will include novels, poetry, non-fiction essays and journalism, pornography, photography, paintings and, of course, literary criticism.

Dr. Caldwell

ENGL 571T: Shakespeare’s Tragedies and Histories: Chronicles, Controversies, and Crises of Conscience

We have all read a number of Shakespeare’s plays before. This course asks you to take a second or third look at some familiar texts, using primary materials that Shakespeare would have known to inform your “new” reading. The subtitle of Shakespeare and Fletcher’s history play *Henry VII* is *All is True*, but clearly Shakespeare is playing with the construction of history and reality in all his history plays. We will see how this begins in an early history, *I Henry VI*, how it is developed in two plays of the sophisticated second tetralogy *(IHIV* and *HV*), and how it influences a Roman history play (*Antony and Cleopatra,* with a quick look at *Julius Caesar*). Examining some historical chronicles that Shakespeare consulted for the history plays will let us see how he reshaped the “truth” of history.

The infrequent soliloquies in the history plays anticipate the more “interior” psychological portrayals in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Lear*, particularly in the crises of conscience and identity in the protagonists and their battles with family or, in Macbeth’s case, the absence of posterity. Since both histories and tragedies in this course focus on the image/iconography of governance, we will be able to see how the construction of self, nation, monarchy, and history are connected. We will also look at the ways in which disease, not only psychological and physical, but spiritual, will guide our understanding of the plays, especially the tragedies. The histories may undermine what we might think of as historical truth; the tragedies, which consistently cast identity as a performance, will call into question the nature of the self.

Dr. Kelman

ENGL/CPLT 574T: Globalization and the Emergence of “World Literature”

Already in 1827, Goethe foresaw the coming of something he called “Weltliteratur” or “World Literature,” warning that “the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach.” Goethe was addressing not only the increased communication between literary authors, but also and more especially a nascent globalization that was making it possible to talk about a “world” made up of networks of trade routes and communication lines (with Europe and later the United States almost always strategically placed as a central “hub”). Following Goethe’s lead, this course will focus on the problems and possibilities of world literature today in its relation to the “machine” of globalization. On the one hand, we will focus on an emerging canon of “World Literature” texts (written originally in English and various foreign languages). Our focus will be on texts since the mid-19th century that emphasize the relation between humanistic concerns and “technology” (moving from the effects of industrialization, including automata and mass production, to the more recent effects of the computer age and mass communication networks). On the other hand, this course will provide an introduction to the theoretical debates that have taken place over the last twenty years concerning the possibilities and problems of studying world literature both within the university and outside of it (at secondary schools, but also within various non-institutional frameworks). In effect, we will ask how world literature can be a strangely productive place to respond to the seismic effects of globalization. Class material includes narrative fiction (novels and short stories), poetry, autobiographical narrative, critical essays, and literary theory. All texts are in English or English translation. Note: We will be reading Thomas Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow*, a novel that was denied the Pulitzer in 1974 because the board deemed it “obscene” (even though the Pulitzer jury unanimously voted for it).

Texts: *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature* (selected essays); Benjamin, selected essays ; Baudelaire, selected poetry and prose; Dickinson, selected poetry and letters; Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, *Tomorrow’s Eve*; Bioy Casares, *The Invention of Morel*; Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*; Pynchon, *Gravity’s Rainbow*; Deleuze/Guattari, selection; Rilke, selected poetry; Borges, selected poetry and prose; Agamben, *Homo Sacer* (selection); Rigoberta Menchú, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*; Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*

Dr. Blaine

ENGL 591T: Topics in Rhetoric & Comp: “The Rhetorical Tradition”

Don’t know a ploce from a polyptoton?  A metonymy from an antimetabole?   Then take ENGL 591T: The Rhetorical Tradition.  In this course, we will survey the ancient Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition and some aspects of its later influence in the Renaissance and modern eras.  The syllabus will include works by Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Erasmus, Kenneth Burke, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., to name only a few of the authors.   We will not only work toward a theoretical understanding of the rhetorical concepts articulated by these luminaries, but also develop practical applications ranging from rhetoric-based analysis of Shakespearean sonnets, political speeches, and popular music to somewhat creative exercises involving the use of ancient rhetorical compositional practices.  In the process, students will develop a sophisticated vocabulary for pinpointing in very specific ways verbal strategies and techniques that have been deployed by authors from Isocrates to Ice Cube and techniques for turning those formal identifications into critical and creative capital.