

Graduate Courses

Fall 2018



Department of English

University of Miami

ENG 661
Joseph Alkana

American Literature: 1800-1865

Section 41, Fri. 9:30-12:00

Description: This course is designed to help students develop their research as well as teaching interests by familiarizing them with a range of literature within broader contexts of U.S. culture from its beginnings. An additional part of our seminar work will involve discussing relevant scholarship with an eye toward polemical structure and style. The point here will be not just to become better readers of criticism or theory but to lead students toward becoming more effective writers themselves.

Although our focus will be on the nineteenth century, we will spend a week each on Puritan era writings as well as eighteenth-century works that helped frame cultural conflicts. Thus, for example, while we will look at Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*, we also will turn to early depictions of relations between New England colonists and Native Americans, such as Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative. In a similar manner, we will consider Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* in light of utopian strains in U.S. culture. We also will read works by a number of other notable writers from the period, such as Herman Melville, Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, and Frederick Douglass.

During the past decade, there have been increasing calls by scholars to reexamine the way the field is conceived. We will use essays by the central literary figure of the period, Ralph Waldo Emerson, to provide a focus for this discussion. For example, are we to understand Emerson as someone who established an imperialistic discourse or as one who opened up possibilities for transnational resistance? Accordingly, we will explore how academic treatments of Emerson have evolved over the years, and in addition to more recent works we will consider how such distinctive thinkers as Stanley Cavell, Richard Rorty, and Sharon Cameron developed their own approaches to Emerson's writings.

Requirements: Seminar members will be expected to offer a brief oral presentation about readings along with one about intended research. In preparation for a fifteen-page seminar paper, students will be asked to write brief (one-page) critiques or assessments of scholarly works. Students are free to pursue research projects from among the many possible topics that will not be focused on in seminar work. If you have any questions about the course, you are welcome to contact me (jalkana@miami.edu).

ENG 677
Robert Casillo

Studies in Modern Literature

Section 41, Mon., 9:30-12:00

This course introduces the student to some major modern poets and traditions. Rather than confining itself to the twentieth century, it will show the relation of modern poetry to a number of poetic themes, ideas, values, and tendencies already evident in the Romantic and Victorian periods in England as well as in America and on the Continent. These will include the cult of Nature and its gradual neutralization (Wordsworth, Hopkins, Hardy); the rejection of Nature for the primacy of the imagination (Yeats, Stevens); metrical and rhythmical innovation away from the iambic pentameter (Whitman, Hopkins, Hardy, Pound, Lawrence); the search for a sophisticated, technical, ironic, and truly modern as opposed to "poetic" diction (Hopkins, Hardy, Laforgue, Eliot, Pound, Stevens); the reliance on common speech to introduce texture, tonal complexity, and metrical and rhythmical tension into verse (Whitman, Frost, Pound); the turn towards mythologies personal or extrapersonal (Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Crane, Stevens); the centrality of the dramatic monologue and its formal permutations from Browning onward (Eliot, Pound); the increasing reliance on external objects and landscape to objectify inward states (Tennyson, Yeats, Hardy, Eliot, and Pound); the overall drive toward a poetry of sensation and images rather than abstraction, of verbs rather than nouns.

ENG 681
Tim Watson

Introduction to Literary Theory

Section 1K, Mon., 6:25-8:55

Description:

This class is a survey of some recent developments in contemporary literary and cultural theory. Topics to be covered include the new formalism; surface and distant reading and the turn to “description” over interpretation; digital humanities; world literature; ecocriticism; ethnic literary studies; queer theory; and critical university studies. Theorists and critics may include: Rita Felski, Caroline Levine, Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, Bruno Latour, Rob Nixon, Saidiya Hartman, Christina Sharpe, Christopher Newfield, Jack Halberstam, and others. At least one reading each week during the first nine weeks of the semester will be selected by students; the final three class sessions are deliberately left open for now, and we will work collectively to determine the best use of our time and attention during those three weeks.

Requirements:

Each week, one student will be responsible for assigning one additional article/book chapter/excerpt to our weekly reading and then for briefly introducing and presenting their chosen reading.

We will collectively determine the best ways to organize the planning for the final three weeks of the semester; this will necessarily involve group work, either in pairs, small groups, or the full class. The ethics and practice of collaborative research, writing, and presentation are crucial aspects of this class—as they will be in whatever professional endeavors you undertake after your PhD. I hope we can create a vibrant, engaging model of collective teaching and learning over the course of the semester.

You have two options for writing assignments in this class.

1. *A traditional 20-page research paper.* If you choose this option, please begin thinking about and planning this paper well before the end of the semester. I am available to help with any and all aspects of this process: developing a topic; finding materials; writing and revising the paper itself.

2. *Two shorter research and writing projects, forms to be determined in consultation with me.* Possibilities include a combination of short research/position paper; annotated bibliography; conference presentation; sample syllabus with rationale; sample or actual grant/fellowship proposal; WordPress or other blog; multimedia presentation. Due dates to be determined, but one project in each half of the semester.

ENG 691 **Graduate Practicum I: Teaching College Writing**
Joanna Johnson

Section 5O, Thur., 9:30-12:00

This course will help prepare students to teach college-level freshman composition. We will read and discuss composition pedagogy and theory, examine best practices in teaching writing and multimodal composition, and engage in practical teaching exercises. Course work -- along with several class observations and weekly tutoring in the Writing Center -- will develop students' skills as teachers of composition, introduce them to the particular methodology used in the University of Miami composition program, and get them started in planning the English 105 and English 106 courses they will teach.

ENG 695 Special Topics: Gender and Sexuality in Early English Literary History

Pamela Hammons

Section 1Q, Tues., 12:30-3:00

Many well-known medieval and early modern English literary texts foreground matters of love, desire, and sexuality. Chivalric romances intertwine stories of combat with tales of courtly love; medieval mysticism theorizes desire between human believers and the divine; Petrarchan sonnets dissect the intense, vacillating emotions and turbulent psychological states associated with unrequited love; Renaissance drama stages the erotics of mistaken identities and crossed purposes. As we will see in this course, the diversity and complexity of early English representations of love, desire, and sexuality deeply challenge modern notions of heteronormativity. For example, what does it mean when two medieval knights merrily (and repeatedly) kiss one another? How are we best to understand a medieval housewife and mother who is publicly scorned and threatened by Church leaders for her conversion to earthly celibacy and her erotically charged relationship with Christ; does her manner of loving Christ make her queer? What are we to make of a cross-dressed female knight who unhorses male opponents and turns the Renaissance ladies' heads? And perhaps most famously, how can we best understand Shakespeare's frequent portrayal of homoerotic desire to increase the emotional intensity of his verse and the delightful complications of his plots? Is it historically accurate to refer to straights, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, homosexuals, heterosexuals, or queers in medieval and Renaissance England? What methodological differences are there among identifying representations of same-sex desire or homoerotic acts; locating figures of non-normative sexuality; and queering a text, genre, or literary history itself?

In this class, we will explore the ways in which recent theories of gender and sexuality have been especially useful in increasing our knowledge of pre-modern sexualities, including unpredictable, shifting connections among emotions, gender expressions, eroticism, desire, sexual acts, and identities. The course will provide a substantial survey of medieval and Renaissance literature by male and female writers: likely authors include the anonymous "Gawain" poet, Geoffrey Chaucer, Margery Kempe, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, Margaret Cavendish, and Katherine Philips. We will become familiar with specific genres such as the spiritual autobiography, chivalric romance, fabliau, erotic epyllion, Petrarchan sonnet, romance epic, Shakespearean comedy, closet drama, and seventeenth-century love lyric. This course should be especially helpful to students seeking greater familiarity with medieval and Renaissance literature; feminisms, gender theories, and queer theories; and the theoretical stakes underpinning the writing of literary histories. Course requirements will include leading class discussion about a primary text and writing a brief close analysis (2-3 pages) of part of that same text; giving a mini-lecture on a critical or theoretical text and writing a short critical response to some specific aspect of that text (2-3 pages); and completing one or two major writing projects totaling approximately 15-20 pages. Students may choose one of several options for their major writing project(s):

- (a) a traditional seminar paper, turned in first as a short draft (i.e., 8-10 pages) and then in a refined longer (i.e., 15-20 pages) version;
- (b) an essay, turned in first as a short draft (i.e., 8-10 pages) and then in a refined longer (i.e., 15-20 pages) version, that traces and critiques the genealogy of a specific theoretical concept, question, problem, issue, etc. presented in our class readings;
- (c) one or two traditional conference papers (i.e., 8-10 pages each);
- (d) one or two literature reviews detailing and taking a position on the scholarship most relevant to our seminar that has been published since 1990 on a single primary text (i.e., 8-10 pages each).