

Graduate Courses

Spring 2014



Department of English

University of Miami

ENG 504 Poets Write Memoir: Lyric, Narrative, and Memory

Maureen Seaton

Section QY, Thurs., 12:30-3:00

This is an opportunity to explore memoir as it has been experienced and executed by poets, from Lisbon's Fernando Pessoa to Miami's own Mia Leonin; and to experiment with a myriad of styles and impulses: diaries, blogs, the autobiographical persona, the "factless autobiography," as well as short and long narratives in both prose and verse. We will contemplate the roles of memory and imagination in accessing and building memoir. We will consider the theories of others while voicing and embodying our own. Contemporary poets to inspire us will include Kimiko Hahn, R. Zamora Linmark, Lyn Hejinian, Martín Espada, Paul Guest, Julie Marie Wade, and Melvin Dixon.

ENG 601 Creative Writing: Fiction III

M. Evelina Galang

Section GY, Wed., 3:30-6:00

This workshop asks its members to write. In addition to work-shopping each other's narratives, every week you will either draft or revise 10 pages of fiction. These pages are to generate and develop your body of work. Workshops will alternate between critiquing short pieces between 15-25 pages and larger bodies of work between 45-60 pages. This workshop is about reading, writing, and revising so plug in your laptops and let's go!

ENG 602 Creative Writing: Poetry II

Jaswinder Bolina

Section EY, Wed., 12:30-3:00

English 602 will offer individual practice in the craft of poetry. An ancillary goal will be the development of critical awareness of poetry.

ENG 505

Form in Fiction: Writers on Writing

Manette Ansay

Section OX, Tues., 9:30-12:00

Writers on Writing will focus on memoir, homage, essays, letters and journals by published writers seeking to better understand their own work and/or the works of their particular mentors and influences. Students should have Facebook and Skype accounts, as well as access to youtube. We will augment our readings with The Paris Review's extensive collection of author interviews at <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews> as well as hosting walk-in and Skype-in Q&A sessions with contemporary authors.

This course is for Masters candidates who have been accepted into the University of Miami's internationally competitive Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing. Select students may also be admitted by permission of both the instructor and the Director of Creative Writing. A writing sample and workshop history will be required. **If you simply show up for this class, you will not be permitted to stay.**

Course Requirements

Regular attendance with punctual arrivals. Preparation (reading and analysis) of all assigned readings. Regular participation in class discussions. One in-class presentation. Completion of three critical annotations for a total of twenty pages. One final creative nonfiction essay, 10-20 pages, or an interview with a publishing author (please see me for approval.)

Core Readings:

Two or Three Things I Know for Sure and **Trash** by Dorothy Allison
Out of Sheer Rage by Geoff Dyer
The Mezzanine and **U+I** by Nicholson Baker
The Wapshot Chronicle and **The Journals of John Cheever** by John Cheever
Home before Dark by Susan Cheever
The Hours by Michael Cunningham
Mrs. Dalloway and **Moments of Being** by Virginia Woolf
What I Talk About When I Talk About Running by Haruki Murakami
Sex Talks to Girls by Maureen Seaton

Additional selected essays, stories, letters and blog/journal entries may include pieces by Julia Alvarez, James Baldwin, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, Jeanette Winterson, Flannery O'Connor, Ann Patchett, Barry Lopez, Marilynne Robinson, Stewart O'Nan, Diana Abu-Jabar and others.

Recommended Readings:

The Madonnas of Leningrad by Debra Dean; **Burning the Days** by James Salter, **Speak, Memory!** by Vladimir Nabokov; **One Writers Beginnings** by Eudora Welty; **Angel de la Luna and the 5th Glorious Mystery** by M. Evelina Galang

ENG 592 Graduate Practicum II: Teaching College Literature

Brenna Munro

Section EZ, Fri., 12:20-2:50

In this informal, noncredit seminar we will work to develop your skills as literature teachers and prepare you to teach one of the 200-level literature courses. We will draw upon your experiences and observations as students and, for some of you, as teachers, to explore some of what works, and what doesn't, in twenty-first century literature classrooms.

Some of the many questions we'll take up include: How do you design a syllabus? How might one "teach" a literary text? What kinds of classroom policies are most helpful? What are the most common mistakes that beginning literature teachers make? How can you work on your classroom persona? How do you prevent plagiarism and what should you do if you encounter it? What are some strategies for writing exams and essay prompts? How might one make use of anthologies?

The course will include opportunities for visiting other people's classes, role-playing, and self-reflection. We will also practice grading student essays, and you will write up a sample syllabus, including all of your rules and policies; this will be something you can use regardless of which 200-level course you are assigned to teach. We'll study current position advertisements, too, and discuss the teaching portfolio, including a statement of teaching philosophy, sample syllabi, and evidence of your effectiveness as an instructor, such as class observations and student evaluations. Finally, we will think ahead to your future job interviews, in which you are likely to be asked to outline a course in your particular field, or to describe the ideal course that you would most like to teach.

ENG 633 Things, Minds, and Feelings in the Eighteenth-Century British Novel

Tassie Gwilliam

Section QX, Tues., 12:30-3:00

A period of experimentation and ferment in fiction, the eighteenth century produced novels that are highly responsive both to literary antecedents and to the world around them. In this course we will read a number of works that transformed the genre and, in some cases, altered the way the world was perceived. While our primary focus will be on consuming and engaging with these texts, we will also explore some new avenues for understanding narrative in general and eighteenth-century fiction in particular: for example, “thing” theory (Cynthia Wall’s *The Prose of Things* and the collection *The Secret Life of Things*); theories of feeling or affect; and theories of cognition (Lisa Zunshine’s *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*).

Novels: Aphra Behn, *The History of the Nun* (etext)
 Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina & The City Jilt* (etext & ECCO)
 Daniel Defoe, *Roxana* (Penguin)
 Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa* (abridged and ed. John Richetti and Toni Bowers, Broadview)
 Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones* (Penguin)
 Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* (Penguin)
 Frances Burney, *Evelina* (Oxford)

Requirements: Students will be asked to participate in seminar discussions, to do short weekly assignments of various kinds, to prepare part of a class session, and to write a 15-20 page seminar paper.

Note: Students should read Aphra Behn’s short novel *The History of the Nun* for the first class: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~ayadav/Behn%20The%20History%20of%20the%20Nun.pdf> (or go to the Wikipedia stub under “The History of the Nun” and click on “etext” to get the pdf).

Joseph Alkana

Section OY, Thurs., 9:30-12:00

During the years before the Civil War, a time when Ralph Waldo Emerson exhorted his contemporaries to awaken "the sluggish intellect of this continent," American writers made distinctive demands of their readers while working to shape their culture and society. The focus of this seminar will be the interplay between the aesthetic and the ethical, for writers attended to both with meaningful consequences. Accordingly, we will periodically turn to readings on aesthetics during the semester; for example, we will explore some writings that helped shape Romanticism, such as Kant's inquiries into the sublime and the beautiful. For the most part, however, we will be looking at narrative literature that focused on topics such as social conditions, race, and politics, and genres that explored cultural encounters, such as travel writing, or attended to obscure motivation, such as the gothic.

Seminar readings are likely to include the following: James Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans; Herman Melville's Moby-Dick, "Benito Cereno," and "Hawthorne and His Mosses"; Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Blithedale Romance as well as some short stories; selections from Margaret Fuller's travel writings; Frederick Douglass's Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave; Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin; Henry David Thoreau's Walden; Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills"; and a selection of stories by Edgar Allan Poe.

Seminar participants will be expected to offer one brief oral presentation about the readings along with a short (5 pages) prospectus during the semester in preparation for the seminar paper (20 pages). If you have any questions about the course, you are welcome to contact me (jalkana@miami.edu).

ENG 668 Critical Readings in Caribbean Studies: What is Caribbean Studies?

Patricia Saunders

Section KY, Wed., 6:25-8:55

Interdisciplinary scholarship has long been central to Caribbean Studies and recent publications in the field suggest that this is truer now, more than ever before. Historically, the divide between the social sciences and humanities in Caribbean Studies centered on the differences in critical approaches as well as how each defined what was critical to the field as a whole. However, new epistemic engagements with social sciences research, archival documents, and disciplinary methodologies provided opportunities for innovative collaborations among scholars, visual artists and creative writers. These interdisciplinary collaborations provided opportunities for rethinking not only the direction of the field, but also the extent to which theoretical approaches in “areas studies” needed to be revised for the field to move beyond the geographic fantasies that designated the Caribbean as the “West Indies.” At the same time, scholars were also grappling with the colonial pasts out of which these imaginings emerged and building bridges with other fields engaged in similar critical enterprises (i.e. American Studies, Trans-Atlantic Studies, Women’s Studies). The contemporary moment in Caribbean Studies can be characterized by debates invested in interrogating the content, structure and perspectives of the field. This course invites students to participate in these ongoing conversations in order to gain a deeper appreciation of some of the key critical moments that informed the shape of the field and continue to influence the trajectories of critical conversations today. We will begin our discussions with the special issue of *Small Axe* (Vol. 41, July 2013) dedicated to the question, what is Caribbean Studies? We will then expand our conversations to consider more focused engagements with, and responses to, this question from an array of inter-disciplinary and theoretical approaches. Readings for the course will include:

Brodber, Erna. *Louisiana*

Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture* (selections)

Brathwaite, Kamau. “Caribbean Man in Space and Time”

Rubin, Vera ed. *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium* (selections)

M. G. Smith. *A Framework for Caribbean Studies* (selections)

Nair, Supriya. *Pathologies of Paradise: Caribbean Detours* (selections)

Sheller, Mimi. *Consuming the Caribbean and Citizenship from Below* (selections)

Nunez, Elizabeth. *Bruised Hibiscus and Beyond the Limbo Silence*

Thomas, Deborah. *Exceptional Violence: Embodied Citizenship in Transnational Jamaica*

Francis, Donette. *Fictions of Feminine Citizenship* (selections)

Scott, David. *Conscripts of Modernity* (selections)

Neptune, Harvey. *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation*

Smith, Faith. (ed.) *Sex and the Citizen: Interrogating the Caribbean* (selections)

Thompson, Krista. *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*

Tim Watson

Section UX, Tues. 6:25-8:55

The gold standard for the assessment of scholarship in literary studies remains the single-authored monograph—in this class we will read and analyze some examples of books that have had a disproportionate impact in recent critical history, the ones that helped to move and shape the parameters of their fields and of the discipline itself. However, just as we continue to use the metaphoric phrase “gold standard” even though no contemporary economy any longer relies on gold reserves, we could ask whether we continue to pay undue attention to scholarly monographs at the expense of the many other effective ways in which research can be and is presented. In this class we will also read examples of influential journal articles and explore some of the newer forms of scholarly presentation: digital humanities projects, academic blogs and the academic Twitter and Facebook community.

Requirements: Regular participation; posting on class Blackboard blog; one 20-page paper or two 10-page papers or equivalent writing in appropriate format(s) to be determined in consultation with instructor.

Texts:

American Literature in the World: <http://amlitintheworld.commons.yale.edu/>

ARCADE: Literature, the Humanities, and the World: <http://arcade.stanford.edu>

Lauren Berlant, “Cruel Optimism”

Bill Brown, “Thing Theory”

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*

Early Novels Database: <http://syslsl01.library.upenn.edu/dla/earlynovels/index.html>

Brent Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*

Shelley Fisher Fiskin, “Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies”

Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*

Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*

Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs”

Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*

Ursula Heise, “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to Ecocriticism”

Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”

Franco Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature”

Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance*

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

Stanford Literary Lab: <http://litlab.stanford.edu>

Women Writers Project: <http://www.wwp.brown.edu>

ENG 695 Special Topics: Queering Early English Literary History

Pamela Hammons

Section GX, Mon., 3:15-5:45

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 queer theories 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, including 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 a major writing project of approximately 15-20 pages. Students may choose one of two options for the major writing project: they may either write 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; or they may compose two conference-length papers (i.e., 8-10 pages each) on two different topics.