

Department of English Graduate Course Descriptions *Spring 2021*

Eng 521:01 **Topics for English Teachers: Shakespeare**
K. Lechler **M 4:30-7:00 pm**
 kalechle@olemiss.edu
 ****For Education Graduate Students only****

Designed for graduate students in education, this course will offer an introduction to the reading and teaching of Shakespeare as a site of (and for) critical thinking. Designed not only for those who already love Shakespeare, but equally for those who find his plays and poetry opaque and intimidating, this class will focus on the core skills involved in thinking critically with Shakespeare, from close reading and working with textual evidence to building an interpretive thesis. Instruction will foreground both directly developing students' skills in these areas, and developing methods for breaking down and teaching these skills to primary and secondary school learners. This will be a writing intensive course with regular short writing assignments and pedagogical exercises, working up towards a longer teaching project at the end of the semester. Plays may include: Richard III, Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar, Twelfth Night, King Lear, The Tempest.

Eng 617:01 **Teaching First-Year Composition**
S. Monroe **M 6:00-8:30 pm**
 smonroe@olemiss.edu

English/Writing 617 prepares graduate students to teach composition at the University of Mississippi and beyond. During this seminar, we will read and discuss foundational texts in writing pedagogy, rhetoric, and writing center studies. Students will make several classroom observations of experienced

DWR faculty. Course requirements include weekly reflections, a 15 page seminar paper, and a concluding presentation.

Eng 681:01 **Graduate Fiction Workshop**
M. Ruffin **T 3:00-5:30pm**
 mcruffin@olemiss.edu

Eng 682:01 **Graduate Poetry Workshop**
D. Harriell **W 3:00-5:30 pm**
 harriell@olemiss.edu

English 682 is a course designed for advanced students of poetry writing. While this course will function as a craft workshop, our overall scope will be macro. This means we will consider the work of our participants through sequence. Students will have two opportunities to workshop a sequence of around 4-8 pages of poems. Collectively, we will consider and comment on narrative and or aesthetic patterns amongst craft concerns. Our goal is to immerse ourselves in an environment that aims to foster creativity, curiosity, and a respect for language. Our course requirements will consist of an essay, two workshops, a presentation of a sequence / series, and a final revised manuscript of around 8-16 pages. With your full engagement, by the end of this course you will have a greater appreciation and a truer understanding of the sequence: the ways in which a good poetry collection is constructed and the way that particular—and purposeful—construction creates an impression on the reader. Additional readings will be provided at various points throughout the semester.

Eng 706:01 **Studies in Early English Literature**
S. Baechle **M 3:00-5:30 pm**
 sebaechl@olemiss.edu

This course will examine the Geoffrey Chaucer as international poet, both in and of the Middle Ages. That is, in this course, we will explore Chaucer's work within two international milieus: Chaucer as an international poet in his own time, and Chaucer's global significance to later authors. We will read the poet as the product of a cosmopolitan medieval England, one deeply entrenched in the Hundred Years' War with France, marked by the influence of Italian literary culture, and enmeshed in European political affairs. Likewise, we will study later adaptations of Chaucer's most influential work, The Canterbury Tales, from Caribbean short story cycles influenced by the single Tales to Patience Agbabi's Telling Tales, a collection of short poetic retellings of the entire text. We will focus in particular on ways in which the Tales are used to give life to less-heard voices, exploring feminist, postcolonial, and queer reimaginations of

Chaucer's oeuvre, in order to discover what Chaucer meant to his global Middle Ages—and what it means to invoke him now.

Eng 711:01 Studies in Shakespeare
I. Kamps W 3:00-5:30 pm
egkamps@olemiss.edu

Shakespeare: quite dead for over 400 years. Yet he has a staying power, perhaps more than any other author, not just in academia but in popular culture the world over. Each new generation of scholars finds ways to reinvent Shakespeare, and media – from major Hollywood film productions to Bikini Shakespeare on Youtube – keep coming back to the words of Shakespeare. Why is that? What is the reason for his sustained cultural capital? The question is probably too big to answer in a definitive way, but I'd like to explore the degree to which the play perhaps possess a certain malleability – even a hollowness – that allows us to reimagine the plays productively according to the form and pressure of our times. Is it, as Dr. Johnson held, that Shakespeare “sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose”? His plays sometimes seem inexhaustible, capable of offering intriguing replies to whatever question we pose to them. To put the question differently, how is it possible that Shakespeare can mean so damn much to so many for so long?

To assist our exploration, we'll read examples of a various critical approaches, including Marxism/cultural materialism, New Historicism, Ecocriticism, Disability Studies, Queer Theory, popular culture criticism. Plays under consideration are: A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, Macbeth, King Lear, Henry V, Hamlet, Richard III, The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, and Measure for Measure. Perhaps others as well.

Eng 733:01 Studies in Drama: New World Acts
P. Reed T 3:00-5:30 pm
preed@olemiss.edu

In this class, we will explore the historical beginnings of “American” drama, reading texts that provide contextual and theoretical insight into theatrical practices and performance cultures. This class asks questions such as: what did it mean to perform in the diverse and changing contexts of the colonized western hemisphere? Where did performance fit into cultures of literacy, entertainment, and edification? What kinds of actors and acts, on and offstage, shaped the major performance practices and theatrical themes of the “early Americas”? How did emergent forms of

performance define and help create Atlantic and early American modernity?

We'll engage some of the most durable and well-known themes in American culture. Reading fiction, drama, and other texts from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and (early) nineteenth centuries, we will engage performances of nation and empire, indigeneity and race, and other foundational acts that shaped the work and play of the early Americas. We'll consider, for example, how tragedy traces the foundational imperial and national dramas of the United States; how Pocahontas plays, and the larger phenomenon of “playing Indian,” influenced and reflected relationships between European settlers and Native American people; how neoclassical melodrama reshaped the class imaginary in the Jacksonian 1830s; and how forms of racial imitation like blackface came to be recognized as a sort of national culture in the nineteenth century. As a seminar, this class of course relies heavily on informed and thoughtful class discussion and will require a scholarly research essay for a final grade.

Eng 742:01 Studies in Genre: American Women Poets
A. Fisher-Wirth TH 3:00-5:30 pm
afwirth@olemiss.edu

In the 1960s, when I was in college, only Emily Dickinson among American women poets regularly showed up on course syllabi. This changed rapidly, as second wave feminism with its feminist theory and scholarship awakened attention to early- and mid-twentieth century poets such as Gertrude Stein, H. D., Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Bishop, Muriel Rukeyser, Gwendolyn Brooks, Adrienne Rich, Lucille Clifton, and Sylvia Plath. In the decades since then, the diversity, range, and importance of American women poets have been enormous. We will read work by these literary foremothers and then, mindful of both continuities and ruptures or transformations, we will turn to more contemporary figures, to be selected in consultation with the members of the class. Through the works of these many poets we'll explore Language poetry, cabalistic poetry, eco-poetry, documentary poetry, the poetry of witness and social justice, and so much else. Though we will buy some books, I'll also make a course pack to keep your expenses down. The final assignment will include a creative option, which you may choose even if you are not an American woman poet.

Eng 763:01 Studies in Modern American Literature
E. Young-Scurlock TH 6:00-8:30 pm
eyoungmi@olemiss.edu

Eng 767:01 Studies in Major American Writers: Richard Wright and Eudora Welty
A. Trefzer T 6:00-8:30 pm
atrefzer@olemiss.edu

This seminar for MA, PhD, and MFA students offers an in-depth study of the fiction of Eudora Welty and Richard Wright. Born within a year of each other and raised in Mississippi less than 100 miles from each other, these two writers created lasting portraits of southern culture often by responding in diametrically opposite ways to the histories and realities of their days. Comparing their short stories, award winning novels, photographic work, autobiographies, and later writing from and about places abroad, this course takes up questions of literary politics and aesthetics. How do the authors characterize the culture of modernity including race, class, and gender relations? Beyond their apparent differences in biography and style, what comes into sharper focus when we read one writer in light of the other? In what ways might their aesthetic strategies be related to social, economic and other material conditions? In what ways do their modernist works rethink or transform common conceptions of time, space, and memory? Working with this comparative approach, students will write weekly reading responses, share literary criticism in class presentations, and write a seminar paper. Should Archival Collections at UM be open in the spring, students will also report on an unpublished or rare document relating to the authors or their work. For the first day of class, please have on hand the Library of America Editions (used or new) for Wright and Welty and be tuned for a reading assignment in early January. Note: the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference in July of 2021 will be on “Faulkner, Welty, Wright: A Mississippi Confluence” offering continued reflection, discussion, and opportunities to meet with scholars.

Eng 770:01 Studies in Faulkner
J. Watson TH 3:00-5:30 pm
jwatson@olemiss.edu

This seminar will take its cue from the theme of a forthcoming special issue of *The Faulkner Journal*, “William Faulkner and the Work of Anti-Racism.” We will focus on key representations of race, race relations, antiblack racism, racial injustice and violence—what I will for brevity’s sake call “the racial matter” of Faulkner’s fiction, nonfiction, and screenwriting work—reading critically but also with an eye toward reparative possibilities and themes. Topics will include: slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, incarceration, lynching, double-consciousness, debt and reparation, migration, Black modernity, Black culture, and depictions of everyday Black life. The goal, in short, will be to read and assess Faulkner’s work

“Blackly,” to recenter his writings, including his writings as a public intellectual, around Black life and Black experience in order to trace its (anti)racist content and work as it—if it—develops over five decades of writing. The larger aim is for a seminar on a canonical white male writer to try to make its own contributions to the decolonizing effort now underway in our department’s graduate program. We will be doing a lot of thinking and rethinking together, some of it inevitably uncomfortable, as all growing pains are.

The syllabus is still very much a work in progress but will draw from among the following Faulkner texts: *The Sound and the Fury*, *Light in August*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, *The Unvanquished*, *Go Down, Moses*, *Intruder in the Dust*, *Requiem for a Nun*, *The Reivers*, selected short stories, correspondence, essays, and public speeches and letters, and the coauthored screenplays for two “noir” classics, *To Have And Have Not* and *The Big Sleep*. Secondary materials will include writings by W. E. B. Du Bois, Eric Williams, C. L. R. James, Paul Gilroy, Frantz Fanon, Michelle Alexander, Edouard Glissant, Houston A. Baker, Jr., Christina Sharpe, and several generations of African American Faulkner scholars and critics, including Sterling Brown, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Wilson Harris, Toni Morrison, Thadious M. Davis, Hortense J. Spillers, Farrah Jasmine Griffin, and others. Writing assignments will include weekly reader-response journals and an article-length research project, and each student will also be responsible for “sparking” discussion for the first 75 minutes of at least one class meeting.



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