

# Department of English

# Graduate Course Descriptions

## *Fall 2021*

Required hours	Category	Courses offered <i>during Fall 2021</i> that fulfill each category
3	Eng 600	Eng 600
6	Post-1800	Eng 679 <sup>1</sup> , 732 <sup>2</sup> , 735 <sup>2</sup> , 738, 742, 776,
6	Pre-1800	Eng 710, 717
12	Creative Writing Workshops (MFA/PhD-CWC only)	Eng 680, 682

<sup>1</sup> MFA students (but not MA, PhD, or PhD-CWC) may count ENG 679/683 (Form, Craft and Influence) towards one of their required post-1800 requirements.

<sup>2</sup> For Fall 2021, ENG 732 and 735 count for the post-1800 requirement because of their subject matter and timeframes.

Eng 521: Remote 01      Topics for English Teachers: Journeys in American Fiction  
D. Barker                      T 4:30-7:00 pm  
   [dbarker@olemiss.edu](mailto:dbarker@olemiss.edu)

**\*\*For Education Graduate Students only\*\***

The journey is an important motif in American literature, especially given the focus on the frontier as an ever-expanding horizon, providing an opportunity for individual development but also for destruction and the exploitation of the land and the people. In this class we will explore epic motifs and geographical mobility as it intersects with psychological and spiritual journeys in American fiction after the Civil War. Possible works include: Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself"; Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*; Ernest Hemingway, "Snows of Kilimanjaro"; Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Sherman Alexie, *Smoke Signals: A Screenplay*; and Jesmyn Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing*.

Eng 600:01                      Introduction to Graduate Studies  
I. Whittington                M 6:00-8:30 pm  
M. Bondurant

[iwhittin@olemiss.edu](mailto:iwhittin@olemiss.edu)  
[mrbondur@olemiss.edu](mailto:mrbondur@olemiss.edu)

**\*\*Required for First Year English Graduate Students in All Programs\*\***

Eng 679:01 Form, Craft, and Influence: Poetry  
B. Fennelly    M 3:00-5:30  
                                 [bafennel@olemiss.edu](mailto:bafennel@olemiss.edu)

The aim of this class is to develop our understanding of what makes a poem work and to gain a deeper appreciation for how poetry in English has evolved from its roots. We'll look at technical aspects of craft and engage in a study of prosody, particularly blank verse. We'll survey major verse forms (both received forms, with an emphasis on the evolution of the sonnet, and shaping forms, such as elegy, ode, etc.) and seek to become familiar with their histories and opportunities. Students will write explications, recite memorized poems, take a mid-term on prosody, draft a sonnet, pantoum, villanelle, and sestina, and write a final paper that puts a pre-1800 poet in conversation with a contemporary practitioner of formal verse.

**Eng 680:01 Graduate Fiction Workshop**  
K. Laymon T 6:00-8:30  
[kmlaymon@olemiss.edu](mailto:kmlaymon@olemiss.edu)

In this workshop, we will split time between workshopping fiction and creative nonfiction and reconsidering the shape, execution and function of writing workshops generally.

**Eng 682:01 Graduate Poetry Workshop**  
M. Ginsburg TH 3:00-5:30pm  
[mginsburg@olemiss.edu](mailto:mginsburg@olemiss.edu)

Students will be expected to turn in one new poem per week and critique the weekly work of classmates. In addition, you will write a statement of poetics, curate a packet of poems that you consider influential on your work, and participate in a number of generative exercises designed to move your individual poems toward participation in an eventual manuscript. We will also read one full collection of poems (TBD) and discuss it in class.

**Eng 710:01 Studies in Early Modern Literature: The Intersectional Renaissance**  
K. Raber W 6:00-8:30 pm  
[kraber@olemiss.edu](mailto:kraber@olemiss.edu)

What can a concept like intersectionality bring to the study of early modern literature and vice versa? In the last decade, even as Medieval and Renaissance texts and culture have been weaponized by the far right, scholars working in these fields have diversified their methods and opened up new lines of research and criticism by using critical race studies, disability studies, and transgender/queer/sexuality studies, to interrogate or recover past embodied experiences. Ongoing interrogations of class, religion and caste continue to reveal the ways that pre-modern literature marginalizes, demonizes, or makes invisible whole segments of England's population. What new 'pasts' are generated out of these methodologies? How do they influence the way we imagine-- or help us reimagine -- our present and future? This seminar will begin with selected non-Renaissance readings (some theoretical, some historical, and some just good basic readings in the approaches I've named above) to ground our discussion. We will then read a cross-section of works by Renaissance writers that treat race, class, gender, religion, sexuality, and disability as overlapping aspects of early modern identity. At the same time, we'll pose questions about our own practices: *whose* Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, Marlowe or other early modern author are we reading? *whose interests* are served by past or present scholarship on any given

author? How might new versions of “the Renaissance” change what and how we teach? Students will journal weekly, and complete exercises leading to an article-length essay by the end of semester.

**Eng 717:01**            **Eighteenth Century Studies: Ghost Metaphysics and Epistemologies of Privilege**  
**S. Mackenzie**        **TH 6:00-8:30 pm**  
                              [smack@olemiss.edu](mailto:smack@olemiss.edu)

“A specter is haunting Europe”: the term “ghost metaphysics” is meant to capture the way in which, since the eighteenth century if not before, European intellectual history has removed transcendental essences from its knowledge systems but retained haunting traces of the renounced metaphysics. For instance, political economy got rid of divine providence in favor of market determination, but Adam Smith’s invisible hand plays the ghost of providence. In a set of thematic sections, we will explore European (primarily British) modernity’s attachment to the gesture of renouncing essence and the revenants that it summons. These sections will include scarcity, deviance, omniscience, and change. Discussion will also attend to the epistemologies of privilege that have developed along with these ghostly metaphysics — for example, the white supremacist belief that civil rights movements threaten established entitlements is premised on the scarcity logic that underpins both economics and the biological sciences. Readings will include both philosophical and literary writers, including Margaret Cavendish, Eliza Haywood, Edmund Burke, Ann Radcliffe, Jane Austen, and participants in the abolitionism debates. Readings in recent critical work will include Michel Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Saidiya Hartman, Lee Edelman, José Muñoz, and others.

**Eng 732:01** **Studies in the Lyric: On Solidarity: Lyric Poetry and (or, as) Pragmatism**  
**D. Stout**            **T 3:00-5:30 pm**  
                              [dstout@olemiss.edu](mailto:dstout@olemiss.edu)

For the past 200+ years, the lyric in its modern form has been the most widely practiced and culturally significant poetic mode in English. Recently, a number of critics have argued that the basic conventions of the lyric—basically, poems that are shortish, largely first-personal, and stage moments of intellectual/emotional recognition—have grown so widespread since their establishment in British romanticism (c. 1789-1837) as to now be effectively synonymous with poetry as such. For many of these critics, our task should be to resist this dominance by recovering non-lyric forms of poetic expression (e.g. the ballad) that have gone missing behind our lyric obsession. Behind this critical imperative is the widely held assumption that the lyric is, politically speaking, an especially regrettable form. It is, many have argued, solipsistically individualistic and therefore hopelessly abstracted from any political program invested in collective and/or embodied forms of life. We ought to be anti-lyric, the thinking goes, because the lyric is anti-solidarity.

This course sets up its guiding intuitions rather differently—aiming not to abandon the lyric but to discover a counterhistory (or counter-theory) of the mode that centers on questions of collectivity (not just solipsism), action (not just thought), materiality and/or embodiedness (not just imagination), and the sometimes-rough/sometimes-smooth reality of interpersonal communication (not just, like, a solitary speaker frictionlessly contemplating a mountain). These questions—of collectivity, enactment, and a shared, lived reality—have all been central to the philosophical perspective known as pragmatism. Our basic question, therefore, will involve asking what philosophical pragmatism can light up about the lyric’s potentials for thinking about solidarity. Readings will begin in the romantic period (working class radical tavern poetry, Wordsworth, John Clare) and move into the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century with special attention both to the development of philosophical pragmatism (related readings will likely include John Dewey, W.E.B. Dubois, Richard Rorty, Cornel West, and Eddie Glaude, Jr.) and the development of a contemporary lyric deeply attuned to the inherently social questions of race, gender, and class. Primary literary/lyric examples will be drawn from work by Lyn Hejinian, Christopher Gilbert, Rodrigo Toscano, Christopher Nealon, Claudia Rankine, and Jos Charles, among others. The writing component for this course will be adaptable: a traditional seminar paper, a series of shorter papers, or a creative option are all on the table.

**Eng 735:01            Studies in the Novel: The Historical Novel Across Space and Time**  
**M. Bhagat-Kennedy** TH 3:00-5:30 pm  
[mbk@olemiss.edu](mailto:mbk@olemiss.edu)

This seminar constellates a range of historical novels to analyze the relationship between history and literature, with a focus on how fiction (re)interprets pivotal events in a particular community or nation’s past and consolidates collective identities. Beginning in nineteenth-century Britain, we will travel across a number of world regions to examine how authors adapted and departed from established models of the historical novel to reinvent the genre in light of their own sociocultural and political contexts. Categories to be explored will include historical romances, alternate histories, revisionist histories, and historical metafiction. Our study will be guided by a number of questions: What is the literariness of history and vice versa? What is the relationship between historicization and novelization? How is social memory made and what is the role of literature in this process? What changes can we discern in the historical novel as it was produced and consumed in different locations around the world from the nineteenth century to the present? How does the historical novel continue to respond to crisis in our contemporary moment?

**Eng 738:01 Special Topics in Film Study: Space, Race, and Critique**

L. Duck      M 3:00-5:30 pm  
[lduck@olemiss.edu](mailto:lduck@olemiss.edu)

This class bridges the study of film with that of social theories concerned with racial capitalism, environmental racism, and extractive economies—those that capture resources from disempowered persons and poorer regions, mobilizing that power in ways that locate profits with economic elites elsewhere. In other words, we will explore films and analytic approaches that contemplate connections between race, ecology, and geography. Hollywood has notoriously served to naturalize and even romanticize such extractive dynamics as slavery and settler colonialism; it can even be understood as an extractive industry, as it decontextualizes the stories, sounds, and images of marginalized cultures and commodifies them for corporate profit. Acknowledging this history, we will engage with scholarship that updates such arguments for the digital era (including critics such as Jonathan Beller, Lisa Nakamura, and the Precarity Lab), but we will concentrate our discussions on critical cinema. The syllabus will remain under development until fall, in part out of uncertainty concerning what will be available for viewing and in part to allow for some student choice; feel free to email the instructor for greater (albeit tentative) detail. It is certain, however, that we will focus chiefly on the US, reaching back to the silent era to examine how Oscar Micheaux critiqued the legacies of enslavement amidst the rise of the “plantation romance,” incorporating leftist production amid “classic Hollywood,” and spending time with the “LA Rebellion” of Black filmmakers in the 1970s alongside other early critical independent filmmakers. The remaining screenings will be more contemporary, including genres of documentary, “slow cinema,” science fiction, and surrealism. Overall, we will explore how film can provide new and/or broadly accessible insights into topics including mass incarceration, conflicts over land use in contemporary and historic Native American territories, practices of exploitation and exclusion along the US/Mexico border, and the ways in which nationalist narratives distort local and regional histories. Course requirements include active participation in discussion, almost-weekly written responses to the readings/viewings, and a research project including a prospectus, an annotated bibliography, a class symposium in which students present their research, and a 15-25 page seminar paper (depending on students’ degree programs).

**Eng 742:01 Studies in Gender: Gender Theory**

J. Harker      T 3:00-5:30 pm  
[jlharker@olemiss.edu](mailto:jlharker@olemiss.edu)

Gender theory is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry that questions cultural assumptions about sexuality and gender. Rather than viewing sexuality and gender expression as natural and fixed, gender theorists interrogate the ways that specific cultures frame certain gender identities as normal and others as deviant. “Masculinity” and “femininity” are under a site of inquiry and critique, and intersectionality—the complex array of identity categories that emerge under systems of power—is a constant frame for contemplating gender.

As an interdisciplinary mode of analysis, gender theory incorporates the literary, the historical, the political, the sociological, the biological, the cultural, and the postcolonial. In this course, we will look at some of the most influential theories of gender, and also consider how competing theories of gender and challenges to social construction—including critiques of biological discourse and trans theory—have influenced gender theory. Theorists include Jack Halberstam, Judith Butler, Jasmine Puar, Chandra Mohanty, Gloria Anzaldua, L.H. Stallings, Susan Stryker, and more. Students will write a weekly 500-word response journal and a 20-page final seminar paper.

**Eng 776:01 Studies in Southern Literature: “Southern Studies and/in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**

K. McKee W 3:00-5:30 pm  
[kmckee@olemiss.edu](mailto:kmckee@olemiss.edu)

This course will ask questions about how and why we study “the South” in the 21st century, taking as its departure point Eddie Glaude’s observation that “the South has the answer to the American riddle.” In the midst of a prolonged health crisis, a crisis in democratic governance, and a crisis centering the need for racial equity and inclusion in the United States, what does “the South” have to teach us and how can we justify studying a place and an idea that has historically nurtured much of our national disunion? And how does “southern literature” operate or fail as a viable parameter of discussion within that context? This class will proceed in three units. We will begin by examining what scholars for the last twenty years have called “New Southern Studies,” tracing the genealogy of that term and distinguishing it from preceding scholarship. What is (or was) “new” about “New Southern Studies”? What blind spots have emerged to frame its limitations? We will sample classic texts that exemplify “old” style Southern Studies, before moving to selections from scholarly works pivotal to defining the newness of “New Southern Studies” or to rebutting it (Romine; Woods, Kreyling, Yaeger, Baker, McPherson, Duck, Richardson, Smith, Bibler, Watson, Greeson, Davis). Next we will examine works of scholarship from the last five years that may or may not position themselves relative to the term, including all or parts of Greeson and Romine, *Keywords for Southern Studies* (2016); Coffey and Skipper, *Navigating Souths* (2017); Hinrichsen, Rountree, and Caison, *Small Screen Souths* (2017); Bone, *Where the New World Is* (2018); Vernon, *Ecocriticism and the Future of Southern Studies* (2019); Szczesiul, *The Southern Hospitality Myth* (2019); Caison, *Red States* (2020); and Foster, *I Don’t Like the Blues* (2020). We will conclude by reading selections from a triptych of black Mississippi writers who claim this state as both their creative energy and the energy that frustrates their creativity: Kiese Laymon, Natasha Trethewey, and Jesmyn Ward. We will also enjoy some scholarly dialogue with Professor Duck’s ENG 738 course, “Topics in Film Studies: Space, Race, and Critique,” and watch and discuss one film together. Class requirements will include weekly written responses on a variety of topics, discussion leader responsibilities, and a final essay about a primary text of each student’s choosing, read through the critical framework of the course.



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