

# LSU Department of English

## Spring 2020 Course Descriptions

### MFA Workshops/Forms Courses

#### **ENGL 7001: - Literary Nonfiction Workshop**

**12:00 – 2:50 T**

**J. Wheeler**

Lexicographer Samuel Johnson once defined the essay as a *loose sally of the mind*. While the expanse of creative nonfiction is vast (memoir, profile, criticism, investigative journalism, travel writing, nature writing, etc.), all of these kinds of writing have in common the imperative to communicate a process of thought about a particular subject. Nowhere in literature are the intricacies of the mind's inner workings laid bare quite like they are in the tradition of the essay.

In this workshop we'll begin by reading several examples of recently published essay collections that evidence the breadth and possibility of the genre. Then, we'll write our own loose sallies of the mind. You'll be expected to compose and revise about 30 pages of high-quality nonfiction, as well as engage in weekly workshops of your peers' work.

#### **ENGL 7007 - Poetry Writing**

**3:00 – 5:50 W**

**L. Glenum**

In this class, we will engage in a dynamic exploration of the craft of poetry writing. We will pursue poetry as a vital and potentially radical art form with much to contribute to contemporary cultural dialogue. Through an immersion in contemporary poetic practices, students will gain a set of tools through which they may more deeply fathom their own creative process, improve their writing skills, and strengthen their aptitude for analysis and revision. Across the arc of the semester, students will construct a portfolio of their poetry, which will showcase the scope and depth of their work, as well as demonstrate incisive examples of self-reflection and revision.

#### **ENGL 7106 - Fictional Storytelling**

**3:00 – 5:50 Th**

**M. Ruffin**

Fictional storytelling is at the core all narrative art. This class will focus on story creation. Students will complete the class with an acute understanding of the critical elements of fiction: conflict, characterization, scene setting, pacing, tone, and theme as well as how to publish work.

## PhD Seminars

### **ENGL 7221 - Ecocriticisms**

**3:30-6:20 M**

**C. Barrett**

This seminar explores some of the currents in ecocritical theory and approaches to literature. We will adopt a couple short early modern texts to think with throughout the term, but the course will center on theoretical and critical texts on an array of practices and topics including (but not limited to): ecomaterialisms, new materialisms, and object-oriented ontologies of environment; queer ecology; ecofeminisms; hydrofeminisms and blue ecologies; kinship and trans-speciesism; environmental justice; and the work of representation in the Anthropocene/Capitalocene/Plasticene. Seminar is geared toward all grad students (MA, MFA, and PhD), with written work tailored by and with each participant. No prior experience in early modern literature or ecocriticism is required, but we will contour the seminar agenda to meet the interests of those with existing knowledge in either/both field/s.

### **ENGLISH 7222 - The Politics of Poetry**

**12:30-3:20 M**

**S. Weinstein**

We often talk about poetry as though it's a single, monolithic genre of literature. Of course, it's not - there have been many poetics over the course of millennia, as there have been many purposes for poetic expression. Accompanying the existence of many poetics, there have long been tensions over which poetics and poets count as the real poetic deal. In this seminar, we will dive into such tensions, tracing the claims people have made for and about poetry in different eras and how those claims are embedded in dynamics of power - who gets published, who gets paid, who gets employed to transmit traditions. We will read manifestos, ars poeticas (the dreaded "poetry about poetry"), histories, and literary criticism, and will investigate recent debates, clashes, and implosions among contemporary poets and poetics. Students will be encouraged to develop their own statements on the purposes of poetry.

### **ENGL 7521 - Rhetoric: Theory and Practice from Plato to Virginia Woolf**

**3:00 – 5:50 Th**

**M. Zerba**

This seminar will feature readings from the most influential theorists of rhetoric in antiquity and interweave them with practical analysis of literary texts. Theoretical readings will be drawn from the works of the Sophists, Plato, and Aristotle. We will apply their ideas to the rhetoric of the Shakespearean soliloquy; to rhetorics of sexuality, especially in the work of C.P. Cavafy (1863-1933) and Virginia Woolf (1882-1941); and rhetorics of race in a Caribbean setting, especially in the work of Aimé Césaire (1913-2008) and Derek Walcott (1930-2017). Students will learn fundamental concepts in rhetorical theory and devise ways of using them to interpret literary texts drawn from a wide range of cultures from around the world. Requirements will include weekly short response papers about two pages in length, a ten-page midterm paper, and a fifteen-page final paper that may be either research oriented or based on a close rhetorical analysis of a text.

### **ENGL 7920: The Dissertation Writing Workshop**

**3:00 – 5:50 T**

**B. Kahan**

***\*\*This course is by permission of instructor. Student must have passed the general exam requirements before signing up for this course. Contact the Graduate Studies Office if you have questions.***

The Dissertation Writing Workshop is for PhD students at a variety of levels, but having passed your exams is a requirement. At the beginning of the semester, each student will choose one of the following three goals: completing your dissertation prospectus, completing a new chapter of your dissertation, or transforming a dissertation chapter into an article. Over the course of the semester, your classmates' and I will workshop your work and provide constructive feedback. We will also study a variety of exemplary models of academic writing in order to think about what makes a good chapter, a good book, etc. The course will also discuss writing strategies in order to help each student achieve their goals. It is important to note that this course will be pass/fail.

### **ENGL 7922: Jane Austen's Intimacies**

**6:00 – 8:50N T**

**C. Rovee**

Jane Austen's novels are studies in intimacy and its avoidance. Lovers vacillate between a yearning to get close and a need to self-protect. Narrators revel in a voyeuristic knowledge of the people whose lives they tell. Plots hinge on moments of destructive intimacy, distressing moments of exposure and embarrassment. Outside the books themselves, there are yet other intimacies: readers famously feel close with Austen's protagonists ("I am Elizabeth Bennett"), modern 'Janeite' cults get cozy with the Regency world of teas and balls, while in ways that are often under-appreciated, the novels divulge their intimacy with contemporary politics, history, and the literary tradition. This class will survey this whole range of Austenian intimacies. Readings to include major novels by Austen and her contemporaries, political and social tracts of the era, historical as well as recent literary criticism, reception studies, and writings about the theory of the novel.

### **ENGL 7962 - Victorians on Stage, Screen, and New Media: Adapting and Performing the Nineteenth Century**

**3:00 – 5:50 T**

**S. Weltman**

We will examine 19th-century British literature alongside 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century adaptations. How many versions of *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Jane Eyre*, *Goblin Market*, or *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* do you know? What cultural work does each of these adaptations accomplish? What makes these stories so adaptable and attractive to film-makers, television producers, graphic novelists, and Broadway audiences, choreographers, lyricists, and composers? To what extent were the source texts already adaptations? And what does the genealogy of intervening adaptations reveal? Informed by contemporary adaptation and performance theory, we'll consider sexuality, religion, gender, science, race, myth, empire, class, disability, visual culture, and more. Requirements include active participation, oral presentations, a book review, a short paper, an annotated bibliography—all funneled into a potentially publishable, article-length term paper

### **ENGL 7974: Toni Morrison & the American Literary Tradition**

**12:00 – 2:50 W**

**A. Gourdine**

This course will focus on Toni Morrison as writer, cultural critic, social activist, editor, and scholar. Our goals in this course are to engage in an in-depth and focused study of a writer, paying attention to trends and tendencies, identifying the traditions within which she worked, and her sense of the significant literary spaces of "tradition" and "canon". We will read Morrison's fiction, critical essays, lectures and speeches, and her popular culture musings as well.

