

Graduate Courses in English

2024-25

Course Title	Fall	Winter	Spring
Eng 403 Writers' Studies in Literature (MFA+MA only)	Martinez, Juan Tuesday 2:00-5:00	Hernández, Daisy Thursday 2:00-5:00	
Eng 410 Introduction to Graduate Study	Mwangi, Evan Friday 10:00-1:00		
Eng 411 Studies in Poetry <i>The Poetics of Dissolution</i> [post-1800]	Wilson, Ivy Thursday 2:00-5:00		
Eng 422 Studies in Medieval Literature [pre-1800] <i>Global Middle Ages</i>		Newman, Barbara Tuesday 2:00-5:00	
Eng 431 Studies in 16th-Century Literature [pre-1800] Fall - <i>Queering the Crown: Marlowe and Shakespeare, Pre-texts and Afterlives</i> Winter - <i>Early Modern Horror</i>	Masten, Jeffrey Wednesday 2:00-5:00	Evans, Kasey Monday 2:00-5:00	
Eng 441 Studies in 18th-Century Literature <i>Novel Utopias: Critique and Normativity in 18th-Century Realism</i> [pre-1800]			Soni, Viv Wednesday 2:00-5:00
Eng 461 Studies in Contemporary Fiction [post-1800] sec 20 <i>Translation Problems: Coloniality, Resistance, Solidarity</i>			Johnson, Rebecca Tuesday 2:00-5:00
Eng 461 Studies in Contemporary Fiction [post-1800] sec 21 <i>Digital Aesthetics</i>			Hodge, Jim Thursday 2:00-5:00
Eng 465 Studies in Colonial and Postcolonial Literature <i>Postcolonial Literature and U.S. Empire</i> [post-1800]	Nadiminti, Kalyan Tuesday 2:00-5:00		
Eng 471 Studies in American Literature sec 20 Winter - <i>Women on the Verge: Obsession and Melodrama, 1900-1965</i> [post-1800] Spring - <i>The Black Novel</i> [post-1800]		Stern, Julia Wednesday 2:00-5:00	Mann, Justin Thursday 2:00-5:00
Eng 471 Studies in American Literature sec 21 <i>Sovereignties Across the Americas</i> [post-1800]		Rodríguez Pliego, Mariajosé Thursday 2:00-5:00	
Eng 481 Studies in Literary Theory & Criticism Winter - <i>The Environmental Humanities</i> [post-1800] Spring - <i>Mimesis and Its Doubles</i> [pre-1800]		Dimick, Sarah Wednesday 2:00-5:00	West, Will Monday 2:00-5:00
Eng 496 MFA Poetry Workshop (MA and PhD by application)	Abani, Chris Monday 10:00-1:00		Trethewey, Natasha Tuesday 2:00-5:00
Eng 497 MFA Fiction Workshop (MA and PhD by application)		Abani, Chris Tuesday 2:00-5:00	
Eng 498 MFA Creative Nonfiction Workshop (MA and PhD by application)	Schulman, Sarah Wednesday 2:00-5:00		Hernández, Daisy Monday 10:00-1:00
Eng 520 Professionalization Workshop (PhD only)		Breen, Katy Thursday 2:00-5:00	
Eng 570 Seminar in Teaching College Composition (available to any interested student)			Lenaghan, Elizabeth TBD by students
Eng 571 Teaching Creative Writing (1st-year MFA+MA only)		Seliy, Shauna Monday 10:00-1:00	

Fall Quarter

English 403

Writers' Studies in Literature

Plot is Life: Autofiction, the Campus Novel, and Narrative Engines

Juan Martinez

Plot is easy to define and difficult to execute. We know that narratives require *some* form of animating force, and we know that this force hinges on a series of causally-linked events, sometimes. Not always. In this seminar we'll work through two seemingly disparate novel genres--autofiction and the campus novel--to tease out what makes for compelling story-telling energy: a crisis, a disconnect between public and private behavior, politics, subgenres and their expectations (there's a hilarious epistolary novel in our list, but there are also striking examples of science fiction, the fantastical, and the crime novel), hunger, desire, hypocrisy, satire (academic and otherwise), setting, ticking clocks and timetables, and our direct lived experience. The latter is crucial: we find our most interesting plots in life. We'll also be sure to connect these elements beyond the novel and into each of our genres: we'll discover how these same narrative engines animate poetry and creative nonfiction.

We'll work through a considerable deal of material together, and we'll help each other find ways to explore the possibilities of that material. But I'll also ask each of you to bring in a short published piece that you love that we'll all read; it should be a piece in your primary genre--a short story or a poem or an essay--that you feel best exploits one of the topics discussed.

Every week, we will all (1) read a novel, (2) respond, (3), read the short piece chosen by one of our classmates. In addition, one of us will be responsible for a presentation on the chosen short piece.

Reading list will include:

- Sofia Samatar's *The Practice, The Horizon, and the Chain*
- Annie Ernaux's *Simple Passion*
- Claire Louise Bennett's *Pond*
- W.G. Sebald's *The Emigrants*
- Amy Gentry's *Bad Habits*
- Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe*
- Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin*
- Julie Schumacher's *Dear Committee Members*
- James Hynes's *The Lecturer's Tale*
- Lucy Ives's *Loudermilk*

English 410

Introduction to Graduate Study

Evan Mwangi

This seminar explores the various approaches to literary analysis in the 21st-century academy, including the pitfalls to avoid when using certain

theories and methods of reading. Examining the history of English as a discipline and the emergence of different methods of analysis, we will discuss both established and emergent critical approaches and assess their applicability in the reading of a particular set of texts and in engaging different audiences. Of particular interest to us is the future of humanistic knowledge, research and writing practices in the neo-liberal academy. How do creative writing, literary theory, and literary research inform one another? In what ways can we be innovative and "marketable" in the neo-liberal realities of our times while remaining true to the core values of humanistic education? In a world that is inundated with theoretical approaches, how do we choose a methodology that best suits our goals? How can we enfold activism in our research and maintain academic standards?

The main aim of the course is to equip ourselves with skills to handle different types of texts--activist, theoretical, creative etc.--in the classroom, during research, and in public-facing engagements. At the end of the course, the student should be able to analyze a primary literary text (or a set of texts) using the most appropriate theory and methodology and in a way that the analysis would have resonance beyond the narrow confines of the academy.

Teaching Method(s): class discussions, library visits, guest lectures

Evaluation Method(s): Weekly self-evaluation, presentations, 13-page essay

Texts include:

- Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*
- Giorgio Agamben, *What is an Apparatus and Other Essays*
- Gayatri Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*
- Bruce McComiskey, *English Studies Reimagined*
- James F. English, *The Global Future of English Studies*
- Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique*

English 411

Studies in Poetry

The Poetics of Dissolution

Ivy Wilson

Frantz Fanon has famously written that the conditions of modernity have rendered blackness increasingly illegible, fraught with contradictions that push it outside the realm of facile comprehension and explicability. Taking Fanon's polemic as a cue, this graduate seminar will look at a number of late twentieth-century textual and performance sites with radical instances of experimentation where articulations of blackness move into the interstitial space between meaning and non-meaning, coming into being precisely at the moment when the compositional logic of their anticipated forms are ruptured. The course will focus on three primary sites where black artists engage what might be called the poetics of dissolution to examine and critique the processes of racial formation: poetry (where the form of the line or stanza dissolves); music (where sonic interpolations puts additional, if not different, claims on the lyrical content), and visual culture (where the moves

toward graphic mimesis are refused delineation).

The material under consideration may include work by the poets Nathaniel Mackey, Douglas Kearney, and Harriet Mullen; sound alchemists King Tubby, Alice Coltrane, and MF Doom; and visual artists Glenn Ligon, Hank Willis Thomas, and Bethany Collins. Theoretical texts may include work by Emily Apter Barthes, Baudrillard, Fred Moten, and Saussure, as well as ethnomusicologists and linguistic anthropologists.

Texts include:

- Darby English, *How to Read a Work in Total Darkness*
- Douglas Kearney, *The Black Automaton*
- Nathaniel Mackey, *Discrepant Engagement*.
- ————. *Splay Anthem*.
- Fred Moten. *In the Break*.
- Christina Sharpe. *Ordinary Notes*.

English 431

Studies in 16th-Century Literary

Queering the Crown: Marlowe and Shakespeare, Pre-texts and Afterlives
Jeff Masten

This course will simultaneously engage a set of methods within/around literary/performance studies and interrogate the transhistoricity of queerness. It follows the long representational career of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* (c. 1592): from Holinshed's Tudor-era chronicle history and other "pre-texts" through Shakespeare's adaptation/revision/rewriting in *Richard II*, to the emergence of the theatrical-alienation effect in Bertolt Brecht's early twentieth-century translation/adaptation *Leben Eduards des Zweiten*, twentieth-century productions and films tied to the early gay-liberation movement (Ian McKellen in repertory as both kings) and the early AIDS crisis (Derek Jarman and "New Queer Cinema"), to contemporary re-writings -- Tom Stuart's play *After Edward*; a German opera that weaves together antisemitism and homophobia; the recent rom-com "Red, White, and Royal Blue." Critical readings in the history of sexuality, queer theory, "source" study, history of the book, adaptation theory, theory of tragedy, critical race studies and casting, and performance studies.

English 465

Studies in Colonial and Postcolonial Literature

Postcolonial Literature and U.S. Empire
Kalyan Nadiminti

After asserting its "manifest destiny" in the nineteenth century, the United States became an unprecedented global power in the twentieth century, especially after World War II. In 1941, the publisher Henry Luce went so far as to coin the phrase "the American century" to describe the new role of the emerging superpower in world affairs. For some, the US became the "indispensable nation," "world leader," and an exceptional

international figure. For many others, such as the people of the Philippines or Vietnam or Iraq, it became a cruel and coercive imperial force. This course studies how the historical fact of US empire influenced literature and expressive culture. We will examine how both domestic and international writers most impacted by imperial violence—ranging Filipino migrant laborers, Afghan diaspora in the US, Middle Eastern and North African civilians caught in the dragnet of detention—contest the language of empire that the U.S. uses to ceaselessly redefine itself.

This graduate course asks: how has the geography of United States empire shaped and informed the evolution of US empire studies and postcolonial studies in the contemporary moment? In what ways might the intersection between postcolonial studies, ethnic American studies, Pacific studies, Middle Eastern and North African studies, and US empire yield new categories of analyses that have been broached by scholars like Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Eqbal Ahmad, and Amy Kaplan in the 1990s? What purchase do they have on contemporary academic as well as aesthetic developments in the post-9/11 era? Throughout the term, students will be introduced to and learn to grapple with theoretical and historical concepts like sovereignty, Cold War liberalism, counterinsurgency, extralegal internment, extraterritoriality, and neoliberal multiculturalism. We will read monographs almost every week by theorists starting with Said, Kaplan, Junaid Rana, Erica Edwards, Stuart Schrader, Anjali Raza Kolb, and Darryl Li, We will also work through theorists like Eqbal Ahmad, Jasbir Puar, Judith Butler, Joseph Slaughter, Jodi Melamed, Nadia Abu Al-Hadj, and many others to think through complex vocabularies of law, literature, and human rights in understanding the undertheorized intersection between postcolonial studies and US empire.

Winter Quarter

English 422

Studies in Medieval Literature

The Global Middle Ages

Barbara Newman

The term “Middle Ages”—the period “in the middle” between classical antiquity and the Renaissance—derives from European history, and it’s problematic even there. But the global turn in medieval studies enables us to go beyond the field’s traditional focus on Europe alone to explore its ties with the rest of the known world. In this course we’ll do that in two ways. Our first unit will deal with romance, gender, and the aesthetics of eroticism. Court ladies feature as foundational romance authors in two island nations, England and Japan, at opposite ends of the Eurasian land mass. After reading the *Lais* of Marie de France (12th century) and selections from the *Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu (11th century), we’ll complicate our study with two transgender romances: Heldris of Cornwall’s *Silence* and a Japanese tale translated by Rosette Willig as *The Changelings*.

In our second unit, dealing with travel and ethnography, we’ll consider two Islamic and two European works: *The Book of Ibn Fadlan* (921-22), *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck* (1253-55), *The Travels of Ibn Battutah* (1325-54), and *The Book of John Mandeville* (ca. 1356).

Critical readings will include literary essays on the French and Japanese texts, as well as excerpts from Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*; Shayne Aaron Legassie, *The Medieval Invention of Travel*; and Shirin Khanmohamadi, *In Light of Another’s Word: European Ethnography in the Middle Ages*.

Texts:

- *The Lais of Marie de France*, ed. & trans. Claire Waters (Broadview) ISBN 978-1-55481-082-6
- Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji* (abridged), ed. & trans. Royall Tyler (Penguin) – ISBN 978-0-14-303949-0
- Heldris of Cornwall, *Silence*, ed. and trans. Sarah Roche-Mahdi (Michigan State UP) – ISBN 0-937191-32-9
- *Torikaebaya monogatari (The Changelings)*, trans. Rosette Willig available on Canvas
- *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness*, trans. Paul Lunde & Caroline Stone (Penguin) – ISBN 978-0-140-45507-6
- *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, trans. Peter Jackson (Hackett) – ISBN 978-0-87220-981-7
- *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*, ed. & trans. Tim Mackintosh-Smith (Picador) – ISBN 978-0-330-41879-9
- *The Book of John Mandeville*, ed. & trans. Iain MacLeod Higgins (Hackett) – ISBN 978-0-87220-935-0

English 431

Studies in 16th-Century Literature

Early Modern Horror

Kasey Evans

This seminar will bring together literary texts from the English Renaissance, ancient and Renaissance theories of spectatorship and catharsis, and academic criticism and theory on contemporary horror fiction and film. Juxtaposing theoretical texts ranging from Aristotle to Carol Clover, we will consider the ways in which early modern narratives and theatrical productions anticipate horror fiction and film of the 20th and 21st centuries. Across three main units—on revenge tragedy, witches, and monsters—we will consider what psychological, cultural, and civic functions are served by the publication and performance of horror. Methodologically, we will consider the validity and value of a diachronic approach that juxtaposes Renaissance and contemporary texts without relying on direct and documentable examples of authorial influence.

The following books will be available for purchase at Norris; other assigned reading will be available for download on Canvas. You may substitute alternate editions of texts—including facsimiles available through EEBO or online editions available through NU Library—so long as you’re willing to contend with different sets of explanatory notes, page numbers, and so on.

Texts:

- Aristotle, *Poetics* ISBN 978-0140446364
- Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror*, ISBN 978-0231053471
- William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ISBN 978-1350030916
- Thomas Middleton, *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, ISBN 978-1472520456
- John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ISBN 978-1904271512
- James I, *Daemonologie* ISBN 978-0738723457
- Henricus Institor, *Malleus Maleficarum (The Hammer of Witches)* ISBN 978-0719064432
- William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* ISBN 978-1904271413
- Ambroise Paré, excerpts from *On Monsters and Marvels* (English translation) ISBN 978-0226645636
- Marie de France, *Bisclavret*, ISBN 979-8863454115

English 471, sec 20

Studies in American Literature

Women on the Verge: Obsession and Melodrama, 1900-1965

Julia Stern

Women’s fiction and films of the classical Hollywood era, 1929-1950, feature heroines on the brink of madness, suicide, and death. Melodrama, a dramatic form that flourished in the nineteenth century and featured making virtue and evil visible, structures

many of the works in our course. We will explore how and why female artistic production from the beginning of modernism, the Harlem Renaissance, and the heyday of the “woman’s picture,” 1933-1950 featured women on the brink, rejecting the 19th-century “marriage plot,” for a different set of endings. We will discuss the significance of “the New Woman,” the last throes of the “cult of domesticity” and the work of arguably classic Hollywood’s greatest actress, Bette Davis, whose films took up those historical issues.

Mode of evaluation: two take-home close reading exams (2 pages total) and a final project on a Davis film not on the syllabus. Works may include *The Awakening*, *Ethan Fromme*, *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*, *Plum Bun*, *Quicksand*, and *The Street*. Films may include *Of Human Bondage*, *Jezebel*, *Dark Victory*, *Now, Voyager*, *In This Our Life*, and *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*

We will read selected theoretical works from object relations psychoanalysis, feminist film theory, star theory, genre theory, and Lauren Berlant’s *The Female Complaint*.

English 471, sec 21 **Studies in American Literature**

Sovereignities Across the Americas
Mariajosé Rodríguez Pliego

The terms “sovereignities” and “Americas” in the title of this course stand at the crossroads of old and new dialogues about their meanings. This course considers Indigenous and Native American notions of sovereignty that imagine nationhood outside of the nation-state framework. It reads these theorizations of sovereignty and nationhood alongside Latin American and Latinx anti-imperial writing. We will consider José Martí’s late nineteenth-century articulation of “Our America” alongside the rise of the Guna word “Abiayala” and its use by Indigenous activists from Latin America, and “Turtle Island” as the name that Native American creation stories give to our continent.

Our discussions will trace connections between the storytelling traditions of Native American, Indigenous, and Latinx authors across the hemisphere. We will study the narrative forms that authors take up as they construct or critique nationhood: essays, short stories, novels and poetry.

We will also examine how authors break down these forms by taking up communal authorship, orality, visual media, and multilingualism as narrative strategies that provide aesthetic and ideological challenges to canonical articulation of nation-state sovereignties.

Evaluation Method(s): Conference abstract, paper, presentations, and participation in discussions.

Assigned texts will likely include essays by Emil’ Keme, José Martí, Gerald Vizenor, Shari M. Huhndorf, Silvia Rivera

Cusicanqui, and Walter Mignolo.

Primary materials will include works by Leslie Marmon Silko, Luz Jiménez, Tommy Orange, Yuri Herrera, and Natalie Díaz, as well as excerpts from Popol Vuh and Florentine Codex

All materials will be uploaded to Canvas.

Eng 481 **Studies in Contemporary Literature**

The Environmental Humanities
Sarah Dimick

This graduate seminar explores core concepts, questions, and methodologies within the environmental humanities. Rather than reading literature and literary scholarship in isolation, we will trace their entanglements in environmental history, anthropology, philosophy, geography, and other adjacent disciplines. What, we will ask, are the unique affordances of literary study when confronting environmental questions and challenges? What are the risks and rewards of conducting interdisciplinary environmental research?

The syllabus will be tailored to support the particular interests and pursuits of students in the course, but topics may include climate writing, environmental justice literature, environmental racism, global and local scales, militarized and nuclear environments, and queer ecologies. Collectively, the readings will ensure familiarity with classic texts in the environmental humanities and introduce students to the cutting edges of this wide-ranging field.

Evaluation Method(s): Conference abstract, paper, presentations, and participation in discussions.

Assigned texts will likely include scholarship by Lawrence Buell, Ursula Heise, Rob Nixon, Olúfemi O. Táíwò, Anna Tsing, and Kyle Powys Whyte. Primary materials will include works by Rachel Carson, Jamaica Kincaid, Imbolo Mbue, Arundhati Roy, Indra Sinha, and Karen Tei Yamashita.

Eng 520 **Professionalization Workshop** **Katy Breen**

The aim of this course is to offer PhD students an open and supportive community for discussing professionalization issues of all kinds. It is intentionally designed to be low stress, with P/NP grading and little-to-no homework. Class meetings are intended to help you make the most of your time at NU while also preparing you for positions after graduation. Some sessions will focus on the academic genres that you’ll need to master over the next few years, including the dissertation chapter, the prospectus, the conference abstract, and the course description. Others will be more strategic, addressing issues such as managing committee expectations and

navigating difficult relationships. Many class meetings will have a hands-on component, aimed at producing working drafts of documents such as the (academic) CV and the (nonacademic) resume. Time will be reserved in each class session for questions and unstructured discussion (with the option to submit questions anonymously if that is more comfortable). I promise that my answers will be as straightforward as possible.

Spring Quarter

English 441

Studies in 18th-Century Literature

Novel Utopias: Critique and Normativity in Eighteenth-Century Realism

Viv Soni

The utopian tradition plays a significant role in the emergence of the novel in the eighteenth century. Novels often include embedded utopias within them, so much so that these might be considered a “chronotope” of the early novel. On the face of it, this is paradoxical. Utopias portray visions of idealized societies, while novels operate in the mode of a critical realism scrutinizing the present. In this class, we will try to understand the place of utopian thinking in eighteenth-century novels. Are utopianism and realism at odds in the early novel? Does the critical potential of realism need the normative guidance of utopian thought to be effective? Why do embedded utopias become more scarce in later novels, and how is realism able to get along without them?

This class will read an array of early novels with embedded utopias. (Possibilities include: Cervantes, *Don Quixote*; Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (book 4); Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*; Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*; Rousseau, *Julie*; Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister*; Jane Austen, *Persuasion*; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*.) We will also read a selection of early utopias such as More's *Utopia* and Bacon's *New Atlantis*. Alongside these texts, we will read contemporary critical writing about utopias (Bloch, Jameson), realism (Watt, Lukacs, Jameson) and the crisis of ends-oriented thinking in eighteenth century ethics and politics (Horkheimer, Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, Thomas Pfau). Our aim will be to arrive at an account of the function of the “embedded utopia” chronotope in early novels.

English 461, sec 20

Studies in Contemporary Literature

Translation Problems: Coloniality, Resistance, Solidarity

Rebecca Johnson

This course aims to give students grounding in postcolonial and decolonial translation studies by focusing on some of the problems embedded in its history and practice: translation's employment in the contexts of war, displacement, and empire; its role in national canon formation and transnational literary circulation amid the hegemonic force of Anglicization; and the importance of translation problems—mistranslation, pseudo-translation, “bad translation,” and untranslatability—to projects that we might organize under the sign of “solidarity.” We try to account for translation's politics and ethics, that is. We will do so by focusing on important examples of translation theory as well as by using case studies drawn from the history of Arabic-English and Arabic-French translation from the 19th to the 21st century (using work from Algerian, Iraqi, Syrian, and Palestinian authors) and by class visits—funding pending—from working

translators. Readings will be provided in English. No knowledge of a foreign language is required, but students with reading knowledge of Arabic or French are particularly welcome. We will work collaboratively and creatively with all of our competencies to further the course goals.

English 461, sec 21 **Studies in Contemporary Literature**

Digital Aesthetics
Jim Hodge

This seminar introduces students in the arts-based humanities to the study of digital aesthetics across the arts, including literature, visual art, moving images, and music. It will examine a range of aesthetic forms responsive to the popular emergence of the computer and the internet, including computer-generated prints, video games, electronic music, hypertext, print fiction, and projects inflected by vernacular digital forms such as memes. Moving historically, roughly decade by decade from the 1960s to the present, the main task of the class will be to consider the difference digital computational technologies make in the creation of aesthetic forms and the experience of them. For instance, what new forms and modes of experience become possible with computers? What exactly makes something "digital"? And how can we tell (or not) -- and does it matter at all -- if something was made with the aid of automated processes? And finally, how do the answers to these questions change as we move from one computational era to another, e.g. from the mainframe and hobbyist eras to the domestic reception of popular electronics and computers in the 1980s to the emergence of the World Wide Web and social media and smartphones in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s up to and possibly beyond our historical present.

The seminar will also emphasize the formal analysis of a range of both experimental and popular works across media, taking care to measure the aesthetic and historical meanings of the digital in the changing imagination of computers as central to society. Finally, students will encounter and write about forms native to their chosen discipline (literature, visual art, the moving image, music) but also about newer forms that do not fit easily into discipline-specific histories. Possible texts and objects of aesthetic analysis include computer-generated prints in the collection of Northwestern's Block Museum, the Detroit Techno and Chicago House electronic music scenes, fiction by William Gibson and Patricia Lockwood, net.art by Mendi + Keith Obadike and Ricardo Dominguez, films by Ridley Scott and the Wachowskis, glitch art by JoDi, Takeshi Murata, Jon Satrom, Rosa Menkman, and others, a group session devoted to video game play, meme aesthetics, and a class devoted to experimenting with artificial intelligence. Assignments will likely include a short presentation, a short formal analysis paper, and a final paper or project on digital aesthetics on an approved topic of the student's choosing.

English 471 **Studies in American Literature**

The Black Novel
Justin Mann

In this course students will assess how the novel has figured in the development of Black literature and life over the long 20th Century. Through our engagement with this form, students will examine how long-form narrative fiction has captured the historical and social realities of Black life since the turn of the 21st century and how it has called for different worlds through innovative technique and style. We will read topically from the end of the 19th century through to the 21st century and will consider how the novel has evolved as a form that takes in multiple genres. In addition to fiction, students will also read theories of narrative written by black and non-black authors to better understand how narrative works.

Some conceptual questions for consideration include:

What historical, stylistic, aesthetic qualities produce the novel? How do Black American novels innovate formally, stylistically, and narratively? How do such innovations (or, on the contrary, adherence to tradition) help us understand literature and culture's work in the project of Black freedom?

Texts Include:

- Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*
ISBN 978-1636003672
- Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
ISBN 978-0060838676
- Ellison, *Invisible Man* – **ISBN 978-0679732761**
- Brooks, *Maud Martha* – **ISBN 978-0883780619**
- Baldwin, *Go Tell It On the Mountain* -
ISBN 978-0375701870
- Butler, *Kindred* – **ISBN 978-0807083697**
- Bambara, *The Salt Eaters* – **ISBN 978-0679740766**
- Morrison, *Beloved* – **ISBN 978-1784876432**
- Everett, *Erasure* – **ISBN 978-1555975999**
- La Valle, *The Changeling* – **ISBN 978-0812985870**

English 481 **Studies in Literary Theory & Criticism**

Mimesis and Its Doubles
Will West

Mimesis names a relation of likeness: the way a work of art of literature is like something else—not the only way, but a uniquely central way in theories of representation in the traditions of Europe and the Mediterranean. Since Plato and Aristotle, mimesis has often stood for a kind of natural relation of one thing to another. It thus paradoxically is a relation that often goes without saying: you are supposed to recognize likeness when you see it. This course will explore some of the things that literature is supposed to be like (action? the world? other literature?), but also what it means for one thing to be said to be like another thing at all. We will

balance theoretical discussions of mimesis with theatrical and other explorations of its role, as well as strategies for representation besides likeness, representing things that are like nothing, and hierarchies implied or subverted by the concept of mimesis.

Readings: might include selections from Aristotle, Longinus, Shakespeare, Corneille, Calderon, Cavendish, Freud, Woolf, Warburg, Benjamin, Auerbach, Wittgenstein, Capote, Latour, Bhabha, Ranciere, Viveiros de Castro, or Hartman.