

Graduate Courses in English

2025-26

Course Title	Fall	Winter	Spring
Eng 410 Introduction to Graduate Study	Mann, Justin Thursday 10:00-1:00		
Eng 411 Studies in Poetry <i>Modern Poetry & Poetics</i> [post-1800]		Froula, Christine Thursday 2:00-5:00	
Eng 422 Studies in Medieval Literature [pre-1800] <i>Chaucer</i>	Phillips, Susie Monday 2:00-5:00		
Eng 434 Studies in Shakespeare & Early Drama [pre-1800] Fall - <i>Global Shakespeare</i> Spring - <i>The Human Question: Shakespeare's Hostile Climates</i>	Wall, Wendy Tuesday 2:00-5:00		Shannon, Laurie Monday 2:00-5:00
Eng 435 Studies in 17th-century Literature [pre-1800] <i>Epic, World, History</i>		West, Will Tuesday 2:00-5:00	
Eng 451 Studies in Romantic Literature <i>Lyrical Environments</i> [pre/post-1800]	Wolff, Tristram Thursday 2:00-5:00		
Eng 461 sec 20 Studies in Contemporary Literature [post-1800] Fall - <i>Asian American Literature</i> Winter - <i>The Environmentalism of the Poor</i> Spring - <i>The Planetary in Contemporary Art</i>	Huang, Michelle Wednesday 2:00-5:00	Dimick, Sarah Thursday 2:00-5:00	Mwangi, Evan Thursday 2:00-5:00
Eng 461 sec 21 Studies in Contemporary Literature [post-1800] Winter - <i>Possibility within Form: The Grotesque Body and the Global Novel</i> Spring - <i>Hannah Arendt</i>		Abani, Chris TBA	Gottlieb, Susannah Tuesday 2:00-5:00
Eng 465 Studies in Colonial & Postcolonial Literature [post-1800] <i>Postcolonial Method</i>		Nadiminti, Kalyan Wednesday 2:00-5:00	
Eng 471 Studies in American Literature <i>American Modernist Novel, Black & White</i> [post-1800]			Stern, Julia Wednesday 2:00-5:00
Eng 481 Studies in Literary Theory & Criticism <i>Reading Form</i>			Jackson, Lauren Monday 2:00-5:00
Blk-St 402 Theorizing Black Genders & Sexualities			Bey, Marquis Wednesday 2:00-5:00
Eng 496 MFA Poetry Workshop (MA and PhD by application)	Abani, Chris Monday 10:00-1:00	Shanahan, Charif Thursday 10:00-1:00	
Eng 497 MFA Fiction Workshop (MA and PhD by application)	Martinez, Juan Tuesday 10:00-1:00	Abani, Chris Tuesday 10:00-1:00	
Eng 498 MFA CNF Workshop (MA and PhD by application)	Schulman, Sarah Wednesday 2:00-5:00		Hernández, Daisy Tuesday 2:00-5:00
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
Eng 571 Teaching Creative Writing (1st-year MFA+MA only)		Seliy, Shauna Tuesday 2:00-5:00	

Fall Quarter

English 410

Introduction to Graduate Study

Justin Mann

This course will offer students an introduction to current theories and methods in literary studies. Students will grapple with key questions and debates that guide research and teaching in the humanities in the twenty-first century. The course begins with an inquiry into the history of the institution, the field(s) of literary studies, broadly conceived, and the questions of center and periphery that remain central to our work. We will then shift to an investigation of contemporary keywords guiding literary studies in the present.

Foregrounding the disorienting effects of the literary, the course begins by examining the history of the discipline and its institutions, including shifting definitions of our objects of study; the histories of exclusion and inclusion that accompany these shifts; and, issues of canonicity, especially as they relate to empire building both within and outside the academy. Then, we will explore the methods of literary critique, thinking about what is at stake in the objects we study and the ways we choose to read them. Finally, we will engage with challenges to the traditional organizing principles of our field, including its archives, geographies, periodization.

Texts include:

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, ISBN 978-0241386019
Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, ISBN 978-0679745426
Chris Eng, *Extravagant Camp*, ISBN 978-1479834662
Faith Barter, *Black Pro Se*, ISBN 978-1469685977
Sarah Dimick, *Unseasonable*, ISBN 978-0231209250
Maia Gil'Adí, *Doom Patterns*, ISBN 978-1478031208
Noémie Ndiaye, *Scripts of Blackness*, ISBN 978-1512826074

English 422

Studies in Medieval Literature

Chaucer

Susie Phillips

From the fifteenth-century glossators to twenty-first-century critics, readers of the *Canterbury Tales* have sought to interpret and contain Chaucer's constantly shifting, experimental poem. The text poses numerous interpretative puzzles—the myriad objects of the poem's irony, the cultural politics of its author, the “identities” of its characters, and the demographics and ideologies of its intended audiences, to name a few—puzzles that have been “solved” in strikingly different ways at different historical moments. This course takes as its subject the *Canterbury Tales* and its reception history, exploring of both the poem's multiple interpretative contexts and the hermeneutic conundrums it poses to them. As we read the *Tales*, we will consider the narratives (and

narrative conventions) that Chaucer translates and transforms and the contemporary voices with whom he is in dialogue—both in the fourteenth century and the twenty-first. We will investigate the ways in which the tales circulated both individually and as a collection (which tales were the most popular? how and by whom were they published? with which other texts did they travel?) and analyze the various paratexts that accompanied them (glosses, prologues, illustrations, and “spurious” links and tales). Alongside this early publication context, we will explore current conversations in Chaucer criticism and the scholarly history and contemporary public debates to which it responds. Analyzing the *Tales* through a wide array of methodological lenses, we will use Chaucer's experimental poem as methodological and interpretative testing ground, placing its multivalent narratives in dialogue with feminist and queer theory, critical race studies, disability studies, animal studies, and the Global Middle Ages, in addition to new and old materialities and historicisms. Seminar members are encouraged to treat the course as an interpretative lab, bringing their own methodological interests and questions to bear on the *Tales* in both seminar discussion and their final projects.

Texts include:

The Canterbury Tales, ed. Jill Mann, ISBN 978-0140422344 (~\$25)
Also acceptable: *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Larry D. Benson or *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson are
Textbooks available at Norris Center Bookstore.

English 434

Studies in Shakespeare & Early Drama

Global Shakespeare

Wendy Wall

Appropriation, Adaptation, Reinvention: scholars have deployed these terms to theorize ways that 20th- and 21st-century artists — working in different media across the globe— use Shakespeare's plays as a vital cultural and creative resource. These artists' acts of cultural translation offer sites for exploring complex social and political issues, including colonialism and postcolonialism, racial and ethnic tensions, gender fluidity, same-sex desire, structural violence, and legal inequities. In this course, we will focus on *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet* to explore transformations of Shakespearean drama through a range of media (print, theater, and film). We'll attend to creative reworkings such as Toni Morrison's *Desdemona*, Shishir Kurup's *Merchant on Venice* (a play about Hindu, Muslim, and Latina/o cultures in modern Los Angeles), James Lujan's *Kino and Teresa* (a play about star-crossed love in colonial New Mexico), the teen flick *O*, and *Te Tangata Whai Rawa o Weniti* (*The Māori Merchant of Venice*).

All course assignments are structured to support the development of foundational research competencies in the humanities, with emphasis on formulating viable research questions, engaging responsibly with sources, and constructing evidence-based arguments. The final project invites students to undertake an

original research inquiry into any global adaptation or afterlife of any Shakespearean play.

Texts include:

Toni Morrison, *Desdemona*, ISBN 135027027X

Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. Halio, Oxford World Classics 1st ed, ISBN 019953585X

Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. Thompson, Honigmann, The Arden 3rd series, 2nd ed, ISBN 1472571762

Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*. The Arden 3rd series ISBN 1903436915

English 451

Studies in Romantic Literature

Lyric Environments

Tristram Wolff

This course serves as an introduction to the “greater romantic lyric,” as well as an abbreviated survey of lyric theory. While tracking the sequence and dialogue of a handful of key critical paradigms from the last half century, we will investigate how lyric poetry situates its reader in a universe of discourse through rhetorical address, affective cues, and social disposition. The “environments” in question do connote familiar romantic scholarship on “nature poetry,” and the relations of language to nature; but we’ll be thinking about “nature” here bearing in mind that for the romantics and their newer interlocutors, natural “environments” implicate social space and psychic geographies as well. Relevant critical work will be drawn from romantic studies, phenomenology, critical race theory, feminist standpoint theory, affect studies, critical geography, and linguistic anthropology. As time allows, we’ll refer as well to work by living poets that distinctively (and sometimes self-consciously) reconfigures conventions for lyric space and scenes of address laid down in the romantic era.

Readings (all available on Canvas):

Poetry includes readings by Wheatley, Coleridge, Robinson, Wordsworth, Clare, Smith, Barbauld, Keats, Hemans, Shelley, Yearsley

Theory and criticism includes readings by G. W. F. Hegel, J. S. Mill, Frantz Fanon, Roman Jakobson, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Raymond Williams, V. N. Voloshinov, Denise Riley, Lauren Berlant, Stanley Cavell, Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins, Donna Haraway, Erving Goffman, Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed, Doreen Massey, Bakary Diaby, Susan Stewart, Nate Mackey, Camille Dungy, Geoffrey Hartman, Erica Hunt, Barbara Johnson, William Wimsatt, Rei Terada, Paul de Man, Virginia Jackson, M Ty.

English 461

Studies in Contemporary Literature

Asian American Literature

Michelle Huang

This graduate seminar serves as an introduction to the field of Asian American literature, with a twin focus on classic texts and core debates. In addition to highlighting the richness and complexity of this literary tradition, the class will pressure key critical terms and paradigms such as representation, authenticity, genre & form, voice & lyric, history & archive, and of course, race. Participants will be exposed to a range of methodologies for close reading for racial formation as a formal feature of textual composition, as well as gain proficiency with Asian American literature’s relationship to central and emergent debates within American literary studies.

Some questions for consideration include the following: What do the many subjects and locations of Asian American literature tell us about the capaciousness of the category itself? What tensions and resonances arise when critical race and ethnic studies meet theories of representation? How are conventional modes of understanding racial identity in literature transformed when put in relation with theories of migration, imperialism, economics, and the environment?

Texts:

Assigned texts will likely include primary texts by Maxine Hong Kingston, Chang-rae Lee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Karen Tei Yamashita, Monique Truong, Frank Chin, Lesley Tenorio, Lê thị diễm thúy, Ruth Ozeki, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, and Mei-mei Berssenbrugge.

Secondary texts will include work by Lisa Lowe, David Eng, Kandice Chuh, Colleen Lye, Joseph Jonghyun Jeon, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Rachel Lee, among others. Please verify before purchasing texts.

Primary texts will be available at Norris bookstore.

All secondary materials will be uploaded to Canvas.

Winter Quarter

English 411

Studies in Poetry

Modern Poetry & Poetics

Christine Froula

Course Description: TBA

English 435

Studies in 17th-Century Literature

Epic, World, History

Will West

Course Description: TBA

English 461, sec 20

Studies in Contemporary Literature

The Environmentalism of the Poor

Sarah Dimick

After detailing Ramachandra Guha and Joan Martinez-Alier's influential distinction between "full-stomach" and "empty-belly" environmentalism, this course focuses on literary engagements with the latter. We track class and environmentalism through literature set in electronic waste dumps, tent cities of the unhoused, and disaster zones. Via this reading, we catalogue the capacities and limitations of literary modes associated with poverty—including social realism, the documentary, and sentimentalism. This class delves into environmental knowledge and movements emerging from communities subjected to poverty, but it also attends to unsettling slippages between practices of environmental simplicity and experiences of economic deprivation. Primary texts will be drawn from 20th- and 21st-century literature of the United States and the global South.

English 461, sec 21

Studies in Contemporary Literature

Possibility within Form: The Grotesque Body and the Global Novel

Chris Abani

The novel has often been seen as a vehicle for nation and tradition building. But the form also contains the ability to subvert these categories. Subversion in this case is a decrowning of power, the process of constructing an alternate history, state, or community of ideas. Carnival and the grotesque, as theorized by Bakhtin, will guide our reading, as we explore the body as a site of narrative and a powerful tool of subversion. We will read five novels - from Finland, the UK, China/Tibet, Japan and Nigeria - as vehicles of the transnational and necessarily transitional sites of narrative. I will provide some foundational secondary reading, but a big

part of this course is the student doing research for readings to support their theories. Our focus is on a guided close reading. We will question what these novels and the bodies created by them can reveal about the form of narrative, subversion and its dialogue between traditions.

English 465

Studies in Colonial & Postcolonial Literature

Postcolonial Method

Kalyan Nadiminti

Is there such a thing as a postcolonial method? If so, what are its spatial, temporal, and theoretical constructs as well as its limits? This course examines the rise and evolution of postcolonial studies as a disciplinary apparatus across literature, history, and culture. The course will examine how postcolonial theory thinks through vectors of colonialism, capitalism, race, and gender in distinct ways. This course will begin with key theoretical texts like *Orientalism* and *Masks of Conquest*, work through major debates of the 1980s to 2000s around postcoloniality, literary form, and subaltern historiography, before spending the last third of class around race and contemporary imperial formations. In effect, we will think about the formation of postcolonial studies both through and against Cultural Studies, the Subaltern studies group, invocations of the Third World, the institutional development of Global South theory, and finally the fiercest critiques of postcolonial studies like Dalit studies and decolonial studies. Postcoloniality has been invoked to modify categories like the unconscious and sovereignty, but faulted for its aura and exoticism: how do these approaches allow us to think about the future of postcolonial studies and its core political commitments?

Readings will include BR Ambedkar, M.K. Gandhi, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Sylvia Wynter, Gayatri Spivak, Ranajit Guha, Natalie Melas. Neil Lazarus, and others. We will also dip into some literary texts like Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, and Shehan Karunatilaka's *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*.

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

