ENGL 7360: Topics in Rhetoric: Rhetoric and Gender

Professor Beth Britt
CRN: 35330
Fulfills: PRC (core rhetoric requirement) and WS

To study rhetoric is to study the relationship between language and power. Who may speak or write, under what circumstances, and to what effects? How do representations of actions, relationships, concepts, and people empower some groups while marginalizing others? Throughout rhetoric’s 2500-year history, gender has been a powerful determiner of the status of speakers and writers. But contemporary thinkers have realized that gender is not a given; it is constructed rhetorically, that is, by the symbols that influence thought and action. This course examines both ways of thinking of the relationship between rhetoric and gender. To explore the first, we will consider efforts to “regender” the Western rhetorical canon by including women speakers and writers and by redefining what counts as rhetoric. To explore the second, we will examine methods and products of feminist rhetorical criticism. We will read fragments/texts by women rhetors from the classical period to the present day (for example, Aspasia of Miletus, Christine de Pisan, Margaret Fell, Sarah Grimke, Ida B. Wells, and Julia Kristeva), work by contemporary writers from rhetoric and related disciplines (such as Cheryl Glenn, Andrea Lunsford, Krista Ratcliffe, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, Emily Martin, and Patricia J. Williams), and feminist rhetorical approaches to topics such as space and place, domestic violence, and the body. Assignments will include several response papers, a literature review, and a conference proposal, paper, and presentation.

ENGL 7395: Topics in Writing: Politics, Aesthetics and Writing Pedagogies

Professor Patricia Sullivan
CRN: 35126
Fulfills: MAC (literary studies), PRC (core composition requirement), or PLC (literary studies)

This course explores the relation of aesthetics and pedagogies in the field of Composition, as well as other areas of English Studies. Composition scholars have recently argued for the importance of teaching experimental and alternative styles, including mixed genres, textual collages, multi-voiced texts, grammatical experiment and multi-modal or multimedia texts. These recent calls for changing writing pedagogies challenge the existing canon of forms employed in composition classes, forms such as five-paragraph themes, personal essays, literary essays, arguments and research papers, by suggesting that, in the context of the hegemony of academic discourse, experimental writing functions as epistemological and socio-political critique. Drawing on texts from Composition, Literary Studies, Cultural Studies, and Creative Writing Studies, this course critically examines how the rationales for the teaching of various forms, styles, genres or media, are undergirded by aesthetics theories and broad assumptions about the value of writing as art.

Students will write regularly (short 2 page responses weekly) both in conventionally scholarly formats, as well as in “unconventional” formats. Students will also be asked to produce a seminar paper length project (15-20 pages) and oral presentation (10 minutes) that examines the relationship between aesthetics and pedagogy in theory and practice in historical, cultural and institutional contexts. Students are encouraged in consultation with their peers and the professor to choose a theory or theories, a set of texts, and practices of teaching writing that are most relevant to their broader scholarly interests in English Studies.

**ENGL 7212: Topics in African-American Literature: The Slave Narrative**

Professor Nicole Aljoe  
CRN: 34654  
Fulfills: MAC (literature), or PLC (18th Century)

This course will explore the range of texts known as slave narratives in order to better understand its pervasive and continuing influence on American and world literary cultures. To that aim we will locate the genre of the slave narrative in relation to the broad range of political, cultural, and economic currents that constituted the system of Atlantic slavery. Although we will explore the slave narrative as a technology for producing a "subject" in the face of a system intended to deny that subjectivity, we will also explore the ways in which it simultaneously creates a paradigm for what can and cannot be said about life under slavery. We will read the narratives alongside a number of contemporaneous modes of writing such as: the captivity narrative, the spiritual autobiography, and criminal confessions with an eye to understanding the complex print culture within which the slave narrative circulated and was produced. Finally, because the narratives manifest a variety of forms and themes, additional topics for consideration may include: the transnational cultural context; the politics of slave literacy and the heritages of the enlightenment; the rise of capitalism; gender and sexuality; discourses of the law and theories of natural rights; as well as the influence of rhetorics of sentiment, the sublime, and the gothic.
ENGL 7215 Topics in 20th Century American Literature: American Modernism

Professor Carla Kaplan
CRN: 34008
Fulfills: MAC (literature), or PLC (19th Century/20th Century)

“Remapping Modernism”

For some time now, the meaning of American “modernism” has been up for grabs. To the canon of traditional high modernist writers such as Faulkner, Hemingway, Dos Passos, and Fitzgerald, has been added a dizzying array of other writers, including heretofore neglected realists and regionalists, popular writers from the period, previously neglected women and blacks (especially black women), and expatriates of ambiguous national identity. Creating a new account of this much more variegated period has been particularly challenging. As a case study in the problems – and the possibilities – of both “canon-busting” and periodization, this course will focus on what is often now called “The New Modernist Studies” to consider the ways in which adding the “s” to Modernism – pluralizing it as “Modernisms” – opens new questions about what it means to define a field or literary period. Alongside essays on periodizing modernism, we will read a wide range of modern and modernist writers, including Jean Toomer, John Dos Passos, William Faulkner, Djuna Barnes, Sinclair Lewis, Willa Cather, T.S. Eliot, Eugene O’Neill, Nella Larsen, Gertrude Stein, and others (with a concentration on the modern novel). Assignments will include one short critical reception paper, one paper comparing aesthetic manifestoes, and one final research paper, combining a reading with an argument about periodization.

ENGL 7282 Topics in Renaissance Literature: Becoming Human

Professor Marina Leslie
CRN: 34655
Fulfills: MAC (literary studies), or PLC (Medieval through early Renaissance -or- literary studies)

The boundaries of the human came into visibility in the early modern period primarily through a series of border skirmishes. The relationship between man and beast, man and woman, man and machine, flesh and spirit, matter and mind were all subjects of fierce debate, whose terms did not generally resolve into strict binaries. Indeed, early modern print culture is well-populated by monsters, faeries, sprites, savages, hermaphrodites, talking animals, automata, and other creatures who troubled the borders of human (that is, male European) exceptionalism, autonomy, and sovereignty. We will explore how neoclassicism, contact with the New World, and the New Science contributed to the controversies over what it meant to be human. Topics of consideration will range from animal spirits to artificial men, metamorphosis to Mechanism, as we examine the discourses of the human contributed to the production of whole new disciplines as well as the emerging and intersecting systems of species, racial, and gender difference. Readings will put philosophical and scientific texts by della Mirandola, Montaigne, Paré, Bacon, Hooke, Descartes, and Hobbes, into dialog with works by Rabelais, Shakespeare, Spenser, Hakluyt, Middleton & Dekker, Jonson, Behn, and Cavendish. Requirements will include an archival presentation and a final essay.
ENGL 7286 Topics in Victorian Literature: Victorian and Neo-Victorian Literature

Professor Laura Green  
CRN: 34657  
Fulfills: MAC (literature), or PLC (19th Century/20th Century), CS (consult instructor)

In the almost two decades since A. S. Byatt’s prize-winning novel Possession (1990), the neo-Victorian novel has become a prominent postmodern fictional genre. In the first part of the semester, readings will group together Victorian and neo-Victorian fiction to trace derivations and contrasts. Possibilities include Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre, and Byatt’s Angels and Insects; Charles Dickens, Little Dorrit, with Sarah Waters, Fingersmith, and Peter Carey, True History of the Kelly Gang; Henry James, The Turn of the Screw, and Waters’s Little Stranger; Julian Barnes, Arthur and George and Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories. Other areas of inquiry may include the steampunk genre, such as William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, The Difference Engine; and neo-Victorian film. Student research papers will draw on recent scholarship on neo-Victorian literature and will be aimed at submission to the online journal Neo-Victorian Studies.

ENGL 7332 Topics in Film: Framing Faust: Film, Literature and Cultural Struggle

Professor Inez Hedges  
CRN: 34656  
Fulfills: MAC (literary studies), or PLC (literary studies), CS

The Faust legend played an important role in the formation of narrative film in the first decade of the 20th century, and was also the inspiration for some of the most important films of the silent era (including various editions of "The Student of Prague", and W.F. Murnau’s "Faust"). In the sound era, Faustian themes were explored in many different film genres, from film noir to drama to comedy. Political as well as cultural struggles were illuminated by references, in feature films, to the dialectic between Faust and Mephistopheles—whether the topic was Nazism, the rise of feminism, socialist experiments, avant-garde subversion, the cold war, or ecology. Focusing for the most part on the cinematic explorations of the Faust legend, we will nonetheless consider key literary texts, works of criticism/philosophy, and operas that played a significant role in the film versions (Goethe, Gounod, Lukács, Ernst Bloch, Gertrude Stein). The work in the seminar will consist of oral presentations, short papers, and a final research paper.