ENGL 7215.01: Topics in 20th Century Literature: Modern American Novel

Professor Carla Kaplan

- CRN: 35931
- 3 semester hours
- Wednesday, 3:30-5:45
- Location: 400B Holmes Hall
- Fulfills: 20th Century

“Modernism” is up for grabs. To the American canon of traditional high modernists such as Faulkner, Hemingway, Dos Passos and Fitzgerald, has been added what some critics see as a dizzying array of other modern American novelists, including Djuna Barnes, Gertrude Stein, Nella Larsen, Jean Toomer, Fannie Hurst, Willa Cather, Rudolph Fisher, George Schuyler, Wallace Thurman, Susan Glaspell, and others. This canon revision, as it turns out, has changed everything. The line between realism and modernism, for example, once thought firm, now appears wavering and fuzzy. The question of whether modernism designates an historical period or a fixed set of aesthetic experiments has become much more vexed. Urban and cosmopolitan sensibilities root themselves in rural and regional landscapes, and vice versa. Gender, race, class, sexuality, and nationality collide and collapse across a range of genres and styles. How, then, can we create a new account of this complex and tumultuous moment, attending to the extraordinary complexity of its sociality of forms? Towards that goal, we will combine historicist, evaluative, theoretical, formal, and literary historical approaches as we concentrate on a range of modern American novels which all share concerns with questions of personal and cultural identity, easily the most pressing social issue of the period. A tension between seeking identity and seeking to escape identity was a particular feature of the 1920’s and it is built into the complexity of its forms, its modes of narrative address, and gives rise to many of the stylistic innovations associated with “the modern” and the various issues of audience and reception addressed by all writing of this period. We will read a range of black and white, male and female, expatriate, Greenwich Village, and Harlem writers, as well as some of the key manifestoes from the period which staked a claim for the political, social, and artistic importance of new aesthetic forms and techniques, forms – as we will see – which were widely variant across race, class, sex, and region, even if the arguments for their “newness” were often, quite strikingly, similar. We will look, critically, at both theories of modernism and theories of the novel to unravel the canons they typically assume. Each student will experiment with a variety of methods, combining close reading with archival work (reporting on one modernist “little magazine” and also one text’s critical reception), which will form the basis of some of our discussions of changing aesthetic and cultural assumptions. All students will write critical papers and all will also read one supplemental novel, off the syllabus, to expand our own collective canon of the Modern American novel.
ENGL 7281: Topics in Medieval Literature: Gender and Sexuality in Medieval Romance and Modern Film Adaptations

Professor Kathleen Kelly

- CRN: 35930
- 3 semester hours
- Monday, 6:15-8:30
- Location: 400B Holmes Hall
- Fulfills: Medieval/Renaissance, Cinema Studies, WGSS

Except perhaps for the two world wars, no other subject has proved to be as filmable as the Middle Ages in American and European cinema-dom. One reason that “movie medievalism” continues to be popular among film-makers and audiences is that films set in the Middle Ages offer a particularly rich site for working out debates on gender: the Middle Ages is both remote and close, unfamiliar and familiar, allowing for explorations of stereotypes as much as experimentation with boundaries. In ENGL 7281, we will read texts written between 1200 and 1500 (all in translation), that have been adapted to the screen, with a focus on representations of women and femininity, men and masculinity, and sexuality. Jonathan Culler, in The Pursuit of Signs, argues that a text’s meaning depends on a reader whose view of time is both historical (diachronic) and immediate (synchronous). In this course, we will develop both ways of reading through examining texts that represent the so-called antifeminist tradition of late antiquity and the Middle Ages as well as considering late twentieth-century and twenty-first-century feminist criticism. Examples of texts paired with films: excerpts from Malory’s Morte Darthur (c. 1470) plus Boorman’s Excalibur (1981) and the musical Camelot (1967, an essential film in the history of the musical, and a fabulous 60s set-piece); the legend of Tristan and Isolt (c. 1200-1300) plus Jean Cocteau’s L’Eternel Retour (1947); Chaucer’s Wife of Bath’s Tale (c. 1385) plus the BBC modernization (2003). We will also read (in translation) a French romance, Le Roman de Silence (13th c.), about a transvestite knight—long overdue for a cinematic adaptation, surely—and, as a class project, turn an obscure late Arthurian romance into a screenplay. Requirements: brief in-class presentations and a final paper.

ENGL 7342: Topics in Criticism: Marx and Marxism

Professor Patrick Mullen

- CRN: 36252
- 3 semester hours
- Thursday, 6:15-8:30 (will be listed as 6:00-8:30 PM on your schedule, but this is the actual meeting time)
- Location: 400B Holmes Hall
- Fulfills: Theories & Methods
This course will be organized around the close reading of Karl Marx’s Capital Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy. Marx has been widely influential in the humanities and in an attempt to evaluate this influence we will also be engaging a range of historical and contemporary criticism that takes up Marx’s thought. We will examine early thinkers that might include: Antonio Gramsci, Georg Lukás, Rosa Luxemburg, and Mikhail Bakhtin; the influential people working with the Frankfurt school, such as Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and Bertol Brecht; poststructuralists such as Louis Althusser, Étienne Balibar, and Gayatri Spivak; as well as world systems theorist Immanuel Wallerstein; and finally Fredric Jameson and David Harvey. Students do not need a previous training in philosophy or critical theory as the course will take students where they are, so to speak. Our goal will be to explore both the rich trajectories of thought and practice opened by Marx and the traditions of Marxists intellectual work and to consider how Marx might or might not play a role in contemporary intellectual projects. Students will be required to do one presentation and complete a seminar essay.

ENGL 7358: Topics in Literature and Other Disciplines: Doing Digital Humanities

Professor Ryan Cordell

- CRN: 36443
- 3 semester hours
- Wednesday, 6:15-8:30 (will be listed as 6:00-8:30 PM on your schedule, but this is the actual meeting time)
- Location: 400B Holmes Hall
- Fulfills: Theories & Methods

This graduate seminar introduces the key theories, methodologies, and debates of the expanding, interdisciplinary field of digital humanities (DH). The course will survey computational approaches to humanities materials, from post-WWII until the present; review important DH projects; engage the debates (re)shaping DH in this current moment of growth; and offer practical training in a set of DH tools. Major themes of our course readings will include theories of new and old media, the (a)materiality of digital texts and objects, models of “scalable” reading and analysis, and changing modes of scholarly production and communication. Most class sessions will balance theory and praxis, moving between discussion of readings and humanities lab practicums. Course labs will introduce students to multimodal scholarly composition, text encoding, textual analysis, digital archive building, geospatial analysis, and network mapping. This course, like the digital humanities itself, will benefit from participation by scholars in a range of disciplines; students in CSSH fields outside English are encouraged to register.
ENGL 7360: Topics in Rhetoric: Rhetoric Then and Now

Professor Beth Britt

- CRN: 32717
- 3 semester hours
- Tuesday, 6:15-8:30 (will be listed as 6:00-8:30 PM on your schedule, but this is the actual meeting time)
- Location: 400B Holmes Hall
- Fulfills: Rhetoric & Composition

This course introduces students to rhetorical studies through classical/canonical texts and contemporary award-winning monographs of the past decade or so that extend, problematize, and depart from them. Designed both for students desiring a foundation in rhetorical studies and those interested in joining current conversations, the course will examine some of the central themes, concerns, and approaches to studying what has been variously described as “Aphrodite’s daughter” (Sappho), “the art of enchanting the soul” (Plato), and “an essential function of language itself” (Kenneth Burke). Readings may include the anonymous Dissoi Logoi, Plato’s Gorgias, Aristotle’s On Rhetoric, selections from Kenneth Burke and Michel Foucault, Jacqueline Royster’s Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women, Phaedra Pezzullo’s Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice, Bradford Vivian’s Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again, Wendy Hesford’s Spectacular Rhetorics: Human Rights Visions, Recognitions, Feminisms, Morris Young’s Minor Re/Visions: Asian American Literacy Narratives as a Rhetoric of Citizenship, Hariman & Lucaites’ No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy, Krista Ratcliffe’s Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness, and Judy Segal’s Health and the Rhetoric of Medicine. Assignments may include an analysis of a rhetoric journal, an annotated bibliography, a group presentation, and a conference paper/proposal.

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Post-coursework Registration

ENGL 6960: Exam Preparation – Masters, CRN: 34146

ENGL 8960: Exam Preparation – Doctoral, CRN: 31770

ENGL 9986: Research, CRN: 31771

ENGL 9990: Dissertation, CRN: 31773

ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation, CRN: 31772