

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Department of English Language & Literature
Undergraduate Course Descriptions
Autumn Quarter 2009

10700 Introduction to Fiction: Short Story

In the first half of this course, we focus on the principal elements that contribute to effect in fiction (setting, characterization, style, imagery, and structure) in order to understand the variety of effects possible with each element. We read several different writers in each of the first five weeks. In the second half of the course, we bring the elements together and study how they work in concert. This detailed study concentrates on one or, at most, two texts a week.

Veeder, William

AUTUMN, 2009 MW 1:30-2:50

11100 Critical Perspectives

Required of students majoring in English. This course develops practical skills in close reading, historical contextualization, and the use of discipline-specific research tools and resources, and encourages conscious reflection on critical presuppositions and practices. The course prepares students to enter into the discussions that occur in the more advanced undergraduate courses.

Knight, Janice

AUTUMN, 2009 TUTH 10:30-11:50

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Knight, Janice

AUTUMN, 2009 TUTH 1:30-2:50

11901 After Great Pain:Aesthetics/Emotion Sentiment-Affect Theory

This course explores, in broad outline, the centrality of suffering to the production of concepts of social belonging and sovereign personhood in the United States since the migration of sentimental fiction to the United States in the 1780s and the rise of abolitionist and indigenous rights rhetoric in the 1830s. While an image of the universal subject enlightened by rationality suffuses most descriptions of national/capitalist modernity, this course suggests that scenes of negative emotion involving pain, suffering, abjection, trauma, and shock were more central to the production of mass society and came to establish the measure of a subject's and a culture's humanity, virtue, and value. The first unit focuses on rhetorics of sentimental attachment; the second on those operating according to the logic of trauma; the third will provide an introduction to the facets of affect theory that look at the contemporary moment as a scene of ordinary crisis. The course will exemplify the logics of pain, suffering, and citizenship by focusing on aesthetic genres through which public affect worlds were said to be organized around a normative emotional habitus or kind of subjectivity. Readings include theoretical selections from Freud, Ferenczi, Caruth, Massumi, Deleuze, Sedgwick, Butler, Seltzer, Taussig, Daphne Brooks. Peter Brooks; novels such as: Uncle Tom's Cabin; Imitation of Life; The Bluest Eye; Black Hole; Survival in Auschwitz; In the Shadow of No Towers; City of Refuge; films Safe, When the Levees Broke.

Berlant, Lauren

AUTUMN, 2009 TUTH 12:00-1:20

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13800 History and Theory of Drama 1

A survey of major trends and theatrical accomplishments in Western drama from the ancient Greeks through the Renaissance: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, medieval religious drama, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, along with some consideration of dramatic theory by Aristotle, Horace, Sir Philip Sidney, Dryden. The course features voluntary but highly recommended end-of-week workshops in which individual scenes will be read aloud dramatically and discussed. Assignments at mid-quarter and at the end of the quarter will give the option of two substantial essays, or (in place of either or both) the putting on of a short scene in cooperation with some other members of the class. Acting skill is not required; the point is to discover what is at work in the scene and to write up that process in a somewhat informal report.

Bevington, David

AUTUMN, 2009 TuTh 1:30-2:50

14308 Poetry from the Outside

"I prefer commencing with the consideration of an effect," wrote Poe in his famous essay on the composition of "The Raven." This class approaches poetry with a similar concern. We will explore what it means to write from outside the first-person perspective by reading modern and contemporary poets who regard their work as similar to that of historians and reporters, as well as poetry composed by chance operations and machines. This class is open to both creative and critical writers. Some classes will be organized as creative writing workshops, others as seminar discussions. Both creative and critical final projects will be accepted.

Regan, Matthias

AUTUMN, 2009 TUTH 1:30-2:50

16709 Shakespeare, Marlowe, Benjamin, and Brecht

In this course, we will read several plays of Shakespeare and Marlowe in relationship to the theoretical writings of two twentieth-century critics, Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht. Why did Benjamin and Brecht think Shakespeare and Marlowe were radical, avant-garde playwrights? What conclusions did they draw from Shakespeare and Marlowe for their own political moment? How were Brecht's own plays and dramatic theory influenced by these earlier writers? Texts will include Shakespeare, Hamlet; Marlowe, Edward II and Tamburlaine; Benjamin, The Origin of German Tragic Drama and Understanding Brecht; Brecht, Selected Plays and his Short Organon for the Theater. For students with an interest in both Renaissance literature and European modernism, as well as a strong interest in literary theory.

Kahn, Victoria

AUTUMN, 2009 TuTh 3:00-4:20

17506 Angels and Diplomats in English Renaissance Poetry

The starting point for this course is a question at the nexus of theology, politics, and art that preoccupied English Renaissance writers: how should power be represented? The course will look at how writers including Tasso, Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, and Marvell figured angels and diplomats and how such images combined with the figure of the poet. Among topics we will likely consider are the linguistic contract, mediation, immunity, license, fidelity, automation, accommodation, and representation of popular sovereignty.

Warren, Christopher

AUTUMN, 2009 MW 3:00-4:20

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20009 London: Culture and Institutions

Taking inspiration from the gargantuan scope of London's histories and geographies, this nine-week course provides students in the London Program with the opportunity to pursue their own academic interests through sustained individual or small-group project work. A selection of introductory readings in the early weeks of the quarter will explore possible avenues of approach to the cityscape. Students may elect to explore topics as diverse as the history of institutions such as the British Museum, the Inns of Court, or the BBC; multiculturalism and the East End; Gothic architecture; the Globe Theatre; or how class-consciousness operates in modern Britain. Interdisciplinary work is encouraged and students will be required to engage with the situatedness of their object of study through work in the field. Students will be required to produce a group presentation and a short final paper.

Kerr, Kristian

AUTUMN, 2009

20104 LONDON PROGRAM- From the Annals of Wales to Monty Python and the Holy Grail: King Arthur in Legend and History

We will consider the historical origins of the Arthurian legend and how it has subsequently been reshaped and used in Great Britain. We will discuss how the legend was treated in the Middle Ages, most importantly by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century and Thomas Malory in the fifteenth. Then we will turn to the extraordinary revival of interest in the legend that started with the Victorians and which has continued almost unabated to the present. We will consider such matters as the various political uses that have been made of the legend as well as some of the reasons for its enduring popularity. Early in the course we will visit sites traditionally associated with King Arthur, including Tintagel Castle in Cornwall and Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset. Later we will examine nineteenth-century visual representations of the legend in London collections, most obviously the Tate Gallery. We will end with a viewing of the 1975 film, Monty Python and the Holy Grail.

von Nolcken, Christina

AUTUMN, 2009 London in London

20121 London Program: Virginia Woolf's London

We will study six of Woolf's major works, occasionally in conjunction with field trips to sites that occupy key cultural and symbolic roles within these texts. Discussions will focus more on the meanings of the city in Woolf's work than is the case in my usual Woolf course, and recent Woolf criticism that touches interwar London will be assigned.

Ruddick, Lisa

AUTUMN, 2009

20704 Three Irish Poets: Yeats, Heaney, Muldoon

Harold Bloom maintains that the case of Ireland presents a possible exception to his theory of "the anxiety of influence": the major poets since Yeats, Seamus Heaney and Paul Muldoon, seem to have shaken off the master's yoke. Without taking a position on Bloom's thesis, this course seeks to clarify the relations of influence and inheritance among these poets, as well as to explore the poetics of twentieth-century Ireland in general, especially in relation to the nation's troubled colonial history.

Robbins, Michael

AUTUMN, 2009 MW 3:00-4:20

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21903 The Victorian Novel

This is a course that considers the Victorian novel within the broader history and theory of the novel form, its function within Victorian society, and its dialogue with other forms of cultural representation during the period. We will read novels or novellas by Dickens, Gaskell, Bronte, Eliot, Trollope, and Hardy, and, at the end of the quarter, consider the continuing impact of the Victorian multiplot novel on contemporary writing. Along with the novels, we will be reading secondary scholarship on the novel, and contemporary primary materials that join the discussions expressed in the novels themselves.

Hadley, Elaine

AUTUMN, 2009 TUTH 12:00-1:20

22814 Contemporary Native American Literature

This course examines literature produced by the indigenous peoples of North America in the last forty years. Our approach will be historical as well as conceptual: beginning with N. Scott Momaday's novel *House Made of Dawn*, we will study the major authors and themes of the literary movement known as the "Native American Renaissance," investigating its transformation from the 1960s to the present. Because in Native American thought, state borders are not only a relatively recent phenomenon but are also philosophically problematic, we will also read indigenous writing from Canada and Mexico, examining the points of resonance and of disjuncture between these texts and those produced in the United States. Combining textual analysis and attention to historical and cultural contexts, we will explore how indigenous writers draw on both European and Native formal traditions to reflect histories of struggle. We will be attentive to relevant theoretical contexts, including post-colonialism, feminism, cultural materialism, theories of identity, and eco-criticism.

McDonough, Marie

AUTUMN, 2009 TUTH 4:30-5:50

25307 Sensibility, Sensation, Sexuality

This course traces a genealogy of affect by focusing on the representation and incitement of emotions in 19th century fiction. Readings include Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*; Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*; Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*; and Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

Rothfield, Lawrence

AUTUMN, 2009 TUTH 1:30-2:50

25923 Geographies of Modernism

Students will read a variety of texts, ranging chronologically from William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1890) to Stuart Dybek's *The Coast of Chicago* (1990), to discover how the modern sensibility relates to the physical environment, urban or rural, poetic or prosaic.

Geltner, Jonathan

AUTUMN, 2009 TUTH 4:30-5:50

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26000 Anglo-American Gothic Fiction in the Nineteenth Century

In the nineteenth century, gothic fiction in English is an Anglo-American phenomenon. America's first internationally recognized literary masterpiece, *Rip Van Winkle*, is written in England and appears the same year as *Frankenstein*. Our course will study the transatlantic aspect of the gothic tradition, while we also give full attention to the particular qualities of individual texts. Close reading will be central to our project. Attention to textual intricacies will lead to questions about gender and psychology, as well as culture. Our authors will include Washington Irving, Mary Shelley, James Hogg, Poe, Hawthorne, Emily Bronte, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Joseph Sheridan LeFanu, Henry James, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Thomas Hardy. Mid-term and final papers.

Veeder, William

AUTUMN, 2009 MW 4:30-5:50

26204 The Brown Decades: American Literature 1865-1914

This survey examines an often neglected period in American literary history, after the Civil War but before World War I, when many questions about what America is and who Americans are were being posed and ambiguously resolved. Writers considered include Chesnutt, Crane, Dickinson, James, Jewett, Norris, Twain, Wharton, and Whitman.

Durica, Paul

AUTUMN, 2009 MW 3:00-4:20

27006 Black Masculinities in American Literary and Visual Culture

Wimbley-Brodnax, Karin

AUTUMN, 2009

27805 Reading Modern Poets

The idea of the class is to read a group of important 20th century poets and some of the crucial theoretical texts. This course will focus on a heterogeneous group of poets, some who write in English, some who will be read in translation. The course is not organized around a particular theme or problem. We will let each poet raise particular themes and problems for class discussion. The poets: Anne Carson, Philippe Jaccottet, Derek Mahon, Czeslaw Milosz, Eugenio Montale, Paul Valery, C. K. Williams.

von Hallberg, Robert

Zagajewski, Adam

AUTUMN, 2009 W 1:30-4:20

28605 Owning and Disowning: J. M. Coetzee

This course is not simply about contemporary South Africa, and the novels of Coetzee, but also about the manner in which the public confession of past sins was and continues to be a critical point of reference for the ways in which political transition and justice are imagined. We will be reading Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Foe*, *The Life and times of Michael K*, *Disgrace* and the volume of essays, *Giving Offence*. We will also be reading Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground*, Yvette Christiaan's novel, *Unconfessed*, and Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Yael Farber's playtext, *Malora*, and will study two films: Alain Resnais' groundbreaking *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, and Christopher Nolan's recent psychological thriller, *Memento*. Theoretical readings will include works from Freud, Derrida, Foucault.

Bunn, David

Taylor, Jane

AUTUMN, 2009 TUTH 10:30-11:50

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28702 American Cinema since 1961

The year 1960 is commonly understood as a watershed in United States film history, marking the end of the so-called “classical” Hollywood cinema. We will discuss this assumption in terms of the break-up of the studio system; the erosion of the Production Code; the crisis of audience precipitated by television’s mass spread; and the changing modes of film reception, production, and style under the impact of video, cable, and other electronic communication technologies. We will also relate cinema to social and political issues of the post-1960s period (Civil Rights, student and women’s movements, the Vietnam war, urban crisis, reproductive freedom, AIDS, the Reagan/Bush era, and the end of the Cold War) and ask how films reflected upon and intervened in contested areas of public and private experience. With the help of the concept of “genre” (and the changed “genericity” of 1980s and ‘90s films) and of the notion of “national cinema” (usually applied to film traditions other than the United States), we will attempt a dialogue between industrial/stylistic and cultural-studies approaches to film history.

Hansen, Miriam

AUTUMN, 2009

28809 Post-War American Poetry

The post-war years enjoyed a remarkable flourishing of poetic principles and practices, many of which were caught up in aesthetic and political countercultures. We will read the “beats” and “confessional” poets alongside work associated with the New York, Black Mountain and Black Arts writers. Our focus will be on how poetry participates in the “distribution of the sensible”: what forms of citizenship do these works bring into view? What do the writers of these different schools perceive to be the urgent problems of their times? What solutions do they imagine poetry might provide?

Regan, Matthias

AUTUMN, 2009 TUTH 10:30-11:50

28911 Film Noir, French and American

This course will focus on film noir in a broad sense, including neo-noir. We will attend to some of the conventions of the genre in terms of plot, characterization, and cinematography. However, the course will have a thematic focus as well: how is trust constructed in these films? What are the features of trust that most directly affect political systems? Is trust among men much different from that among men and women in heterosexual relationships? We will interpret a set of films as utopian efforts to imagine trusting lives. The films we watch will include: *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Big Sleep*, *Kiss Me Deadly*, *Out of the Past*, *Touch of Evil*, *Notorious*, *Narrow Margin*, *Blast of Silence*, *Night and the City*, *Criss Cross*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Gilda*, *Double Indemnity*, *Rififi*, *Chinatown*, *LA Confidential*, *Band of Outsiders*, *Bob le Flambeur*, *Le Samourai*.

von Hallberg, Robert

AUTUMN, 2009 TU 1:30-4:20

29300 History of International Cinema I-Silent Era

PQ: CMST 10100 must be taken before or concurrently with this course. This is the first part of a two-quarter course. The two parts may be taken individually, but taking them in sequence is helpful. The aim of this course is to introduce students to what was singular about the art and craft of silent film. Its general outline is chronological. We will discuss main national schools and international trends of filmmaking.

Lastra, James

AUTUMN, 2009 TuTh 1:30-2:50