

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Department of English Language & Literature
Undergraduate Course Descriptions
Spring Quarter 2010

11003 Money and Meaning in Literature and Criticism

This course is concerned with Marxian, structural and post-structural conceptions of value, and their possible realization as the representation of money in literary and filmic texts. We will begin with theories of value and examine the translation between the economic and the literary/aesthetic. Selected theoretical texts will include Foucault's *The Order of Things*, Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Žižek's *Tarrying with the Negative*, and Postone's *Time, Labor, Social Domination*. This collection of texts will move us from wealth to value, and from value to its deconstruction. We will concurrently explore the aesthetic representation and critique of these varieties of value through novels including Miyuki Miyabe's *All She Was Worth*, Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, and films such as Milos Forman's *Amadeus* and Herbert Ross' *The Secret of My Success*.

La Berge, Leigh Claire

SPRING, 2010

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.

Alworth, David

SPRING, 2010 MW 3:00-4:20

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O'Connell, Caryn

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 10:30-11:50

14307 Advanced Poetry Writing

This course will ask—and respond to—what it means to be “contemporary” in verse. Positing from the first (along with an eruption of texts at hand) that lyricism is a profoundly social, even collective, endeavor and that self-expression is never conducted in a vacuum, we will read widely as we compose—studying poetics tracts from Agamben and Bernstein through Yau and Zukofsky in conjunction with poems archaic and new by Coolidge through Wyatt. We will direct additional attention to hybrid and emergent genres of poetry, including sound poetry, the lyric essay, performance work, concrete poetry, digital poetry, textual installations, and artists' books. A new piece will be expected of each participant each week. Absolute attendance at workshop and a certain number of readings/performances, a reading/process journal comprising creative and critical response, and written commentary on the work of peers will be required in addition to the production of a chapbook of poems.

Scappetone, Jennifer

SPRING, 2010

15600 Medieval English Literature

This course examines the relations among psychology, ethics, and social theory in fourteenth-century English literature. We pay particular attention to three central preoccupations of the period: sex, the human body, and the ambition of ethical perfection. Readings are drawn from Chaucer, Langland, the Gawain-poet, Gower, penitential literature, and saints' lives. There are also some supplementary readings in the social history of late medieval England.

Schleusener, Jay

SPRING, 2010 MW 1:30-2:50

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16180 Travellers on the Silk Road

We will read some of the major travel narratives of the Silk Road and Tibet, from Xuanzang, the most famous of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims who went West, through Marco Polo and others, who went East, including a diplomat like Clavijo, who went to see Tamerlane, to modern travellers like the spies the British government sent from India to explore and map the area, the prototypes for Kipling's Kim, and archaeologists like Aurel Stein who went both ways on the Silk Road. Choice among all the travelers will be limited, of course, by time and by the availability of texts. Through slide lectures students will gain a sense of the physical characteristics of the region and its art at various periods. At the same time the student will learn indirectly about the different religions and political regimes travelers experienced, which changed dramatically over the eleven centuries and more which we will cover in the course. Crosslisted courses are designed for advanced undergraduates and graduate students.

Murrin, Michael

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 9:00-10:20

16600 Shakespeare II: Tragedies and Romances

This course will study the second half of Shakespeare's career, from 1600 to 1611, when the major genres that he worked in were tragedy and "romance" or tragicomedy. Plays to be read will include: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* (quarto and folio versions), *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. There will be one short and one longer paper. Section attendance is required.

Strier, Richard

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 3:00-4:20

16907 Teaching Lessons: Humanist Pedagogy and the Renaissance Stage

The boys who would grow up to become the major playwrights in the Renaissance had their first encounters with classical texts while they were in grammar school. How might we understand their early encounters with the texts that would prove to be so influential on the drama of the period? This course seeks to examine the ways in which humanist educators of the sixteenth century presented classical texts to their students, as well as to analyze scenes of pedagogy in Renaissance plays themselves.

Hutcheon, Elizabeth

SPRING, 2010 MW 3:00-4:20

18906 Radical Love: The Politics of Desire in 19th Century Lit

This course is designed to track the emergence of our modern language of love, romance, and sexuality within the context of early nineteenth-century British literature, specifically in those texts that explore the involvement of various forms of eroticism with political activity or belief. Using interpretive methods associated with Marxist and historicist literary criticism, students will be asked to read literary texts politically, and to treat political texts as literary and cultural objects or artifacts, understood to represent complex sites of both conformity and resistance to dominant paradigms of romantic desire, and of desire's political possibilities. Working together to develop a shared critical vocabulary, we will read poetic celebrations of free love as well as a novel that insists on its practical impossibility; compare the rhetorical use and conceptual understanding of gender across class lines; investigate the discursive development of homosexuality and queer desire in a colonial context; and, most importantly, ask ourselves what is at stake when political questions are considered and conceived terms of personal, erotic, and affective relations between private individuals.

Nersessian, Anahid

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 12:00-1:20

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20705 The New American Poetry: 1945-60

Donald Allen's groundbreaking 1960 anthology *The New American Poetry* has sold more than a hundred thousand copies, an astounding figure for a poetry anthology. Disparaged at the time, the collection featured the poetic inauguration of now-major figures such as John Ashbery, Robert Creeley, Jack Kerouac, Denise Levertov, Frank O'Hara, Charles Olson, and Jack Spicer. Although we read the anthology in its entirety and pursue some relevant questions about the process of anthologization, the course is designed less as a guide to a particular gathering of poems than as an investigation into the poets and movements that made up what came to be known as the New American Poetry as well as to some recent poetry written more or less explicitly under its aegis.

Robbins, Michael

SPRING, 2010 MW 1:30-2:50

22301 Henry James and the Sense of the Past

This course will examine time-travel as it is effected, as well as staged, by the fiction of Henry James, culminating in a study of his final, unfinished novel. Rather than merely attempting to historicize his oeuvre, we will focus on the peculiar conception of history the author's notion of a "visitable past" (always conversant with the "accent of the...future") affords. We will study the reciprocal interference between sensory and historical experience in James's prose, which hankers after, yet never quite achieves a "consanguineousness" with history, in tandem with the commodification of past forms it dramatizes contemporaneously. How does James's fiction reconjure and further mediate the inassimilable "aesthetic presence of the past" he detects in Europe? How does it revise historical fiction, or anticipate later 20th-century conceptions of historical experience? Relevant criticism and primary readings in realism, aestheticism, and historiography will supplement our readings of the bodies and prefaces of selected tales, essays, and travel writings, and novels such as *The American*; *The Princess Casamassima*; *The Wings of the Dove*; *The Golden Bowl*; and *The Sense of the Past*.

Scappettone, Jennifer

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 10:30-11:50

24000 Ulysses

This course takes students through Joyce's novel and exposes them to various recent critical approaches, with some excursions also into materials contemporary to *Ulysses* that can be placed in dialogue with the novel.

Ruddick, Lisa

SPRING, 2010 MW 3:00-4:20

24305 Cosmopolitanisms

Course meets the critical/intellectual methods course requirement for students majoring in Comparative Literature. This course explores notions of cosmopolitanism in philosophy, historiography, and literature. Topics to be addressed include ancient world systems, world literature, hospitality, and hybridity. Readings may include Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, the Hellenistic *Life of Aesop*, early Chinese prose-poetry, Derrida, Frank, Spivak.

Chin, Tamara

SPRING, 2010

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24401 Before and After Beckett: Theater and Film

This course is for juniors, seniors and graduate students only. PQ: one or more college level courses in drama and/or film. Working knowledge of French would be very helpful but is not required. Those with French will also take a weekly Friday tutorial to discuss (in English) original French texts by Beckett and others.

Beckett is conventionally typed as the playwright of minimalist scenes of unremitting bleakness but his experiments with theatre and film echo the irreverent play of popular culture (vaudeville on stage and film including Chaplin and Keaton) as well as the artistic avant-garde (Dreyer in film; Jarry and Artaud in theatre). This course will juxtapose this early twentieth century work with Beckett's plays on stage and screen, and those of his contemporaries (Ionesco, Duras) and successors. Contemporary authors will depend on availability but may include Vinaver, Minyana, Lagarce in France, Pinter, Greenaway in the UK; Foreman, Wellman in the US. Theoretical work may include texts by Artaud, Barthes, Derrida, Josette Feral, Peggy Phelan, Bert States and others.

A Languages across the Curriculum grant for a tutorial taught by a TA with fluent French. French remains 'helpful' rather than 'required' but expect everyone with some French should take that tutorial.

Kruger, Loren

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 1:30-2:50

24802 Queering the Text

This class will focus on filmed adaptations of novels and plays concerned with lesbian and gay representation. In addition to the subject matter of their source texts, these films are "queer" in that they presume to transform existing narrative for a new medium, with a new voice, to a new audience. Such presumptuousness often causes filmed adaptations to be characterized in terms of vilified sexuality: compared to their literary counterparts, they are "trash," are "bastardizations," or are simply "unfaithful." Rather than restricting ourselves to a reductive discussion of original versus copy, this class will consider how the strategies of adaptation expose the representational politics and aesthetics of both film and literary texts. Readings and screenings will include written and filmed versions of *Maurice*, *Orlando*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and *Brokeback Mountain*. Theorists we will read include Judith Butler, Richard Dyer, David Halperin and Eve Sedgwick.

Binggeli, Elizabeth

SPRING, 2010 TuTh 10:30-11:50

25603 Suspense: Narrative, Genre, Medium

This course will track the history of a narrative device. We will structure our conversations around three questions: What is the relationship between the suspense narrative and other narrative modes? Why has the suspense narrative formed such a crucial part of popular culture for nearly two hundred and fifty years? And, finally, how do the Gothic romance, the Victorian sensation novel, the detective novel, the film serial, and the suspense film use the same narrative device for different ends? For the former question, we will look at texts in narrative theory by Edgar Allan Poe, Henry James, Viktor Shklovsky, Vladimir Propp, Wayne Booth, Roland Barthes, Tzvetan Todorov, and Noël Carroll. To answer the latter two questions, we will tackle suspense narratives across media, possibly including Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, Edgar Allan Poe, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Arthur Conan Doyle, Louis J. Gasnier, Louis Feuillade, Raymond Chandler, Howard Hawks, and Alfred Hitchcock, and theoretical texts by Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Fredric Jameson, Franco Moretti, and Slavoj Zizek.

Broughton, Andrew

SPRING, 2010 MW 1:30-2:50

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25901 American Modern: Experimental Fiction

This course concentrates on the formal experiments of American fiction in the first three decades of the 20th century. On the one hand, we will examine those experiments within the context of a more general understanding of "modernism"—a context established through other genres (such as poetry) and other media (such as painting, photography, and film). On the other, we will locate these experiments within a broader cultural milieu—the world of war, mass production, consumer culture, and the age of jazz. Still, the primary engagement will be with the texts themselves, major works by Charles Chesnutt, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jean Toomer, William Faulkner, Willa Cather, and Nella Larsen.

Brown, Bill

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 3:00-4:20

25925 Flux Americana: A Tramp through American Literature, 1870-1970

This course explores shifting cultural attitudes toward the American tramp and tramping as represented in literature, film, and popular music. How do these texts help explain the tramp's transformation from outcast to everyman? Texts include those by Chaplin, Crane, Dos Passos, Dylan, London, Steinbeck, Toomer, Wharton, and Whitman.

Durica, Paul

SPRING, 2010 MW 3:00-4:20

26402 Environment in American Literature

The class will read a variety of classic American literature, from Lewis & Clark's travel journals to Cormack McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*, with the aim of asking how the American landscape has shaped American literature; conversely, we will explore the extent to which our perceptions of the American environment depend on its literary representation.

Geltner, Jonathan

SPRING, 2010 MW 4:30-5:50

26901 New Journalism and the Nonfiction Novel

This course will begin with John Hersey's *Hiroshima* and end with Joan Didion's *Salvador*. The cross-fertilization of the novel with journalism and journalism with the novel constitutes one of the most important developments in US literary production of the post-World War II era. The course will examine the history of such experiments as well as the contemporary pressures, political and aesthetic, that motivated these innovations in storytelling.

Nelson, Deborah L.

SPRING, 2010

27806 Love Songs

This course will examine certain themes in poems and in popular song-lyrics. The themes: devotion, sentiment, serial desire, bought love, aged love. Many of the song-lyrics we study will be tin pan alley tunes, often in their jazz versions. Students will be encouraged to bring in songs that have particularly strong lyrics. The poems will come from various historical periods; the Norton Anthology of Poetry will be our source.

von Hallberg, Robert

SPRING, 2010

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28802 Detective Fiction

Stories of crime and detection constitute the most popular genre in modern English-speaking nations. In this class we will attempt to uncover the essence of this kind of story telling. Primary texts will include 'classic' stories and films by Poe, Doyle, Sayers, Hammett, Chandler and Himes, and the work of contemporary authors, including Mosley, Paretsky, Rankin and Argento. Secondary readings will introduce students to various approaches to the genre, including poststructuralist, historicist, and psychoanalytic accounts.

Regan, Matthias

SPRING, 2010

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

SPRING, 2010 TU 1:30-4:20