

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

10400 Introduction to Poetry

This course involves intensive readings in both contemporary and traditional poetry. Early on, the course emphasizes various aspects of poetic craft and technique, setting terminology and providing extensive experience in verbal analysis. Later, emphasis is on contextual issues: referentiality, philosophical and ideological assumptions, and historical considerations.

Strier, Richard

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 10:30-11:50

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.

Brown, Dustin

WINTER, 2010 MW 1:30-2:50

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Weiss, Joshua

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 12:00-1:20

12800 Theories of Media

This course will explore the concept of media and mediation in very broad terms, looking not only at modern technical media and mass media, but at the very idea of a medium as a means of communication, a set of institutional practices, and a habitat in which images proliferate and take on a "life of their own." The course will deal as much with ancient as with modern media, with writing, sculpture, and painting as well as television and virtual reality. Readings will include classic texts such as Plato's Allegory of the Cave and Cratylus, Aristotle's Poetics, and modern texts such as Marshall McLuhan's Understanding Media, Régis Debray's Mediology, and Friedrich Kittler's Gramophone, Film, Typewriter. We will explore questions such as the following: What is a medium? What is the relation of technology to media? How do media affect, simulate, and stimulate sensory experiences? What sense can we make of concepts such as the "unmediated" or "immediate"? How do media become intelligible and concrete in the form of "metapictures" or exemplary instances, as when a medium reflects on itself (films about films, paintings about painting)? Is there a system of media? How do we tell one medium from another, and how do they become "mixed" in hybrid, intermedial formations? We will also look at recent films such as The Matrix and Existenz that project fantasies of a world of total mediation and hyperreality. Students will be expected to do one "show and tell" presentation introducing a specific medium. There will also be several short writing exercises, and a final paper. PQ: Any 100-level ARTH or COVA course, or consent of instructor.

Mitchell, W.J.T.

WINTER, 2010 MW 1:30-2:50

13000 Academic and Professional Writing (LRS)

This course teaches the skills needed to write clear and coherent expository prose and to edit the writing of others. The course consists of weekly lectures on Thursdays, immediately followed by tutorials addressing the issues in the lecture. On Tuesdays, students discuss short weekly papers in two-hour tutorials consisting of seven students and a tutor. Students may replace the last three papers with a longer paper and, with the consent of relevant faculty, write it in conjunction with another class or as part of the senior project. Materials fee \$25.

McEnerney, Larry

Cochran, Kathryn

Weiner, Tracy

WINTER, 2010 TuTh 3:00-4:20

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13900 History and Theory of Drama 2

History and Theory of Drama I is not a prerequisite. A survey of major trends and theatrical accomplishments in Western drama from the late-seventeenth century into the twentieth: Molière, Goldsmith, Ibsen, Chekhov, Strindberg, Wilde, Shaw, Brecht, Beckett, Stoppard. Attention will also be paid to theorists of the drama, including Stanislavsky, Artaud, and Grotowski. The winter-quarter course, like the autumn-quarter 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. Crosslisted courses are designed for advanced undergraduates and graduate students.

Bevington, David

Coleman, Heidi

WINTER, 2010 TuTh 12:00-1:20

15104 Newberry Library: Law & Literature in Anglo-Saxon England

PQ: ENGL 14900 Old English. Class meets at the Newberry Library.

Law and literature are both narratives that reveal much about the community that produces them. This seminar will explore legal issues such as feud, marriage and status of women, and theft. We will read and translate the legal texts that discuss these issues and then see how literary texts incorporate legal elements to create tension and drive the narrative. Some texts include laws from Aethelberht, Alfred, Edmund, and Cnut, as well as selections from Beowulf, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Juliana, and the Wife's Lament.

Schulman, Jana

WINTER, 2010 F 2:00-5:00

15500 Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales

We examine Chaucer's art as revealed in selections from *The Canterbury Tales*. Our primary emphasis is on a close reading of individual tales, although we also pay attention to Chaucer's sources and to other medieval works providing relevant background.

von Nolcken, Christina

WINTER, 2010 MW 3:00-4:20

16500 Shakespeare I: Histories and Comedies

An exploration of Shakespeare's major plays in the genres of history play and romantic comedy, from the first half (roughly speaking) of his professional career: *Richard II*, *Henry IV* Parts 1 and 2, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Troilus and Cressida*.

Bevington, David

WINTER, 2010 TuTh 1:30-2:50

17505 Translation of Empire: Ancient to Renaissance Epic

This course uses the core concept of the "translation of empire" (*translatio imperii*) to consider the way epic tells how power moves from one empire to another. The course looks also at how these stories about the movement of political or religious power become mixed with claims about the transfer of literary authority. We will first examine Virgil's *Aeneid* and then two Renaissance epics, Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Eisendrath, Rachel

WINTER, 2010 TuTh 10:30-11:50

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17804 Genres of History in the Long 18th Century

This survey will come to terms with eighteenth-century Britons' capacious sense of what counts as "history" and bring that sense to bear on our own historical thinking. We will proceed by way of the myriad genres of history in eighteenth-century literature, a list likely to include Behn's "true history" of imperial slavery, Pope's mock-epic, Defoe's historical novel, Haywood's scandalous "secret history," Hume's sentimental historiography, Gray's elegies, Walpole's gothic, Chatterton's forged poetry, Frances Sheridan's oriental tale, Richard Brinsley Sheridan's family histories, and Cowper's mock-conjecture.

Campbell, Timothy

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 3:00-4:20

18905 Shelley, Wollstonecraft, Godwin

Before Frankenstein, there was Caleb Williams; before Mary Shelley, there was Mary Wollstonecraft and her fictional heroines, Maria and Mary. These figures come together in this course, which focuses on one of literary history's most distinguished—and distinctive—families, as well as on their political, intellectual, and literary historical context. In the main, we will not approach these writers through their family history or biographical narratives. Instead, we will explore the way that their writings raise a host of critical questions: about subjectivity and sociability, gender and the family, the value of literature, the nature of life and of the human, and the possibility or promise of politics. Primary readings will include Godwin's *Political Justice*, Caleb Williams, *Fleetwood*, and essays; Wollstonecraft's *Vindications*, *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, and *Maria: or, the Wrongs of Women*; and Shelley's *Frankenstein*, *The Last Man*, and *Lodore*.

Keenleyside, Heather

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 10:30-11:50

20210 Moore, Bishop, Lowell, and Plath

Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, and Sylvia Plath were four poets who, as mentors and good friends, influenced one another profoundly in the mid-twentieth century. However, all differed dramatically in their poetic techniques and subjects. Of particular interest in this course is the degree to which each poet takes him or herself as a subject of their poetry and how they use the poetic first-person.

Winant, Johanna

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 4:30-5:50

21900 Victorian Women Writers

This course will cover the difficulties and possibilities for women writing in nineteenth-century Britain, as these are variously encountered and exploited in works by Victorian poets and novelists. Likely texts include Charlotte Brontë, *Villette*; Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* and selected poems; Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*; George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*; and selected poetry by Felicia Hemans, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, Alice Meynell, "Michael Field," Charlotte Mew. We will also evaluate some approaches to Victorian women's writing (Gilbert & Gubar, Armstrong, Homans, Mermin, Leighton) and look at various analyses of sex and gender roles in the Victorian period (Davidoff, Hall, Poovey, etc.).

Helsing, Elizabeth

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 12:00-1:20

24103 Middlemarch and Its Contexts

This course has two related aims: to perform an intensive reading of Eliot's novel and to provide an introduction to the history and culture of Britain in the early to mid-Victorian period. In placing the novel and its contexts in conversation with one another, the course aims to illuminate the aesthetic complexity of the novel, the driving concerns of the intellectual climate in which it was produced, and the possibility or extent of mutual influence. Supplementary texts include works by Arnold, Mill, Darwin, Spencer, Ellis, genre theory, and critical responses to the novel.

Kerr, Kristian

WINTER, 2010 MW 3:00-4:20

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24304 India in English

This course examines the emergence of India as a theme in twentieth-century English fiction. We will consider a representative sample of texts, both fictional and non-fictional, written about India by Indian and non-Indian writers. The subject will examine the historical contexts for the India-England connection, especially the impact of British imperialism. Elements of postcolonial theory will be brought to bear upon specific textual study.

Gandhi, Leela

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 10:30-11:50

25405 The American Classics

This lecture and discussion course focuses on classic works of American literature, including Franklin's Autobiography, Douglass' Narrative of the Life of an American Slave, Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter, Melville's Moby-Dick, Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, Thoreau's Walden, Whitman's Leaves of Grass, and Twain's Huckleberry Finn.

Slauter, Eric

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 12:00-1:20

25922 Poetics of Dislocation

This course constructs a route through placelessness as 20th- and 21st-century poetry has attempted to map it: in the wake of a perceived homogenization and abstraction of space, the verse we will study torques and tortures any stable relation that "speaking" might have to "standpoint." We will give traction to abounding discussions surrounding site-specificity and the non-site, non-place, ubiquity, and virtuality within postmodern aesthetics through studies of modernist and postwar poetry of exile, migration, diaspora, and of the wayside. We will study the formal and social repercussions of experiments in polylingualism, barbarism, dialect and creole, and thwarted translation, as well as generic innovations in the form of new-media, installation and otherwise ambient poetics. Poets to include T.S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams, Charles Olson, Paul Celan, Amelia Rosselli, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Edouard Glissant, Kamau Brathwaite, Andrea Zanzotto, John Ashbery, Jenny Holzer, C.S. Giscombe, Renee Gladman, Caroline Bergvall, Kenny Goldsmith, Tan Lin. Readings in geography and aesthetics by David Harvey, Robert Smithson, Marc Auge, Miwon Kwon, Toni Morrison, Timothy Morton.

Scappettone, Jennifer

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 12:00-1:20

25924 American Addictions

This class examines the historical transformation of the issue of addiction in the 19th century. We will read a variety of responses to drug and alcohol use and the way in which these discourses intersect with issues of race, sexuality and class central to the American experience. We will discuss the emergences of new identities like the addict, and the ways in which writing about drugs and alcohol revealed the mechanics of self-control and habit that were becoming increasingly more important in an age of industrialization.

Scotch, Hank

WINTER, 2010 MW 4:30-5:50

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25926 Autobiography as Narrative Scandal

The biggest literary news of the early twenty-first century has been the exposure of autobiographical frauds. The discursive debunking of JT LeRoy, James Frey, and Margaret Seltzer testifies to our culture's fascination with the potential of autobiography to function as both witness and spectacle, promise and betrayal. This course seeks to investigate the autobiographical form as a narrative tool harnessed wherever social forms demand to be correlated with individual experience. Exploiting autobiography's claim to authenticity, these texts both create and express socially embedded identities. Student presentations will provide the reception histories and background for each individual text. However, as a class we will ultimately focus not on evaluating the truth of the claims made in autobiographies and pseudo-autobiographies, but rather on how and by what authority these claims are made.

Gentry, Amy

WINTER, 2010 MW 1:30-2:50

25927 Creativity

Galenson, David

Kotin, Joshua

WINTER, 2010 MW 1:30-2:50

25928 Postmod Fiction: Multicultural/Transnational Perspectives

This course examines postmodern fiction written by African-American, Asian-American, Latina/o, and Native-American authors. Although "postmodernism" has become the dominant heuristic for investigating late 20th century American fiction, literary scholars like Phillip Brian Harper and Madhu Dubey have observed that the discourse of postmodernism tends to be organized around the "normative subjectivity of the white male." At the same time, these scholars note that many of the features traditionally associated with postmodernism—features such as textual reflexivity, narrative irresolution, and intertextual parody—had been central components of minority writing long before the late 20th century. What, then, are the risks and rewards of discussing contemporary minority writing under the rubric of postmodernism? To what extent have contemporary authors shared the same postmodern condition? Is the term "postmodernism" capacious enough to accommodate the array of experiences and experiments that distinguish contemporary literature? Primary authors will include Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston, Bharati Mukherjee, Sandra Cisneros, Helena María Viramontes, Sherman Alexie, Lan Cao, Danzy Senna, and Junot Díaz. Theorists will include Fredric Jameson, Henry Louis Gates, Gloria Anzaldúa, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Madhu Dubey, and Patricia P. Chu.

Jernigan, Adam

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 3:00-4:20

25929 Marooned: Literature of Shipwreck, Survival, and Resistance

Begins with Shakespeare's *Tempest* and ends in the contemporary Caribbean, tracing the figure of the shipwrecked survivor and runaway slave through issues including community, otherness, (in)visibility, and liberty.

Fehskens, Erin

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 3:00-4:20

26900 Postwar U.S. Literature

This survey of postwar U.S. literature begins with Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and concludes with Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*. These works, haunted by the Rosenberg and McCarthy trials, frame a course that considers a variety of genres and formal experiments in poetic language in terms of the political and cultural upheavals of the Cold War. In addition to the two plays, we are likely to read prose works by Jack Kerouac, Malcolm X, Joan Didion, Thomas Pynchon, Norman Mailer, and Toni Morrison, and poetry by Charles Olson, Allen Ginsberg, Amiri Baraka, Robert Lowell, Frank O'Hara, Elizabeth Bishop, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, and Paul Monette.

Nelson, Deborah L.

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 3:00-4:20

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27401 Late Nineteenth-Century American Literary Realism

This course takes up major 19th-century American novelists in conjunction with philosophical and scientific essays that reflect on the project of representing "the real".

Warren, Kenneth

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 4:30-5:50

28500 Sex and Ethics

PQ: 3rd or 4th year standing needed in college.

Sex is a big problem. How do we think about sex in proximity to considering the ethics of risk, the ethics of harm, the potential for good? Developing an account specifically of an ethics of sex requires thinking about the place of sex and sexual vulnerability in social life with an eye toward understanding what's good and what might count as abuses, violations, disruptions, or deprivations of specifically good things about sex. In this course, we will read, write, and think about sex and ethics in relation to a variety of the rubrics such as: act, harm, fantasy, a good, technology, health, disability, and love. Probable syllabus contents involve philosophy, cinema, literature, and social science, including work by: Leo Bersani, David Halperin, Andrea Dworkin, Mladin Dolar, Teresa de Lauretis, Patrick Califia, G. E. M. Anscombe, Barbara Herman, Catherine MacKinnon, Dennis Cooper, Stephen Elliot, Pat Califia, and Ron Athey.

Berlant, Lauren

Vogler, Candace

WINTER, 2010 Tu Th 3:00-4:20

28801 Modern American Poetry

This course will familiarize students with the work of four important North American modernist poets: William Carlos Williams, Gertrude Stein, Carl Sandburg, and Langston Hughes. Our focus will be on learning how to understand and enjoy modern free verse and experimental poetry. Considerable attention will be given to the poetics of voice. We will listen to recorded performances of poetry and investigate the ways in which poets create particular voices on the page. We will also discuss how issues of race, gender, class, and regionalism have influenced the major themes, forms, and critical perspectives that define modern poetry in the United States. This course covers the Poetry and American requirements for English Majors in the College.

Regan, Matthias

WINTER, 2010 TUTH 1:30-2:50