ENGLISH LITERATURE

Please consult the online class schedule for specific days and times of these courses.
https://sunspot.sdsu.edu/schedule/search

ENGL 606A   AMERICAN MEMOIR   L. CHAMPION

This course will consider the evolution of the memoir as a genre and look at how it was originally undefined, then defined, then redefined, even as it continues to evolve. We will trace its roots from early American texts such as The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, which Franklin referred to as his “memoirs,” to contemporary memoirs that spark lively debates regarding specifics of literary genres, boundaries between truth and lies, and influences on memory such as “personal life effects.” We will address texts labeled as “chronicles,” “confessions,” “biographies,” or “autobiographies” that might be considered memoirs. We will touch upon classic memoirs such as Willie Morris’s North Towards Home and Frank Conroy’s Stop-Time, then consider the popularity of the American memoir after the publication of Mary Karr’s 1995 memoir The Liar’s Club. We will debate issues such as factual truth versus conceptual truth, modes of memory, and how memoirs compare to fiction and to other forms of nonfiction. We will explore texts such as Henry David Thoreau’s Walden, Gertrude Stein’s The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, Sylvia Plath’s The Bell Jar, Frederick Exley’s A Fan’s Notes: A Fictional Memoir, Annie Dillard’s The Writing Life, Tony Earley’s Somehow Form a Family: Stories That Are Mostly True, David Sedaris’s Me Talk Pretty One Day, Maxine Hong Kingston’s The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts, Art Spielegman’s Maus: A Survivor’s Tale, and other texts that blur boundaries between memoir, biography, autobiography, and between nonfiction and fiction. We will also analyze motifs and trends that recur throughout subgenres of the memoir such as captivity narratives, misery lit, celebrity stories, stories about addiction, and travel journals.

ENGL 624   BRITISH LITERATURE   J. SHUMAKER

Irish Fantasy

Leprechauns and banshees may come to mind as you think of Irish fantasy. One of our texts, Crock of Gold, does feature leprechauns, along with philosophers. We will read six Irish fantasy novels and four plays. These works range from comic masterpieces such as Gulliver’s Travels and At Swim Two Birds, to Celtic Twilight plays about Irish myths, to a young-adult novel starring figures from Celtic mythology, to an absurdist play by Beckett. In fairly recent works, Carr and Banville draw on Greek mythology rather than Celtic mythology, universalizing Irish problems.

Course Requirement: You will write one twenty-page essay or two ten-page essays. You will also give a 30-40 minute talk to our class about a book that the other students have not read.
SPRING 2018
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ENGL 624         BRITISH LITERATURE         J. SHUMAKER
Continued
In addition, you will write a weekly page of comments and questions on the assigned readings.

J. Swift,         Gulliver’s Travels
J. Stephens,      Crock of Gold
Flann O’Brien,    At Swim Two Birds
Anne Enright,     The Wig My Father Wore
Kate Thompson,    The New Policeman
J. Banville,      The Infinities
Samuel Beckett,   Endgame
Marina Carr,      The Bog of Cats
W.B. Yeats,       On Baile’s Strand
J.S Synge,        Deirdre of the Sorrows

ENGL 626         AGAINST FORGET: WITNESS         H. JAFFE
20th Century Poetry of Witness
MA and MFA students in either fiction or poetry are invited to enroll in the course.

The principal text will be Carolyn Forche’s edited Anthology: Against Forgetting, 1995

Additional poetry texts may include

Nellie Sachs,       O the Chimneys
Primo Levi,         Selected Poems
Bertold Brecht,     Selected Poems
Paul Celan,         Selected Poems
Richard Wright,     Selected Poems

The class will read and comment both orally and in writing about the poems.

Course Requirement:  Students will have a choice between writing a final paper and making an oral presentation to the class. More information about the course will be forthcoming.

ENGL 630         FORM & THEORY OF POETRY         K. FARRIS

In this class we’ll be studying ‘formal’ poetry, from its roots in such traditional forms as the sonnet, where we will learn traditional sonic techniques like meter, alliteration, and rhyme, to contemporary forms organized around various constraints and/or generative principles, such as erasures, flarf, and prose poetry. The class is organized around the concept that the sound of poetry means independently (though oftentimes in relation to) of the poem’s actual content, and we’ll strive to create interesting and complex poems that explore this relationship.

November 22, 2017  2
ENGL 631   FORM & THEORY OF FICTION    S. MARTIN

This version of English 631 will feature graphic novels, but will also include other versions of narrative, including memoir, docufiction and film.

Each class participant will be asked to keep a reading-thinking-imagining journal generated by responses to the assigned texts. Specifically, I want you to comment on any 5 of the 7 required texts, either analytically or “creatively,” which could mean imitation, pastiche, deconstruction, or any combination. The journal will contain your comments and whatever other writing you do, including your presentations or final papers. If you wish to add non-assigned writings or visuals to your journal, you may do so.

I will assign several imaginative and analytical writing exercises generated by the readings, viewings, and class discussions. These should also be included in your journal.

At the end of the term participants will be given two options: collaborative final presentations on one or more of the assigned texts or aspects of the texts; or a final paper. I will consult with every student about the presentation or the paper.

Required texts (subject to change)

David B. (Pantheon),  
Epileptic
Charles Burns (Pantheon),  
Black Hole
Osamu Tezuka (Vertical),  
MW
Sophie Calle (Siglio),  
The Address Book,
Tom Phillips (Thames & Hudson),  
A Humument
Hedges and Sacco (Nation Books),  
Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt,
Harold Jaffe (JEF),  
Goosestep

ENGL 696   SEMINAR: ENVIRONMENTAL LITERATURE    K. FARRIS

Dwelling: Writing towards the Environment

In this class we will explore—in situ, in literature, and in our own creative and critical responses—humans’ relationship to their environment. We will be generating new creative work with a minimum of workshop. The class will consist primarily of four day-long field trips within the larger San Diego area (arranged on Saturdays through the course of the semester), and will also include in-class lectures on the content/form of contemporary writing on/toward/for/with the environment, exploring three genres in particular: the essay, the poem, and fiction, as well as mixed prose forms.

Course Requirement: Students will be expected to write one piece in each genre for a total of three pieces, totaling approximately 20 pages.

ENGL 725   SEMINAR: THE GILDED AGE    C. COLQUITT

Description Not Available
ENGL 726  LITERARY CRITICISM & THEORIES OF READING  J. PRESSMAN
How We Read Now: Literary Criticism and Theories of Reading

In their now-seminal special issue of the journal *Representations* (2009) titled “How We Read Now,” scholars Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus ask what literary criticism looks like—and should look like—in our digital, neoliberal, twenty-first century. They are not alone. From Bruno Latour’s *Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?* to Rita Felski’s *The Limits of Critique*, scholars are questioning the contemporary toolkit of literary criticism. This course uses the opportunity posed by this trend in self-reflection to study the history of our discipline and its critical reading practices. We read seminal examples of literary critical reading practices from the early 20th century up until the present—texts representative of New Criticism, New Historicism, Reader-Response Theory, Symptomatic Reading, Distant Reading, Actor-Network Theory, and more—in order to gain a foundation from which to understand and determine “how we read now.”

ENGL 727  SEMINAR: GOTHIC/HORROR CHILDREN’S LITERATURE  P. SERRATO

We're off to the witch,
We may never never never come home,
But the magic that we'll feel
Is worth a lifetime...

With a distinctive capacity to broker contact with illicit, taboo subjects, gothic and horror texts for children function as thresholds to subjects and images previously forbidden to younger readers on the pretext of their impropriety for “unblemished” minds and souls. In this seminar, we will examine the workings and implications of an assortment of gothic and horror texts for children. For the sake of arriving at more nuanced, more rigorous understandings of these texts, we will engage with theoretical and critical methodologies developed for the study of “adult” gothic and horror texts at the same time that we research extant scholarship on gothic and horror texts for children. We will also put some adult texts in dialogue with some children’s texts (e.g., *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* with *Texas Chain Saw Massacre*) in an effort to a) integrate children’s texts into Gothic and horror scholarship and traditions, and b) test out the particular (or not-so-particular) features of children’s texts.

**Course Requirement:** Include weekly discussion questions, a presentation, a final paper abstract, and a final paper.

Works to be studied include *The Hidden Staircase*, *Heap House*, *Monster House*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Zombie Blondes*, and *Zombies vs. Unicorns*. For a finalized reading schedule, feel welcome to email me at pserrato@mall.sdsu.edu.

For our first class meeting on January 22, please have read Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (all of it).
SPRING 2018
Course offerings listed below are subject to change. All courses may not be listed here.

ENGL 750F  MFA SEMINAR: FICTION WRITING  K. FARRIS
Graduate Fiction Workshop: The Sentence and the Scene

In this workshop, we will be doing some up-close editing of our work, concentrating on the basic units of fiction—sentences and scenes. We will start with a brush-up on grammar, and then plunge into what makes for beautiful sentences, looking at a variety of exemplary models, including those from Hilary Mantel & Virginia Woolf. We’ll then start looking at what makes for beautiful scenes: how to write effective dialogue, how to use staging to create dynamic physical interactions between characters, and how to use detail to enrich, rather than distract from, the action taking place. We will be writing and workshopping individual sentences and short scenes through the course of the semester, rather than entire stories, so we can focus on providing very detailed, line-by-line feedback on each other’s work.

ENGL 750F  MFA SEMINAR: FICTION WRITING  H. JAFFE

This course is designed for MFA and interested MA students. Each participant will be required to submit a minimum number (not yet established), of abbreviated texts, usually (though not always) with a specific word count (50, 100, or 250 words, for example).

It is crucial to understand that short short texts are especially in demand now for several reasons, one of which is that offline journals are not appearing 3 and 4 times annually as previously, but just once, and very short texts permit editors to publish more writings than if they (the journals) came out more frequently.

I will ask for individual texts and also sequences of texts: two or three, for example, on particular subjects, and I wish to see every text you write electronically.

In addition to the assigned books, to read pleasurably and to generate your own mini- or micro-fictions, there will be occasional brief or collaborative “prompts” and films, to explore short short narrative in different contexts.

Regarding critical commentary on peers’ texts and other details, each participant will comment on six shorts or sequences of shorts of his/her choosing; we will discuss that and other options in class.

Required texts (Provisional)
Nathalie Sarraute,  Tropisms
Thomas Bernhard,  The Voice Imitator
Sophie Calle,  Please Follow Me
Edgar Lee Masters,  Spoon River Anthology
Felix Feneon,  Novels in Three Lines
SPRING 2018
Course offerings listed below are subject to change. All courses may not be listed here.

ENGL 750F  MFA SEMINAR: FICTION WRITING  S. MARTIN
The Short Story
This workshop will focus exclusively on the short story. You will be expected to write two separate short stories and submit them for workshop discussion, revising one of them at the end of the semester. What's a short story? Obviously, this term includes a wide range of aesthetic and thematic strategies. But for the purposes of this workshop, the term will not include flash fictions, sudden fictions, long stories, parts of novellas, or parts of novels. Short stories that are meant to be parts of a book-length short story sequence will be acceptable, provided that they can function as completely independent works. I will expect your stories to be roughly 2,500-10,000 words in length, and I will provide models of various aesthetic strategies throughout the semester to enhance our discussions. All assigned readings for this class will be taken from recent issues of selected literary magazines. Special emphasis will be placed on enhancing your chances of publishing in these journals, and others like them.

ENGL 750P  MFA SEMINAR: POETRY WRITING  I. KAMINSKY
Poetic Tools, Discoveries, Details
This is a class on various textures of poetic language: the details, images and sounds, the aspects of line, linebreak, metaphor, and others will be discussed in depth in this class on poetry and poetics. Original research in language,' Ezra Pound said the real thing was. We will work to make sure our new poems live up to that notion. This class will include a heavy reading list & line-by-line discussion of poetry by others, as well as poetry workshop.

ENGL 790  SEM: MA PORTFOLIO/EXAM PREP  Q. BAILEY
English 790 seeks to prepare you for success in your Spring 2018 portfolio defense. It will focus, in particular, on acquainting you with the process of scholarly publication, on providing you with specific feedback on your work during the revision process (of both the “star” and, to a lesser extent, the second paper), and on preparing you for the oral component of the defense. Students will be expected to work intensively on their own papers in this class and to offer detailed responses to the work of others.
ENGL 791B    SEM: MFA MANUSCRIPT FICTION    S. MARTIN

This course will consist primarily of one-on-one meetings developing the narrative, structural, and linguistic elements of each student’s MFA thesis, which can consist of a novella or collection of short stories. Each student will be expected to produce between 45-60 pages of their thesis by the end of the semester, for a total of 90-120 pages by the end of the year. In addition to the production of a thesis, students will be assigned individual reading lists and will be expected to produce roughly 30 pages of reading journals per semester.

This class is linked to the 750F also taught by Professor Farris this semester. Students taking 791B and 750F. This linked two-semester class (12 total units) is required for all third-year fiction students to complete the program of study for MFA in fiction.

ENGL 796    PEDAGOGY    Y. HOWARD
Teaching Internship

This course is intended for graduate students teaching English 220 and English 280 to develop pedagogical skills and talk about approaches to teaching. It will be run as a workshop-style seminar where we will discuss theories and strategies associated with college-level teaching. While we will read critical essays and articles on pedagogy, the class will provide opportunities to hear a range of perspectives from guest speakers and engage in dialogues about experiences in the classroom in order to grow as successful instructors.

ENGL 796    FICTION INTERNATIONAL    H. JAFFE
Internship

ENGL 796    POETRY INTERNATIONAL    I. KAMINSKY
Internship

Poetry International welcomes MFA and MA students to serve as interns. Interns may work offline or online, compiling our archival project, which includes the works of authors such as Nobel Prize, Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, as well as many new and innovative poets. For MFA students, the internship can count as a literature course requirement and can be repeated at least one time during your program of study. For more information contact the editor, Ilya Kaminsky, at ilya_kaminsky@yahoo.com