

## Spring 2014 English Department Graduate Courses

### **English 4/652 History of the English Language**

Professor: Bruce Maylath

Meets M/W 3:30 – 4:45 p.m.

#### **Course Description:**

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Tracing the development of the English language from its Germanic origins to the present day, this course examines key episodes in the history of a small, tribal language expanded through colonialism to become today's global lingua franca for business, science, and even entertainment. Events such as the blending of Anglo-Saxon with Old Norse, the infusion of French following the Norman Conquest, the Great Vowel Shift between Chaucer's and Shakespeare's eras, the proliferation of linguistic varieties through geographic and social isolation, the status of English(es) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century—all come into focus as students are asked to contemplate the question, How did English get this way?

Students will also be asked to examine emerging linguistic features in English at present and to consider where English is headed. All students, undergraduate and graduate, will read David Crystal's *The Stories of English*. In addition, graduate students will read Crystal's *English as a Global Language*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., and take turns leading discussions of it with the rest of the class. All students will be assigned to read various topical articles and Websites posted on Blackboard. A primary research project will be a major assignment as graduate students lead undergraduates in teams investigating linguistic changes identified by the teams as currently unfolding.

### **English 4/676: Topics in American Literature:**

#### **Democracy and the Commons in Early American Literature**

Professor: Matt Duques

Meets M 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

#### **Course Description:**

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In this interdisciplinary course, we will explore the political philosophy referred to as *democracy* and the economic philosophy referred to as the *commons* with a focus on how writers wrestled with these two philosophies in early U.S. literature. We will start the seminar reading works by late-twentieth and twenty-first century historians, political scientists, economists, and entrepreneurs who are promoting these two philosophies such as C Douglass Lummis, David Graeber, Elinor Ostrom, and Peter Barnes. We will then use their ideas to help us read late eighteenth and early-nineteenth century prose by Matthew Carey, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, Alexis de Tocqueville, William Apess, James Fennimore Cooper, Lydia Maria Child, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Students will be expected to write short position papers and to give class presentations. For the final research paper, you will be encouraged to draw upon course readings and outside sources as you create a longer essay about either early U.S. literature and culture or the rhetoric surrounding recent social justice and sustainability campaigns (ex. the Occupy Movement,

Keystone XL Protests).

Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*

C. Douglass Lummis, *Radical Democracy*

Peter Barnes, *Capitalism 3.0: A Guide to Reclaiming the Commons*

David Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement*

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

Lydia Maria Child, *Philothea*

James Fennimore Cooper, *The Prairie*

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*

### **English 483/683**

#### **Topics in British Literature: Victorian Sexuality, Sensation, and Scandal**

Professor: Emily D. Wicktor

Meets Th 5:00-7:30

#### **Course Description:**

Despite persistent attempts to narrowly and pejoratively categorize the Victorians as staid, repressed, and prudish, the Victorians were, in actuality, preoccupied (if not obsessed) with sexuality, sensation, and scandal. While Victorian literary texts fixate on “indelicate” topics like sexual impropriety, violence, criminality, and deviance, the period also gave rise to the formal field of sexology, fostered sensational tabloid journalism, and criminalized indecency. By reading a variety of interdisciplinary texts, both fiction and non-fiction, we will examine this complex culture-wide obsession with sexuality, sensation, and scandal in Victorian literature and culture. Course readings *may* include sexual, medical, and legal documents, Victorian prose/poetry, contemporary critical theory, novels like Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Ruth*, George Moore’s *Esther Waters*, Grant Allen’s *The Woman Who Did*, Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*, Ellen Wood’s *East Lynne*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret*, and plays by George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde. English 483/683

Topics in British Literature: Victorian Sexuality, Sensation, and Scandal

### **English 756: Composition Research**

Professor: Andrew Mara

Meets Th 5:00-7:30 pm

#### **Course Description:**

In Composition Research we will explore issues that currently matter in composition research (like transfer), practice formulating and revising research questions, undertake hands-on research design, and learn how to situate our inquiry into broader field

conversations. As a class, we will briefly explore the history of writing research and deepen our understanding of how research is performed as both an individual and collaborative experience. While this course will provide a basic overview of research approaches in composition, there will be an opportunity to develop an understanding of a range of writing and composition research. Skills in close reading of texts are particularly applicable to discourse analysis of data, and we will experiment with the various theoretical perspectives, such as conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis, cohesion analysis, speech act theory, etc. Throughout the course, we will consider the connections between theory, teaching, and research in composition, as well as how our work matters in broader contexts. Furthermore, we will consider the ethics of the choices we make in carrying out research in composition.

Each student will propose a research plan, and conduct and submit at least part of the associated research findings that stem from that proposal. Students are welcome to use this class to develop their own disquisition projects.

### **English 762: Critical Theory**

Instructor: Miriam Mara

T 5:00-7:30pm

#### **Course Description:**

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The purpose of this course is three-fold: to familiarize students with some fundamental questions regarding contemporary literary theories and practice, and to examine in-depth the various contemporary approaches to criticism (from Formalism to Poststructuralism [Modernism to Postmodernism]). By the end of the course, students should (1) develop some familiarity with these theories; (2) should be comfortable in using the terminology of theories; and, (3) should achieve some felicity in the application of theories to text. Text(s) and requirements to be determined.

### **English 766: Teaching Literature**

Professor: Verena Theile

Meets W 5:00-7:30

#### **Course Description:**

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This course is aimed at introducing graduate and professional students to successful teaching strategies for the literature classroom. This course follows a genre-oriented approach and focuses on integrating student-teacher experiences in the reading and teaching of literary texts. That means that we will study literature alongside literary and pedagogical theory and practice the teaching of literature in front of peers.