COURSE DESCRIPTION

In English 6300, you will have the opportunity to understand why the field of Composition Studies is often associated with pedagogy. It is a course in which theories of writing and tutoring, and the practice of teaching writing and tutoring, will converge on a weekly basis. We will read some of the canonical theoretical texts in the field, and we’ll also read about pedagogy, focusing on the practices of teaching writing and on tutoring pedagogy.

The course is designed to be useful and rigorous at the same time. Its practical orientation reflects the goal of helping guide your work as writing facilitators and as future first-year writing teachers. We will have frequent visitors who will contribute their practical insights from teaching, mentoring, and working at various universities. It is rigorous in asking you to read sometimes difficult texts, to prepare professional documents, and to think critically about the intersections of theory and practice, including ideas about pedagogy.

COURSE TEXTS


Books will be supplied or PDFs will be provided either electronically or in paper version.
Course Description:
This is an advanced introduction to a few current feminist theories and criticism. Some of the foundational texts that defined much of the earliest feminist debates will make up the initial course work. Current discussions and methodologies will represent the final section of the course. The goal is to recognize feminist interpretive strains in texts and use feminism as a framing device to articulate arguments.

Learning Outcomes:
The expected learning outcomes of this course include becoming familiar with some of the conceptions in feminist methodologies, becoming familiar with the different traditions in feminist praxis, and the development of the skills necessary to do feminist analysis on texts.

Texts:
Anzaldúa, Gloria, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*
bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representation*
Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*
Fuss, Diana, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference*
Gonzalez, Maria, *Contemporary Mexican-American Women Novelists: Toward a Feminist Identity*
Irigaray, Luce, *Speculum of the Other Woman*
Foucault, Michel, *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite*
Rhys, Jean, *Wide Sargasso Sea*
Plus essays by Marx, Althusser, Saussure, Freud, Lacan, and Spivak, as well as others, which I will provide.
Each student will choose a text and apply a feminist reading to that text.

Course Requirements: Consistent attendance and class participation is expected (15%). Two oral presentations (30%), and a feminist analysis essay of a work or an annotated bibliographic essay on a specific topic in feminist thought (15-20 pages, 40%) will make up the bulk of the course credit.
The seminar will approach folktales (fairy tale, legend, ballad, and to a lesser extent myth) as expressions of local knowledge rather than as universal archetypes. After two weeks during which some of the most widespread properties of oral narrative are discussed and some leading folkloric approaches to narrative study are outlined, the seminar will focus on the genres most familiar in contemporary Western experience: the \textit{märchen}, known best as adapted by and from the Grimms' Fairy Tales, and the legend, known best through such oral manifestations as urban legends.

Working from our shared experience, we will then study oral artistry in traditional communities: Irish tales as rendered by Seanchais; the art of Hungarian marchen teller Zsuzsanna Palko, who could entertain an audience for twelve hours at a stretch; the animals tales of African Americans, Creoles, and Cajuns; and such Appalachian narratives as Jack Tales. Myth will be examined briefly and principally in relationship to \textit{Gilgamesh}, the world's oldest surviving written story, as well as Native American (Ojibwa, Thompson, and Koasati), South Asian, Polynesian, and Melanesian cultures.

Requirements include one written midterm and a final oral (with written outline). There is extensive writing assignment with proposals and progress reports will be due at regular intervals. Each seminar participant will choose a narrative community or culture (e.g., African Americans in Nova Scotia, Hungarian Szekely, Louisiana Cajuns, Palestinian \textit{märchen} tellers) and study the narratives of that culture with the goal of understanding their meanings and functions on the tellers' own terms.

Goals: basic understanding of oral artistry’s place in your personal experience; beginning understanding of folktale and myth as complex artistic and social statements within the performance contexts of traditional societies; introduction to the scholarship of folktale and myth, its premises, and its uses.

Texts: [please order online]

ENGL 7322 Advanced Poetry Workshop [“Poetics of Microscopy”]
Tejada – Wednesdays, 2:30-5:30

In this advanced poetry workshop, we will meet and collaborate with graduate students, faculty, and other members of the science research community at UH through the Biology & Biochemistry Imaging Core. “Poetics of Microscopy” will include lab experience and a reading-intensive syllabus, from Robert Hooke’s 1665 Micrographia to Emily Dickinson, Paul Valéry, and César Vallejo. Lines of descent include Muriel Rukeyser (The Speed of Darkness) and Ronald Johnson (Ark), as well as Ann Lauterbach, whose poetry and prose give body to the breaking down of distance in the “whole fragment” that obtains from heretofore unknowable things; and Jay Wright, whose writings twin and proliferate a search for aesthetic knowledge in the scientific imagination. Other poets include Severo Sarduy, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, Coral Bracho, Leslie Scalapino, Will Alexander, Rae Armantrout, Andrew Joron, Forrest Gander, Elizabeth Willis, Alfonso D’Aquino, and Emily Wilson; as well as critical writings by Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guatarri, Suely Rolnik, Michel Serres, Elizabeth Grosz, and Dorothy Wang. Our aim will be to create an environment in writing for the cohabitation of molecular patterns and the material structure of the imagination—life and life-like varieties in mutual transfiguration.
Margot Backus, Spring 2017  
ENGL 7325—The British Empire  
Weds. 5:30-8:30 p.m.

The British Empire exposes students to interdisciplinary approaches to the study of the British empire, including discourses of empire in theoretical, historical, and literary texts, touching on a range of periods. In this iteration, the course will focus on education—predominantly but not exclusively on the education of children whose assigned role is as properly gendered, raced, classed imperial (rather than imperialized) subjects – in the establishment and maintenance of the British empire from the early nineteenth century on. The course will start with relevant theoretical models bearing on education, including Althusser’s theorization of ideology, Gramsci’s traditional and organic intellectuals, Fanon’s analysis of the role of the colonized intellectual at the colonial, anti-colonial, and post- or neo-colonial stages of imperialism, and David Mazella on aspects of the funding of education and scholarship in relationship to ideology in the British imperial context. Following this initial onslaught of theory, the course will level out to entail a weekly pairing of literary text with one or two critical or theoretical readings, with each seminar participant signing up for a week to give a short presentation and lead discussion.

This course will focus the empire studies lens more heavily on material from within the British Isles or empire as compared to ENGL 7369 and most versions of ENGL 8386. Students’ independent work in the course, however, may range more broadly both geopolitically and historically. To this end, I am adding to each week’s readings a list of “related texts” (to which students are welcome to add on the fly, based on their own knowledge) for each seminar meeting. These may help individuals to connect the assigned readings to areas of personal interest in our discussions, and in presentations and written assignments.

The British Empire seminar is one of three catalog graduate courses that provide credit toward the Empire Studies certificate. (The other two are ENGL 7369 (Postcolonial Literature) and ENGL 8386 (Topics in Postcolonial literature/studies). In order to receive an Empire Studies certificate, students must complete a total of twelve hours of coursework in the field of empire and postcolonial studies. At least six of the credit hours must be earned in two of the three above-referenced catalog courses. The remaining six hours may be comprised of one or two additional ES catalog courses with one course outside the ES core--with ES faculty approval.

This seminar’s syllabus is in progress. I can make the tentative syllabus available to interested students by email at mbackus@uh.edu. The course will require one oral presentation that will summarize and apply one of the assigned secondary readings to a primary text; one short (3-7 pp.) critical essay; and a final 15-25 pp. critical essay engaging with some of the texts and contexts we have covered. The course will also entail in-seminar workshopping of a portion of the final essay. The final grade will be weighted as follows: 20%, class participation, 20%, class presentation; 20%, short essay, 40%, final essay.
Literature from the mid-1600s to the years lingering around the Civil War. As we collectively extend and refine our practices of attention as close readers, we shall both think about and theorize our attention to attention itself, in relation to ever-evolving notions of affect, agency, desire, genre, and object-ness (to name just a handful of myriad constellated modes of interest). Authors will include Mary Rowlandson, Edward Taylor, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Frederick Douglass, and Emily Dickinson. Final paper, an exam, and several short exercises in close reading.
This preseminar will introduce major texts, concepts, and movements in American literary and cultural studies from the turn of the century through the present day. In addition to considering how the social and political upheavals of the period (mass migration, World War, economic downturn, political agitation, environmental crisis, the rise of industry and the burdens of post-industrialization) shaped literary works, the course will pay particular attention to the development of political and aesthetic avant-gardes. Through our readings, we will explore the multiple and contested genealogies that make up the rather unwieldy field of twentieth-century American literary studies. At the same time, we will develop a strong sense of major keywords currently organizing the field, including: identity, the aesthetic, experiment, globalization, and neoliberalism. In line with recent developments in modernist and American studies, we will pay particular attention to transnational encounters and to the ways in which American literature has been shaped by global contexts and forces. Authors we may discuss include: W.E.B. DuBois, William Carlos Williams, Gertrude Stein, D’Arcy McNickle, Richard Wright, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Claudia Rankine, and Juliana Spahr, among others.

This course meets the “later literature” requirement.
Together we will look at some of the novels and short stories that are most useful for the fiction writer. These books supply innovative strategies for dialogue, point of view, free indirect style, comedy, monologue, parataxis, the parabolic, and irony. They also offer arguments about the world worth reckoning with. We will begin with a two-week prelude on Biblical narrative (the Jacob and Joseph stories from Genesis, the Books of Ruth and Esther, and the Samson story), accompanied by Erich Auerbach's classic essay "Odysseus' Scar." Then we will read Austen's Emma, Stendhal's The Red and the Black, Flaubert's Madame Bovary, Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground and Tolstoy's "The Kreutzer Sonata," short stories by Chekhov, Kafka, Babel, Hemingway, Joyce, Flannery O'Connor and Raymond Carver, Kawabata's A Thousand Cranes and Nabokov's Lolita. The reading load will be reasonable (i.e., we will spend two weeks each on the novels by Austen, Stendhal and Flaubert). The class will also look at critical essays by Auerbach, Woolf, James Wood, and a few others. Requirements: attendance and participation, 15-20 pp. essay due at the end of the term.
A survey of poetic genres, forms, themes, movements and manifestos from Beowulf to the present day. The set texts are Seamus Heaney’s translation of Beowulf, Robert Pinsky’s translation of Dante’s Inferno; The Longman Anthology of Poetry and The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. I will also be supplementing your reading with various handouts.
Course Description

It’s fair to say that our era’s emerging critical horizon is being shaped primarily by new questions about materiality and ecology. This goes beyond tired debates about global warming—calling into question the very category of the human and the attendant standard paradigms we have used to make sense of the world for quite some time. This course will introduce graduate students to several dominant trends in contemporary ecological thinking, theoretical and conceptual models that might be useful for any number of scholarly or creative purposes. In the past several years, ecological scholarly thinking has left its “first wave” roots in nature writing and merged with philosophical, theoretical, historical, and literary studies to produce new interdisciplinary forums for thinking about material and historical reality. This course’s reading will be framed by a series of mini-units that ask students to read this contemporary ecological criticism in terms of literary texts. Units will include:

1) “Vibrant Matters: The New Romanticism?,” where we will read literary texts such as Evelyn Reilly’s poetry in *Styrofoam* (2009) and Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden* (1854) alongside portions of critical texts such as Michael Marder’s *Plant-Thinking* (2013), Eduardo Kohn’s *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (2013), Branka Asić’s *Bird Relics: Grief and Vitalism in Thoreau* (2016), and Jane Bennett’s *Vibrant Matter* (2009).


5) “Beasts of the Southern Wild and Dirty Ecology,” where we’ll close the semester by considering Benh Zeitlin’s film *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (2012) and regional ecological/sociopolitical issues stemming from Hurricane Katrina.

The course will thus offer students a diverse array of contemporary critical models and questions that might add innovatively to their own ongoing research agendas. One cannot attend a major conference these days without hearing the term “Anthropocene” on the lips of scholars and graduate students alike. This seminar will make the case that there’s good
reason for this, and that there’s much work to be done in reassessing our understanding of nature, embodiment, global circulation, and the human.
This is a general, graduate-level reading course/seminar in Native American and Asian American literatures. The current renaissance/transformation in these two literatures, which are not regularly taught in the department, is an exciting phenomenon in American literature. The course focuses on fiction and examines the various trends and diverse voices within the literatures of the two groups. It takes a historical and developmental approach to each literature, beginning with the early part of the twentieth century and focusing on the diverse national and/or ethnic groups within each and how that diversity impacts the production of the two literatures. As two of America’s major minority literatures, one is mostly an immigrant literature and the second one is an indigenous and, at times, an anti-colonial literature, the course is particularly interested in examining how this difference is inscribed in the literatures. We will read seven or eight novels from each group. The American Indian readings will be taken from D’Arcy McNickle’s The Surrounded, N. Scott Momaday’s House Made of Dawn, James Welch’s Winter In The Blood, Leslie Marmon Silko’s Ceremony, Louise Erdrich’s Love Medicine, Linda Hogan’s Mean Spirit, Diane Glancy’s Pushing The Bear, Gerald Vizenor’s The Heirs of Columbus, Susan Power’s The Grass Dancer, and Sherman Alexie’s Blasphamy, Linda LeGarde Grover’s The Road Back To Sweetgrass, and Toni Jensen’s From The Hilltop. The Asian American readings will be taken from Younghill Kang’s East Goes West, Louis Chu’s Eat A Bowl of Tea, John Okada’s No-No Boy, Maxine Hong Kingston’s The Woman Warrior, Frank Chin’s Donald Duk, Carlos Burlosan’s America Is In The Heart, Fae Myenne Ng’s Bone, Lan Cao’s Monkey Bridge, Theresa Cha’s Dictee, Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Namesake, Chang Rae Lee’s Native Speaker, Jish Gen’s Typical American, Julie Otsuka’s When The Emperor Was Devine, Andrew X Pham’s Catfish and Mandala, Jessica Hagedorn’s Dogeaters or Dream Jungle, Viet Thanh Nguyen’s The Sympathizer, and Tao Lin’s Taipei. Student is required to make a short, twenty-minute presentation, write a short paper ((8-10 pages), and, finally, write a graduate-level seminar paper (15-20 pages). Student should come to the first class prepared to discuss McNickle’s The Surrounded.
Beginning with a critique of the Iowa Model, this course will cover current trends in the teaching of creative writing, as well as some history and theory to contextualize the issues at hand. Participants should have some experience in the creative writing classroom—both sides of the desk, if possible. Topics will include standard concerns such as assessment, craft texts, revision, teacher/writers, engagement with published and incomplete texts, as well as experimentation and new strategies (such as the “flipped” classroom). Observations and a case study will be required (if you are not currently teaching creative writing, we will adjust accordingly). Texts will include *Teaching Creative Writing to Undergraduates*, *Creative Writing Pedagogies for the Twenty-First Century*, and *Teaching to Transgress*. 
Course Description

Catalogue Description: “Investigation of approaches, assumptions, and methods in specific fields within the discipline of rhetoric and composition employed in production of research. Course can be repeated once for credit.”

The course is the first of a two-part seminar focusing on research in the discipline of rhetoric and composition. It is intended to introduce you to reading the spectrum of research in the field. It focuses on reading processes that will help you to learn and be critical of the research “literature” currently available in the discipline. It will also serve as the foundation for a career in which reading the research in rhetoric and composition will play an integral role.

While the focus is on reading, graduate students will also have the opportunity to write in three principal ways: (1) exam writing; (2) designing a research project and (3) a seminar essay connected to your research project design in which you read and write about the research most relevant and interesting to you. The exam writing will help prepare you for comprehensive exams. The research project design and seminar essay are designed to lead to publication, either now or in the future.

Some of the questions addressed in the course include:

- What does research tell us about student writing processes and the development of writing abilities?
- What does research tell us about error in college students’ writing?
- What does research tell us about the most effective teaching (best practices) of writing?
- What does research tell us about the effectiveness of teacher commentary on student writing?
- What does research tell us about the value of extensive reading in first-year writing courses for the improvement of student writing in these courses?

Primary Course Readings


Note: Selected paired readings and readings on methods/methodology will be provided.
In his seminal history of surveillance, Michel Foucault names Napoleon as the transformative figure of modern surveillance. His claim, which centers upon Napoleon’s transposition of imperial regulation from Egypt to France, demonstrates the prominent place of orientalism in surveillance theory and practice. This seminar investigates this intimate and longstanding relationship between cultural encounter and contemporary practices of social and territorial control, or what in today’s digital age of dataveillance remains a marked fascination with the perceived difference between “East” and “West.”

Who are the major authors of literary surveillance, and what do their works claim about this distinguishing aspect of modern life? Where are the key spaces in the global geography of surveillance, and when did surveillance become an integral aspect of local and national consciousness? Why is the east/west division in geopolitics so often imagined as a paradigm for surveillance, and how are liberty, privacy, safety, convenience, and prosperity differently impacted by surveillance practices?

By considering these questions, participants in this course will develop a basic familiarity with the major issues of current surveillance theory. By applying these topics to the historical and cultural inquiries of imperial and postcolonial scholarship, we will uncover the many ways that twentieth- and twenty-first century policing, espionage, bureaucratic and capitalist monitoring continue to animate an essentially nineteenth-century orientalism.

In addition to other texts TBA, assigned reading will likely include:

Said, *Orientalism*
Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*
Kipling, *Kim*
Orwell, *1984*
Huxley, *Brave New World*

Instructor will contact participants with reading for the first day of class.
Fulfills requirement for graduate certificate in Empire Studies and also counts towards Literature Ph.D. requirement for later literature.
ENGL 8396: Rhetoric and Neoliberalism  
Dr. Jennifer Wingard  
Monday 2:30-5:30pm

Course Description
This course explores the scholarship of rhetorical practices produced in response to neoliberal capital. The course will be composed of three units, each of which begins with a popular and creative work to help frame the scholarly concerns of each unit. The first unit will explore the historical and cultural assumptions that define neoliberalism. The second unit will examine how neoliberalism and categories of identity are co-constitutive of one another. And the third unit will explore the impact neoliberalism has had on university structures. Each unit will also present texts that demonstrate how rhetorical theory and practice have engaged with the problem of neoliberalism.

In addition to focusing on key arguments regarding rhetoric and neoliberalism, each unit will provide a single author text as a sample inquiry. In each instance, the book should be read not only in connection with the theoretical focus of the unit, but as a text to be decoded in its own right. Students will be responsible for working in groups to figure out the inquiry, methodology, and structure of each single author text, and then they will teach those elements to the class.

Course Requirements
- Three – Unit Response Papers (10% each) 30%
- Group Decoding Presentation 30%
- Final “Meta-paper”: Building an Inquiry Based Project 40%

Tentative Course Plan

Unit One: Brief History of Neoliberalism – David Harvey
- Atwood, Margaret. The Heart Goes Last: A Novel
- Chaput, Catherine, M.J. Braun, and Danika Brown, eds. Entertaining Fear: Rhetoric and the Political Economy of Social Control
- Nguyen, Kim, ed. Rhetoric in Neoliberalism
- Group #1: Wan, Amy J. Producing Good Citizens: Literacy Training in Anxious Times

Unit Two: The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy – Lisa Duggan
- Adiche, Chimamanda Ngozi. Americanah
- Dingo, Rebecca and Blake Scott, eds. The Megarhetorics of Global Development
- Hartelius, E. Johanna. The Rhetorics of U.S. Immigration: Identity, Community, Otherness
- Group #2: McKinnon, Sara. Gendered Asylum: Race and Violence in U.S. Law and Politics

Unit Three: Why School? – Mike Rose
- Smith, Mychael Denzel. Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching: A Young Black Man’s Education
- Horner, Bruce, Brice Nordquist, and Susan M. Ryan, eds. Economies of Writing: Revaluations in Rhetoric and Composition
- Scott, Tony and Nancy Welch, eds. Composition in the Age of Austerity
- Group #3: Asen, Robert. Democracy, Deliberation, and Education