Department of English, Theatre, Film & Media

ENGLISH Courses 2020-2021 (tentative)
upper level, including Honours

(PLEASE NOTE: this course list is subject to change without notice. Please see Aurora Class Schedule for up-to-date information.)

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6 credit hour courses spanning BOTH Fall and Winter terms

**ENGL 2130**  
**Literature of the Romantic Period**  
Fall+Winter (6)  
Dr. Michelle Faubert

In this course we will study the canonical greats of the Romantic period, such as Mary Shelley, William Wordsworth, William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and Lord Byron, as well as some writers who sometimes do not appear on Romantics syllabi, such as William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft and Anna Barbauld. By focussing on various political and cultural issues, such as the French Revolution, abolition, the “Woman Question,” the rise of psychiatry, shifts away from conventional religion, and the celebration of the child, we will consider whether or not we can really speak of an integrated Romantic movement. We will also concentrate on poetic form – particularly the lyric, ode, ballad, sonnet, and the use of terza rima – in order to determine how innovative these supposedly rebellious poets really were. The warring issues of tradition versus innovation, establishment versus rebellion, which characterized the period, lead to questions about canonicity. We will ask, How do the canonical principles of inclusion work? Are we free to reshape the canon according to current scholarly interests? This tumultuous and prolific period of literary giants and forgotten genius provides a plethora of diverse answers.

**ENGL 2640**  
**History of Critical Theory: From Plato to the Present**  
Fall+Winter (6)  
Dr. Serenity Joo

ENGL 2640 is a survey course of critical theory. Grounded in close readings of literary texts, we will work our way through a diverse range of approaches to reading literature and practicing literary criticism, from classical criticism to more contemporary schools of thought. The course is designed to introduce English-major students to a variety of theorists committed to understanding the relationship between literature, culture, and the world around us in diverse ways. Note that “mastery” is not a goal of the course (and we will spend the first few classes unpacking what this means). Rather, the course is committed to a spirit of exploration, experimentation, cultivation, imagination, and whimsy in our pursuit and critique of knowledge. As such, students will be encouraged to draw from their own experiences and current pop culture fixations for assignments.

**ENGL 3000**  
**Chaucer**  
Fall+Winter (6)  
Dr. David Watt

When the fifteenth-century poet Thomas Hoccleve called Chaucer “the firste fyndere of our fair langage,” he may have been describing his predecessor as the best English writer among others. Or Hoccleve may have been making a more ambitious claim: he might have used the word finder to claim Chaucer as the originator—or at least the re-discoverer—of English as a means of poetic expression. Subsequent critics have often promoted the version of Hoccleve’s pronouncement that seemed most apt to them, frequently crediting Chaucer as the father of English poetry. This course’s main objective is to provide an opportunity to reflect critically upon the significance of Chaucer’s verse. We will begin by finding out more about the fair language in which Chaucer wrote. This will allow us to read Chaucer’s most substantial and enduring texts, the Canterbury Tales, Parliament of Fowls, House of Fame, and Troilus and Criseyde, in their
original Middle English. Throughout the year, we will develop the skills and vocabulary necessary to engage with Chaucer’s verse as well as the critical tradition associated with it. In order to encourage learning through active participation and critical revision, I will evaluate work throughout the year but give particular weight to two revised projects when determining your final grade.

3 credit hour FALL COURSES

ENGL 2190  
Special Topics: Books and Bytes: Literature in the Digital Age  
Fall (3)  
TBA

ENGL 2190  
Special Topics: TBA  
Fall (3)  
TBA

ENGL 2900  
Genre: Women and Theatre  
Fall (3)  
Dr. Margaret Groome  
This course will focus on the work of women as playwrights in Western Theatre and the ways in which their work may be considered “feminist.” The course will therefore include discussion of the political and ideological contexts of the works’ production and reception. The relationship of feminist dramatic and theatre criticism to feminist theories in other fields - such as literary studies and film studies - will be taken up to provide a framework for the inquiry. Major concerns include the styles or strategies of writing specific to the female experience and the response of the critical community to the work of women playwrights. Rather than undertaking an historical survey of women’s writing for the theatre, there will be a sampling of the work of playwrights that will range across several centuries. While the major focus of the course is on the work of women as playwrights, in the final four weeks of the course we will consider key issues related to the work of women as actors and directors. Playwrights to be studied include Aphra Behn, Elizabeth Robbins, Caryl Churchill, Pam Gems, Marsha Norman, and Nina Raine, among others.

ENGL 2900  
Genre: Beyond High Fantasy  
Fall (3)  
Dr. Erin Keating  
This class will read an array of contemporary fantasy writers who either directly challenge or work outside of the genre tropes of high fantasy. We will encounter novels, short stories, graphic novels, games, and television episodes by authors such as Jemisin, Kuang, Liu and Takeda, Le Guin, and others. We will analyse the ways that these authors move beyond the traditions of high fantasy to critique both traditional genre tropes that write fantasy as white worlds steeped in a nostalgic view of European history, and contemporary societies that wilfully ignore their foundational racism, sexism, and Eurocentric capitalist elitism. Following Le Guin, we will investigate the fundamental power of fantasy to imagine alternatives to the current political moment.

ENGL 3120  
Studies in Restoration and 18th Century Literature: Fictions of Seduction  
Fall (3)  
Dr. Pamela Perkins  
Virtuous but threatened (or seduced and abandoned) characters appear with startling regularity in eighteenth-century literature. As moralists of the period fretted that fiction was itself dangerously seductive and that readers risked being drawn into vices ranging from indolence to debauchery by such work, novelists retorted that their titillating stories of threatened, misled innocents in fact offered impeccably moral lessons. In this class, we will read a selection of such writing, looking at it in the context of both eighteenth-century theories of art and reading and more recent critical work on eighteenth-century literature and culture.
ENGL 3180  Studies in Renaissance Literature: Shakespeare Unsettled  Fall (3)  Dr. Judith Owens  
In this course, we will study two groups of plays that raise, without resolving, a range of ethical issues. Several of Shakespeare’s plays, a group sometimes labelled the “problem plays,” not only fit uneasily within generic conventions but also pose troubling moral questions, often clustering around gender, sexuality, and power. Shakespeare’s history plays, particularly the four that make up the “major tetralogy,” similarly interrogate—and unsettle—early modern structures of authority and governance. We will read the following plays: All’s Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida, Richard II, Henry IV, Part 1, Henry IV, Part 2, and Henry V.

ENGL 3980  Studies in Modernism: Virginia Woolf  Fall (3)  Dr. Fernando De Toro  
The purpose of this course is to establish a dialogue between Woolf’s fiction (novels) and political and feminist essays. Thus we seek to understand how this dialogue takes place and to demonstrate that she sought, in this two “genres” to expose critical women’s issues of her time. Furthermore, we will explore how her thinking on the place of women in society, particularly as a writer, joins the feminism of the 1970s.

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: The Politics of Affect: South African Literature and the Truth and Reconciliation Hearings  Fall (3)  Dr. Mark Libin  
Through the lens of contemporary affect theory, we will be looking at how national identity, in this case, the post-apartheid South African identity, can be consciously shaped through affective forces. Following the end of that period of violent oppression, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings offered hope for a new era of peace and community. The first public reconciliation hearings in history, the public nature of these hearings were designed so that every citizen in South Africa could connect empathetically with the victims as well as the perpetrators of human rights abuses. This empathetic, emotional connection would be the foundation of the “new” South Africa, the “Rainbow Nation.” Following Deleuze and Guattari, as well as Brian Massumi’s elaborations of their work, and other theorists’ perspectives such as Sara Ahmed’s and Lauren Berlant’s, we will study affect not simply as a synonym for emotion, but as a complex of vital potential that is socialized and is directly relational rather than individual. Specifically, we will examine how the ideological imperative to facilitate national healing and reconciliation after the violent history of apartheid spawned a proliferation of the TRC’s message through various creative media including fiction, documentary film, and poetry.

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: Victorian Bodies  Fall (3)  Dr. Vanessa Warne  
This course explores bodily experience and relationships between bodies and social identities in Victorian literature and culture. Topics to be explored include: invalidism, incarceration, sexuality, and sensory disability. Texts for study include: Wilkie Collins’ The Law and the Lady, Austin Reed’s The Life and Adventures of a Haunted Convict, Bram Stoker’s Dracula and Clemence Housman’s The Were-Wolf.

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: American Travel Writing  Fall (3)  Dr. Lucas Tromly  
This course will consider how the experience of travel, both within the U.S. and around the world, has provoked American writers to reconsider their relationship to their nation, to empire, and to each other. We will explore a range of mobilities and touristic scenarios, from joyriding beatniks, to diasporic return to an ethnic homeland, to the familiar figure of the ugly American abroad.
3 credit hour WINTER COURSES

ENGL 2190  Special Topics: Haunting Tales: The 18th and 19th century Ghost Story
Winter (3)  Dr. Pamela Perkins
This course will look at the ways that writers from Daniel Defoe to M.R. James have used the supernatural. Drawing upon a range of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commentary on and theories about ghost belief as well as both “true” and fictional ghost stories, we will examine the shifting cultural and aesthetic meanings of the supernatural from the Enlightenment through the Victorian era.

ENGL 2190  Special Topics: Territory and Language in Indigenous Literature
Winter (3)  Dr. Warren Cariou
In her essay “Land Speaking,” Okanagan writer Jeannette Armstrong argues that “Language is given to us by the land we live within”. This course examines the relationship between language and land in work by Indigenous artists from several cultures, including Okanagan, Métis, Cree, Nisga’a, Anishinaabe and Haisla. We will discuss the ways in which Indigenous languages as well as colonial languages are utilized to maintain connections to Indigenous territories. We will also study environmental philosophies and relational land-based ethics that are implicit in these works. In addition, we will discuss the role of language in maintaining cultural identity for Indigenous people who have been displaced from their territory. Works to be studied include Jordan Abel’s NISHGA, Leanne Simpson’s Dancing on our Turtle’s Back and Eden Robinson’s Monkey Beach, as well as poetry by Marilyn Dumont, Duncan Mercredi, and Gwen Benaway. We will also study oral stories by Louis Bird and Harry Robinson, and performance art by Rebecca Belmore.

ENGL 2760  Introductory Creative Writing
Winter (3)  TBA
This course focuses on exploring and producing creative writing through a variety of literary genres and styles, including poetry, short fiction, dramatic monologue and memoir. The course is run as a workshop/seminar, with the aim of expanding and improving student writing and providing a broader understanding of the processes – and the cultural considerations – within which writers must work.

ENGL 2900  Genre: Graphic Novel
Winter (3)  Dr. Lucas Tromly
Despite its importance in contemporary culture, the graphic novel does not enjoy the same cultural prestige that purely textual forms of literature do. This course will explore this bias by reading graphic novels alongside literary fiction. We will familiarize ourselves with the conventions and visual grammar of the graphic narrative form, and think carefully about the implications of composition, panels, and drawing style. In other words, we will give graphic narratives the same close readings required for the careful analysis of literary texts. Our course will focus on graphic adaptations of modern novels and short stories. Instead of dismissing these adaptations as simplified versions of the original literary texts, we will explore the different expressive capacities of visual and textual narrative.

ENGL 2940  Short Fiction
Winter (3)  TBA

ENGL 2980  Poetry
Winter (3)  Dr. Vanessa Warne
This course focuses on poetry, memory and memorialization. It explores major poetic forms
connected to grieving and remembering, prominent among them epitaph and elegy. In addition to studying individual poems by nineteenth-century, twentieth-century and contemporary poets, we will read two long poems: Alfred Tennyson’s *In Memoriam AHH* (1849), an influential collection of poems about friendship and loss, and Anne Carson’s *Nox* (2010), an experimental multimedia project Carson created for her late brother.

**ENGL 3620**  
Special Topics in Print Culture and Book History: *Reading the Coffeehouse: Politics, Print, and Periodicals in the 18th Century*  
Winter (3)  
Dr. Erin Keating  
In this class, we will explore the rise of the coffeehouse during the long eighteenth century through a selection of readings from the types of materials that would have circulated in these public spaces, including periodical essays, satires, broadsides, newsletters, plays, and secret histories. Beginning with their early popularity in London, we will examine the anxieties surrounding these new spaces paying particular attention to their potential for occluding distinctions based on class and education, and for fostering political opinion and dissent. By tracing the way that coffeehouses themselves acted as a medium for information, we will investigate the intersections between the rise of a politically informed public and the rise of periodical culture which, largely through the interventions of Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, attempted to civilize the growing London publics through their emphasis on politeness, taste, and decorum. The primary readings will be contextualized with material on the history of the coffeehouse, its critical literary function, its importance for emerging gender identities, and its role in the rise of the public sphere.

**ENGL 3630**  
Studies in Critical Theory: *Marxist Theory Through Literature*  
Winter (3)  
Dr. Mark Libin  
Of all the schools of critical theory that have emerged (and waned) over the span of the twentieth century, the most tenacious of them all is certainly Marxism. This course will investigate the progress, evolution, and adaptation of Marxist theory from its first inceptions (by Marx, of course!) through its most recent phases. Our emphasis will be on understanding how Marxist theory has evolved as well as what it brings to the endeavour of literary and cultural analysis, and to that specific end we will read three different literary texts as a way of testing the various approaches we are familiarizing ourselves with. It is entirely conceivable that students of this course may have devised a completely egalitarian society by its conclusion.

**ENGL 3800**  
Special Studies 1: *Samuel Beckett’s Theatre and the End of Modernity*  
Winter (3)  
Dr. Fernando de Toro  
This course attempts to answer questions which are central to Beckett’s theatre; an attempt to understand why Beckett produces these type of texts, texts that in my estimation are not, strictly speaking, dramatic texts. From his very first theatre writings in the late 1940’s to the late 1980’s this question remained unanswered.

**ENGL 3800xTHTR**  
Special Studies 1: *Ecocritical Theatre*  
Winter (3)  
Dr. Katrina Dunn  
Through the frame of ecocriticism, the study of the relationship between human cultural expressions and the environment, this course will investigate a selection of plays that treat environmental issues. We will begin with late nineteenth century European drama, in which rapid technological and cultural changes were paralleled by the rapid renewal of theatrical environments by a series of playwright innovators. Plays by Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov and Samuel Beckett will enable reflection on differing views of nature, and allow consideration of materialism, dehumanization, exploitation and deception. In the mid-twentieth century our focus will shift to the emergence of an ecological perspective in Canadian drama, looking both at
traditional scripted works and postdramatic and site-specific performances. Through these plays and related interdisciplinary readings, the class will study the interplay between science and culture, and assess the social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of the environmental crisis. We will debate the role of the theatre in dramatizing social and environmental issues and pursuing ecological preservation.

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: **Urbanization, Spectacle and Theatre in Early Modern London**  
Winter (3)  
Dr. Glenn Clark  
Early modern London was the object of celebration and satire in almost equal measure. This course will consider current perspectives on the relationship between the accelerated urbanization of early-modern London and its remarkably ambiguous representations on the dramatic stage. We will consider the theatrical aspects of the city, and the urban and urbanizing aspects of its theatre. We will identify various kinds of urban roles, performances and perspectives, and examine them in terms of their appeal to particular urban audiences. Among other factors, we will attend to the development of dense layers of government and regulation, capital accumulation, ideologies of settlement, and the transformation of marketing practices and innovations in consumption. Primary texts to be considered will include *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Shoemaker’s Holiday*, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, *Bartholomew Fair*, *the Queen’s Majesty’s Passage*, and poetry by Isabella Whitney and Ben Jonson.

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: **Mediating the Mystical**  
Winter (3)  
Dr. Jonah Corne  
This course looks at the treatment of mysticism and mystical experience across a wide range of cinematic, literary, and philosophical texts. We will consider questions about the mystical—and in particular about its famously fraught mediation—in experimental, science-fiction, horror, and art cinema, and in writers such as the psychologist William James, the historian of Kabbalah Gershom Scholem, and the modern-day mystic Simone Weil. Students in no way need to come equipped with a committed belief in the transcendental, merely an openness towards, and curiosity about, ventures to push and exceed the boundaries of human understanding. Ultimately, we will also be thinking about the place(lessness) of mysticism in contemporary society, reading recent theorists who imagine possibilities for the mystical in the face of criticisms against it, who see it as something other than a strictly bad (delusory, naive, exoticizing, etc.) object.

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: **Past the Plantation in Toni Morrison and Zora Neale Hurston**  
Winter (3)  
Dr. Dana Medoro  
In this course, we will study selected novels by two Black women writers: Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon* and *A Mercy*; and Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Written in the 20th and 21st centuries, these novels explore the American slave-institution’s effects on Black women (both during and after slavery) and the forms of self-invention their characters practice and acquire. Development of close-reading skills and facility with contemporary theory on the plantation (and plantationocene) are the aims of this course.