FALL Term

ENGL 7030  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.

ENGL 7840  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 7980  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 7030  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.

ENGL 7170  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 transcendent, 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 7920  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.