FALL COURSES

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: **Racial Futurities**
Fall (3)    Dr. Serenity Joo

This course explores the relationship between race and futurity through a diverse body of ethnic American literary and theoretical texts. It is particularly invested in the ways in which contemporary authors and theorists of color depict the future for different times of American history. Often skeptical of paradigms of acceptance and assimilation into liberal humanism's limited boundaries that never work in the favor of people of color, these writers instead rethink what “human” can mean altogether, through the literary, historical, and/or theoretical tropes of ghosts, zombies, aliens, slaves, and robots. The course will be rooted in the discourse of Afro-pessimism (as a rejection of assimilation politics) forwarded by a cluster of African American theorists including Hortense Spillers, Christina Sharpe, Saidiya Hartman, Katherine McKittrick, and Fred Moten. We will then contemplate the ways in which their theories intersect or diverge from the concerns of other ethnic studies/queer theorists, including José Muñoz, J. Halberstam, and Kandice Chuh. Primary texts we will read may include Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, M. NourbeSe Phillip's *Zong!*, Octavia Butler's *Fledgling* and "Amnesty," Colson Whitehead's *Zone One*, Grek Pak’s film *Robot Diaries*, Julie Dash’s film *Daughters of the Dust*, and the collection of Native American science fiction entitled *A Walk in the Clouds*. Relevant visual art examples will also be incorporated.

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: **Metamorphoses**
Fall (3)    Dr. Diana Brydon

This course will examine the concept of metamorphosis in theory, fiction, and poetry. Beginning with a translation of Ovid, the course will examine the ways in which writers have both embraced change and given shape to fears of change through either welcoming or deplored transgressions of the boundaries between different kinds of humans, and human, animal, place, and machine, creating or ostracizing monsters in the process. Texts to be examined may include Ovid, *Metamorphoses*; David Malouf, *An Imaginary Life*; Donna Haraway, "The Cyborg Manifesto"; Suzette Mayr, *Moon Honey*; Madeline Ashby, *Company Town*; Nnedi Okorafor, *Book of the Phoenix*; Andre Alexis, *Fifteen Dogs*, and Margaret Atwood's *Circe Poems*.

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: **Inventing the Actress on the Stage and Page**
Fall (3)    Dr. Erin Keating

When the first woman stepped onto the English public stage in 1660, she was not merely playing the role of Desdemona; she was performing a role never before seen in England: the professional actress. Studying signature roles, satirical pamphlets, actress memoirs, and other aspects of the fan culture that grew up around the first celebrity actresses in the Restoration and early eighteenth-century, this class will investigate the ways that both society and actresses themselves sought to control and define their public personas. Alongside the primary texts, we will read selections from theatre historians and from current theorists of performance, sexuality, queerness, and affect.
WINTER COURSES

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: Healing Arts in Early-Modern Literature and Culture
Winter (3)  Dr. Judith Owens
This course will focus on a wide array of practices, both material and textual, that can be considered arts of healing in Renaissance England. Our study will range from the healing of bodies to the healing of the body politic to the healing of spirits. We will read pharmaceutical manuals, medicinal recipe books; we will read about midwifery; we will read treatises on witchcraft; we will read anatomies of illness, physical and spiritual. We will also read literature: satires, elegies, epitaphs, poetry of consolation. One of the themes running through the course will be the relationship in this period between magic and science. Another of the themes will be the gendering of knowledge in this period. Which of the healing arts fell under the purview of women? Which under the auspices of men?

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: Awkwardness and Grace
Winter (3)  Dr. David Watt
“We live,” writes Adam Kotsko, “in an awkward age.” Readers familiar with The Office and The 40-Year Old Virgin may be well situated to contemplate awkwardness in other ages. This seminar focuses on the later Middle Ages, a time when some of the most graceful writers—including the Gawain poet and Julian of Norwich—create remarkably awkward moments and when some of the most awkward moments—like those that appear in Thomas Hoccleve’s depiction of the fifteenth-century office and Margery Kempe’s attempt to be considered a virgin well after 40—arise out of a profound desire for grace. Together, we will explore a range of texts and genres in order to reflect on the relationship between awkwardness and grace in the later Middle Ages and our own.

ENGL 4630  Honours Seminar: Irish Theatre-Staging Identity
Winter (3)  Dr. William Kerr
In this course, we will examine the theatre as a staging place for Irish (and English) identity. Since Irish and Anglo-Irish playwrights (like Congreve, Farquhar, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Boucicault, Wilde, and Shaw) have played such an important role in the historical development of English theatre and given the particularly special position of Ireland as a staging ground for colonial and postcolonial practices, we will examine the Irish theatre as a liminoid space in which outsiders who are also insiders create and contest versions of Irish identity within a larger English dominated world. In such a space Dion Boucicault in the 19th century could create images of the Irish onstage praised by the Irish in Ireland for finally escaping from the caricature of the stage Irishman while being condemned by the Irish in England for furthering that stereotype. Considering this backdrop, we will look at the importance of the Irish theatre in forging a sense of national identity during the 20th century that (may) move beyond the stereotypes as we examine firstly W.B. Yeats, J.M. Synge, Lady Gregory and Sean O’Casey at the Abbey and then focus on the more current flourishing in Irish Theatre that begins with Brian Friel, J.B. Keane, and Tom Murphy before moving to playwrights like Frank McGuinness, Sebastien Barry, Marina Carr, Anne Devlin, Christina Reid, Enda Walsh, Conor McPherson, and Martin McDonagh.