Graduate Course Descriptions

Department of English
Northern Illinois University

Summer 2019
ENGL 632 - Writing for Digital Media  Bonnie Kyburz
TTh 11:00 am-1:45 pm  RH 309

Description:
Digital culture has expanded how we understand what writing is and can be, including what media counts as a ‘text’, the ways in which communication is ‘written’, and the critical and analytical faculties necessary for ‘reading’ these media. In this course, we will engage with questions related to the production and function of digital technologies and texts by analyzing the impact of those technologies on culture. One of the primary ways in which we will do this is through exploring digital technologies as rhetorical; we’ll examine how these technologies shape communication practices, and, perhaps, culture at large. Through case studies, critical reading, and sustained forms of networked, digital writing, we will study and learn the nature of writing for/with/through digital media.

Requirements:
Attendance is mandatory. Participation is key (20% of final grade). Weekly blog entries, frequent summary/response papers and presentations, 1 group project, and 1 research project to be delivered via digital media.

Texts:
No textbook required. The course will offer a blog featuring a variety of open access resources.

N. B. This course is cross-listed as ENGL 426 for undergraduate students.

ENGL 663 – 19th Century British Novel  Brian May
MW 2:00-4:45 pm  Naperville
[bmay1@niu.edu; MayWilliamS@aol.com]

Course Aims:
We will study Victorian fiction (and a few 18th-Century texts, plus Austen) in its variety (for example, we’ll talk about a “social problem novel” and a “penny dreadful”), materiality (we may look at facsimiles of one of the Victorian serials in which one of these novels first saw the light of day), philosophy (we’ll
examine some of the philosophical foundations of 19th-century British conceptions of “the real”), history (we’ll pay attention to several of the 19th-century social and cultural contexts out of [and into] which this fiction came), ideology (we’ll be looking at some of these texts as imperial texts, documents doing, or trying to undo, the home-work of empire), and so on. We will seek to distinguish important themes and techniques and trends and whatnot on display in these complex and often lengthy fictions and try to understand how and why this Victorian slice of “the novel,” the genre, developed as it did. The format will be discussion initiated and punctuated by brief monologues, some of which you will be providing. With respect to your professionalization, my ambition will be to encourage you to speak cogently, if in an academic register, to give (some of you) good oral reports, to write good exams, and to write good and proper papers.

**Course Texts:**
Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian*. 1797. Oxford. 978 0 19 870443 0
Thomas Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. 1886. Norton. 9780393974980 (or later ed)
Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. 1886. Copley. (broadview) 9781554810246

**Course requirements:**
*Undergraduate credit.*
1. 20%—“squib” (short, 3-plus page analytical essay); a style sheet will be provided;
2. 30%—a final paper (5-7 pages); a style sheet will be provided;
3. 25%—two take-home essay-exams (the schedule has due-dates);
4. 15%—take-home final exam (due date noon, 8/9);
5. 10%—class participation.

*Graduate credit.*
1. 45%—a final paper (ten- to fifteen-pages); a substantial literary-critical analysis; a style-sheet will be provided;
2. 30%—three take-home essay-exams, the third of which—the “final exam”—will be due noon on 8/9; the two other portions will be due earlier (see schedule);
3. 20%—two ten-minute reports (we’ll discuss them);
4. 5%—class participation.

**Course goals and intended “learning outcomes”:** We will read, discuss, and write about a number of 18th- and 19th-century English novels—novels written in English, in any event. Students should expect to broaden and deepen their raw knowledge of an important period of our cultural heritage. To that end, our aim will be to distinguish the important themes and techniques on display in these often complex and lengthy novels and try to understand how and why the genre of “the novel” developed as it did. Students should expect to finish the course with a good sense of the Victorian tradition in fiction—its Realist center-line, which we’ll be talking about at some length. The format will be class discussion initiated and punctuated by brief monologues (some of which will be offered by students).

*Undergraduate* students will develop their analytical and rhetorical skills; the most specific intention of the course with respect to writing and speaking (in class discussions but also, in some cases, in 10-minute
oral reports, optional for undergraduates) is that of developing undergraduate students' own individual critical voices. To that end, undergraduates will be asked to write essay-exams and a five- to seven-page paper.

Students taking the course for graduate-level credit, on the other hand, should leave the course with all of the above as well as with a sharper sense of what makes for writing of professional quality. They will give two ten-minute oral reports and write several essay-exams as well as a substantial (ten- to fifteen-page) paper.

ENGL 691 – Topics in Film and Literature: Blues and Jazz in Literature and Film  
Dr. Tim Ryan  
TTh 2:00-4:45 pm  
DU 270

Description:
In this class, we will examine a variety of literary and cinematic works that engage with (or relate in some way to) jazz and/or blues music. Although blues and jazz have had an immense impact upon American and global culture, the significant works and artists of these musical traditions remain relatively marginal in the popular imagination today, certainly in comparison to the ubiquitous productions of the rock era. For this reason, the course assumes no pre-existing knowledge of blues and jazz, and provides an introduction to the histories of these musical forms, as well as to selected recordings by major artists. We will also learn more about the subject through excerpts from critical and historical studies.

This class thus provides a survey of canonical twentieth-century literature and film, an exploration of modernist/African American culture, and an introduction to the emerging field of music and literature/film studies. This class also contributes to academic professionalization through writing, workshopping, and presentation of scholarly papers.

Texts:
Our primary texts will be:
*Blues in the Night* (dir. Anatole Litvak, 1941)  
Toni Morrison. *Jazz* (1992)  
*Whiplash* (dir. Damien Chazelle, 2014)

The course will also include short stories, poetry, songs, music, short films, and excerpts from secondary scholarship—all available via electronic reserve on Blackboard—by such writers, musicians, filmmakers, and scholars as Louis Armstrong, James Baldwin, Thomas Brothers, James Lincoln Collier, Angela Davis, Duke Ellington, Ralph Ellison, William Faulkner, Adam Gussow, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Robert Johnson, Gjon Mili, Charlie Parker, Bessie Smith, and Eudora Welty.

Requirements: The central project for the course is a conference-length paper that will go through an in-class workshop and which class members will present at the end of the semester. The final grade will also be based upon productive contributions to class discussion.

N. B. This course is cross-listed as ENGL 363 for undergraduate students.

For additional details and a complete reading list, please e-mail Professor Ryan at tryan@niu.edu.
ENGL 696 – Practicum in the Teaching of College English  Dr. David Gorman
[Permission Number Required]  Contact Dawn Sibley at dsibley@niu.edu

3 hours. May be repeated to a maximum of 15 semester hours; however, only 3 hours may be applied
toward a graduate degree in English. S/U grading.

ENGL 697 – English Institute  Dr. David Gorman
[Permission Number Required]  Contact Dawn Sibley at dsibley@niu.edu

1-6 hours. May be repeated to a maximum of 12 semester hours as the topic changes. S/U grading.

ENGL 698 – Independent Reading  Staff
[Permission Number Required]  Contact Dawn Sibley at dsibley@niu.edu

Normally open only to students who have completed 30 semester hours in an M.A. program. May be
repeated to a maximum of 6 semester hours when topic varies.

ENGL 699 – Master’s Thesis  Dr. David Gorman
[Permission Number Required]  Contact Dawn Sibley at dsibley@niu.edu

This course may be taken upon selection of a thesis director, appointment of a committee of two
additional readers, and approval of a prospectus. Selection of a thesis director is made by the thesis
writer, based upon the faculty member’s expert knowledge in the thesis field. The other two readers,
typically a subject specialist and a general reader, are selected by the Director of Graduate Studies in
consultation with the thesis writer and thesis director.

Approval of the thesis prospectus by all committee members should be obtained at least one
semester in advance of enrollment in 699. A student writing a thesis must register in 699 in the
semester in which he or she plans to defend the thesis, and must register in any subsequent term until the
thesis is submitted to and formally approved by the Graduate School. A permit for registration will be
given to approved students by the Director of Graduate Studies.

ENGL 799 – Doctoral Dissertation  Dr. David Gorman
[Permission Number Required]  Contact Dawn Sibley at dsibley@niu.edu

Dissertators will be enrolled in ENGL 799 when they have entered into candidacy: after their director has
been selected, their committee approved, and dissertation proposal defended. Once enrolled in 799,
continuous enrollment is required, including summers, until the dissertation is submitted to and
formally approved by the Graduate School.