

English Graduate Seminar Descriptions for Summer 2015

SUMMER I (May 26-Jun 25)

ENG 503: MANUSCRIPT, PRINT, AND DIGITAL CULTURES (Dr. Eleanor Shevlin)

This course studies the history of the creation, production, distribution, circulation, and reception of the written word. As it traces how authorship, reading, publishing, and the physical properties of texts have altered over time, the course examines, both historically and analytically, the intellectual, social, and cultural impact of changing communications technologies against the backdrop of our current digital age. Tracing the book's evolution from manuscript to its present electronic transformations, we will consider a variety of questions: How and why did the book and other material forms of the written word change physically over time? How were early texts marketed and distributed? How have conceptions of authorship altered from era to era and what caused these alterations? Who were the past patrons and publishers of texts? What is the relationship between oral and print cultures? How have technological and socio- historical developments intersected with the history of reading, authorship, and publishing? How is electronic publishing modifying authorship, reading, and publishing and how might it transform these areas in the decades ahead? What similarities can we discover among earlier periods of manuscript and print cultures and our own times? Face-to-face meetings on May 27, Jun 22, and Jul 21.

ENG 525: SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDIES AND HISTORIES (Dr. Paul Green)

This course will focus on Shakespeare's poetic and dramatic development in his histories and tragedies through a careful reading of four of his history plays and five of his tragedies. While recognizing Shakespeare's superiority to his contemporaries, the course will situate—will historicize—him within the Elizabethan/Jacobean age. Consequently, at appropriate times we will talk about Shakespeare's theater, the acting companies, the licensing and printing of plays, relevant events in Tudor-Stuart history, major social, political, and artistic concerns of the period, attitudes about women, love, and sex, and the gradual but noticeable shift from medieval/Renaissance optimism to the darker tones of Early Modern cynicism, visible throughout English culture in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but especially prominent in Shakespeare. Students will have the opportunity to pursue aspects of Shakespeare's life and work that particularly interest them and, in their written assignments, to use any and all critical/theoretical/historical approaches with which they feel comfortable.

ENG 609: SHORT STORY WORKSHOP II (Luanne Smith)

This class focuses on the short story form with opportunities for exploring more experimental forms of short fiction. Additional readings in short fiction and criticism will inform writing and workshop discussions. A critical paper on a contemporary short story writer is required.

SUMMER II (Jun 29-Jul 30)

ENG 596: COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC (Dr. Seth Kahn)

This course is a kaleidoscopic look at two sets of ideas: (1) theories/research about *how people write and learn to write*; and (2) the history of an academic discipline organized around addressing (1). We'll take up (not necessarily answer, but at least consider) questions like: What do writers actually do when we're writing? What kinds of practices do experienced writers use that inexperienced writers don't, and how might we teach/encourage students to try them? What constitutes "good writing," and how does that vary by context? What purposes are we serving by teaching students to do "academic writing," and how do the genres of academic writing differ from others? How does our conception of "good writing" change if we understand writing *rhetorically* rather than *formally*? How do we know what works as writing teachers?

**ENG 615: SPECIAL TOPICS (LITERARY FORM: THE SHORT STORY)
(Dr. Christopher Merkner)**

This course will ask students to study the literary form of the prose fragment—the elusive, confrontational, incandescent, nuanced, bare, and dense fragment. Students will improve their understanding of the form, as well as their understanding of the more traditional forms of the short story. Students will explore the relationships between longer and shorter narratives, therefore, but the focus of this class is the reading, studying, practicing of the remarkably powerful micro-macro-form of the fragment. Our discussions will be improved by the reading of theory, but we will be primarily preoccupied with the joy of studying some of the most exciting and complex work in contemporary prose fiction.