

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH GRADUATE COURSES

FALL 2020

**NOTE: ALL FALL COURSES WILL BE ONLINE.
PROFESSORS MAY ADJUST TEXTS (FOR ACCESS) AND
ASSIGNMENTS TO FIT ONLINE FORMATS AND METHODS.**

**ENGLISH 500 A01 RESEARCH METHODS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
(1.5 units)
Dr. Erin E. Kelly**

English 500 is the foundational course of the English graduate program, orienting students within the broad field of the discipline of English studies and also forging a cohesive and collegial student cohort. The course has two functions: first, to introduce the concepts and practices that underpin advanced literary research skills and textual studies (including the practice of textual criticism and the history of the production and dissemination of printed texts); second, to enable students to develop their craft of professional scholarship (methods of research, advanced scholarly writing, digital tools and methods, diverse modes of research dissemination, academic conversation, and appropriate forms of citation and documentation as well as finding a position within established and emerging trends in English studies). Class meetings will be held fortnightly in a Special Collections classroom, and the course will allow students to draw upon the rich materials in UVic Libraries as these fit with their research interests. The graduate program's opt-in Pro-D (Professional Development) seminars will complement the course.

Note: ENGL 500 is compulsory for all English graduate students without equivalent previous credit.

Tentative Texts:

MLA Handbook, 8th edition; Booth, Colomb, and Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed.; and a course pack of select readings related to graduate student life, research, and professional development.

Tentative Assignments:

Participation/preparation for class meetings (50%); short assignments tailored to students' own academic, research, and professional interests (50%). [While this class is not graded, all assignments must be completed successfully for a student to receive a COM mark and course credit.]

**ENGLISH 505 A01 STUDIES IN LITERARY THEORY: AREA COURSE
Literary Theory
(1.5 units)
Dr. Stephen Ross**

This course will ground students in the major developments, figures, works, and ideas of the period of high theory, from about 1970-1990. It will be organized in terms of responses to the Linguistic Turn, venturing back to Saussure and Freud before turning its attention to a survey of the main theoretical "schools": deconstruction, psychoanalysis, Marxism, feminism, queer theory, critical race theory, post colonialism, and various fusions of these. We will conclude the term by taking stock of the legacy of these strong theoretical movements in the recent move towards "weak" or "surface" practices, affect theory, post-humanism (both biological and

technological), eco-criticism, and others. Students will be invited to indicate particular areas of interest, which will be worked into the syllabus if there is sufficiently concentrated interest. Throughout we will take up multiple valences of the idea of *critique*, taking up its various formulations by different thinkers, and attempting to position it in today's landscape. Other key terms for exploration will include hegemony, ideology, subject, subjectivity, human, techno, and other. We will organize the term by history and approach, but recurrent themes will include ethics, politics, gender and sexuality, and above all the politics of representation

Tentative Texts:

Leitch et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*.

Selected additional readings in a course pack or photocopied distribution.

Tentative Assignments:

Presentation I – 10%, Presentation II – 10%, Term Paper Proposal – 10%, Mandatory Proposal Conference – 0%, Term Paper (5000 words) – 35%, Take-Home Final – (3000 words) – 30%, Participation - 5% - assessed on the basis of contributions in class week-in and week-out.

ENGLISH 506 A01
CSPT 500/600

STUDIES IN LITERARY THEORY: SPECIAL TOPIC
Readers are Listening
(1.5 units)
Dr. Jentery Sayers

“Readers are listening.” We’ll treat that sentence, including its many implications, as a refrain for this seminar.

Readers are listening because, as a 2018 BookNet Canada report suggests, more and more of them are purchasing audiobooks and subscribing to podcasts. Readers are listening because publishers, writers, actors, and critics are taking sound more seriously. Readers are listening because they’ve been diagnosed with print disabilities or visual impairments. They are listening because they are multitasking—listening while commuting, working at home, or engaging in hobbies. Readers are listening because they enjoy it, they need a break from screens, or they’re playing games. The list goes on, all to demonstrate that the combination of reading and listening, or the characterization of listening *as* reading, is not a contradiction. Listening is not “cheating,” or passive, or homogeneous, and it’s long been central to the interpretation of fiction. This seminar explores how and why by treating listening as a critical practice.

You’ll have the opportunity to test various approaches to listening by studying fiction (mostly Anglo-American) from the 20th and 21st centuries. To invite an array of expertise on the topic, I’ve selected a range of works that not only engage themes of sound and listening (as content) but also experiment with audio formats, such as radio plays, talking books, cut-ups, recorded readings, serialized drama, voice-over narration, and first-person videogames, where listeners cannot see the “source” of a sound. Each week, we’ll examine a work or two with a particular theme or technique in mind. Themes will include listening to writers read, listening to narrators speak, listening for meaning, listening for effects, listening with others, listening in place, listening against the grain, listening inside acoustic spheres, and listening with machines. Across them, we’ll consider the aesthetics and sensory politics of how readers listen to fiction and how fiction is composed to be heard. I’ll also encourage you to try writing for readers who are listening by asking you to develop a portfolio of audio work comprised of four short pieces that culminate in an audio essay or podcast episode about a seminar topic of your choice. (You can use a mobile phone or computer to record, and free audio software to edit. If you do not have access to these technologies, then the portfolio and essay can be written without producing or editing audio.)

Please note: This is not a seminar about music, and it is not a technical course. I will not assume any experience with audio or sound studies, and we will focus on the design, content, and culture of audio (not how it is engineered). I will, however, instruct you in the use of audio editing software (Audacity) if you're new to it.

Tentative texts: Toni Morrison's novel and audiobook, *The Bluest Eye* (1970); recordings of Edwidge Danticat reading (2013) Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl" (1978) and "Wingless" (1979) and Joyce Carol Oates reading (2009) Eudora Welty's "Where Is the Voice Coming From?" (1963); the radio plays, *All That Fall: A Play for Radio* (1956-7), by Samuel Beckett, and *Sorry, Wrong Number* (1943), by Lucille Fletcher; audio cut-ups, such as "Recalling All Active Agents" (1960), by Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs; sound art such as Laurie Anderson's *O Superman* (1981), Alvin Lucier's *I Am Sitting in a Room* (1969-70), and Steve Reich's *Come Out* (1966); the serialized audio drama, *Within the Wires* (Season One, "Relaxation Cassettes") (2016), by Jeffrey Cranor, Janina Matthewson, and Mary Epworth; voice-over narration performances by Regina King (2005), Edward Norton (1999), Christina Ricci (1998), and Sissy Spacek (1973); a first-person game such as *What Remains of Edith Finch?* (2017), by Giant Sparrow, or *Return of the Obra Dinn* (2018), by Lucas Pope; literary sound projects like SpokenWeb and PennSound as well as storytelling "sandboxes" such as Erik Loyer's *Stepworks*; and a podcast (preferably academic or scholarly) of your choice.

To introduce you to literary and cultural approaches to sound and listening, I'll also compile a course pack of essays (PDFs), notes, and a glossary drawn from the work of Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Roland Barthes, Jody Berland, Daphne Brooks, Michael Bull, John Cage, Jason Camlot, Anne Margaret Castro, Adriana Cavarero, David Cecchetto, Steph Ceraso, Michel Chion, Tanya Clement, Susan Douglas, Nina Sun Eidsheim, Ralph Ellison, Brian Eno, Kodwo Eshun, Frantz Fanon, Julie Funk, Sumanth Gopinath, Lisa Gitelman, Iben Have, Michelle Hilmes, Douglas Kahn, Brian Kane, Anahid Kassabian, Eric A. Havelock, Kool Herc, Holly Herndon, Sarah Kozloff, James Lastra, Hugh Le Caine, Francisco López, Hannah McGregor, Paul D. Miller (DJ Shadow), Mara Mills, Fred Moten, Pauline Oliveros, Walter Ong, John Durham Peters, Richard Cullen Rath, Dylan Robinson, Tara Rodgers, Tricia Rose, Matthew Rubery, Murray Schafer, Pierre Schaeffer, Karis Shearer, Kaja Silverman, Jonathan Sterne, Jennifer Lynn Stoeber, Juan A. Suárez, Emily Thompson, Alexander Weheliye, Anna Williams, Virginia Woolf, Iannis Xenakis, and Pamela Z.

Tentative assignments: a portfolio of audio work (30% x 2), culminating in an audio essay or podcast episode with a description and script / transcript (40%); if you do not have access to audio technologies, then all of these assignments can be written without producing or editing audio.

ENGLISH 531 A01

STUDIES IN THE LITERATURE OF THE 17TH C: SPECIAL TOPIC

Literature and Religion from Spenser to Milton

(1.5 units)

Dr. Gary Kuchar

In this course, we will examine a number of major and lesser known works in the context of early modern religion. Our primary goal is to better understand the extent to which the power of fascination that literary texts possess arises from their engagement with religious practices and beliefs in the period. To do this, we will ask: How did changing ideas of the sacred animate the forms, themes, and exigencies of literary works in the period? How did increasing biblical literacy and changing views of holiness transform the ethical orientations of writers in the period? How did women writers respond to the changing circumstances of post-Reformation England? How did changing views about images, emotion, gender, language, liturgy, history, and power alter the literary landscape? Writers to be studied include Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, Lanyer, Herbert, and Milton.

Tentative Text List:

Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (Books 1 and 5); William Shakespeare (*Henry VIII*); John Donne (Selected Poetry and Prose); Lanyer, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*; Herbert, (Selected Poetry and Prose), Milton, (Selected Poetry and Prose); Peter Marshall, *Reformation England*.

Assignments (subject to change):

Participation (either synchronous or asynchronous) (30%); 1 Presentation (25%); Essay Proposal (10%); Final Essay (35%)

ENGLISH 550 A01 STUDIES IN THE LITERATURE OF THE 19TH C: AREA COURSE
Victorian Place Poetry: Mapping the Ecologies of Victorian Poems
(1.5 units)
Dr. Alison Chapman

In this age of empire, Victorian poetry was replete with places but also with displacement. Victorian poems represented a huge terrain of places, both real and imagined, but also evinced a restless urge to move onwards to places familiar as well as new (think of that iconic Victorian poem, Tennyson's "Ulysses"). As the edges of the Victorian world expanded with colonization and improved technologies of travel, the relationship between center and periphery emerged as an anxious dialectic, and poets explored this tension explicitly in their writing about places, home, and travel. This course asks students to consider Victorian poetry geographically as well as poetically, and the critical methodology will embrace spatial studies, geo-literary criticism, and historical poetics.

Our approach to poems and poets will respond to the emerging critical investment in global Victorian studies, in order to complicate the "Victorian" in Victorian poetry. To make the geographies manageable (and to fit with my own scholarly expertise), the places in the weekly seminars will be focused on Britain, Europe, and India, although students will be encouraged to develop their own interests in mapping poems of place and can venture wider if they choose. The course includes diverse kinds of poets (canonical, non-canonical [including working-class poets], and British as well as colonial and American poets) and publication venues (books, anthologies, newspapers, magazines, and periodicals).

A central concern of Victorian poetry about place was whether, how, and to what degree place and space could be represented, especially as a function of time. And so, as part of their engagement with poems of place, students will address issues of poetics (how can a poem represent place, how does form in particular signify place, and what are the limits of geo-literary representation); the aesthetics and politics that inform metropolitan, rural, and wild places; social spaces and issues of community and intellectual networks (such as cafés, restaurants, art studios, railway carriages, salons, factories, and even the Paris morgue as a social space); museums, art galleries, and ruins, especially those featured on the European "tour" (Catullus's villa in Sirmione, Pompeii, the Louvre, the Uffizi, the Taj Mahal).

Tentative Texts:

Collins, Thomas J. and Vivienne J. Rundle. *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry*. Broadview, 1999. Supplemented by other poems and primary readings.

Tentative Assignments:

Participation 10%; Presentation 15%; Mapping Exercise 25%; Seminar Research Paper 50% (includes 10% research proposal)

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SPRING 2021

ENGLISH 540 A01 STUDIES IN THE LITERATURE OF THE 18TH CENTURY: AREA COURSE
Picture This: Literature and the Visual Arts in the Eighteenth Century
(1.5 units)
Dr. Eric Miller

If a picture is worth a thousand words, there is no way that practitioners of literature could keep up, these days. We can understand why Susan Sontag hypothesized the need for what she called, decades ago, an “ecology” of images. Our shots of endangered species outnumber their extant populations; cameras and guns compete to find their targets on every earthly battlefield; and we moon, shyly or brazenly, over our interchangeable selfies. How revelatory, therefore, to look back at an era before the invention of the camera! In the eighteenth century, printing already permitted the dissemination of images on an industrial scale, but the human hand—the human nervous system—had, in the end or in the beginning, an overwhelming role in the representation of the world, its peoples and its creatures. This seminar intends to look at peculiar modes of ekphrasis, at the development of scientific description and illustration, at the theory of the Picturesque, at writers who pretend to compose their works like graphic artists—or even actually do so.

Tentative Texts:

Darwin, Blake, Simcoe, Sterne, Goethe, Radcliffe, Pope, Swift, White, Novalis

Tentative Assignments:

Leading of Seminar Discussions (30%); Participation (25%); Final Paper (45%)

ENGLISH 572 STUDIES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE: SPECIAL TOPIC
Contemporary American Fiction and Religion
(1.5 units)
Dr. Christopher Douglas

Despite the current reign of “post secular” literary criticism in contemporary literature and religion studies – or perhaps because of it – one of the most astonishing but under-examined facets of the contemporary period of American literature is the cultural and political empowerment of the Christian Right since the 1960s, even as American religions became paradoxically pluralized and secularized. This course examines contemporary American fiction within this context. As we will see, the critical literary response to this Christian resurgence was sometimes complicated by the fact that it seemed to co-occur with two other movements within the contemporary period – multiculturalism and postmodernism. And although multiculturalism and postmodernism would frequently be seen as antagonists of the Christian resurgence, the literary response sometimes says otherwise: in important ways these movements are co-symptomatic, sharing not only non-trivial similarities, but also artistic and intellectual genealogies, relations of influence and articulation. We will discuss, among other issues, the “post secular”, imperialism, race, religion and cultural pluralism, American history, fundamentalisms, theodicy, and evolution, as well as the twin developments of the treatment of religion as though it were a culture, and the collapse of modern modes of rational expertise and authority.

Tentative Text List:

Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*; Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo*; Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead*; Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*; Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible*; Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*; Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian*; Mohja Kahf, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*; Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, *Left Behind*; E. L. Doctorow, *City of God*; Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*; David Foster Wallace, "Good People" (online); Wm. Paul Young, *The Shack: Where Tragedy Confronts Eternity*; LaHaye, Tim, and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Left Behind* (vol. 1); Secondary texts include Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America" (in *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditionalist World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); John McClure, "Postmodern/Post-Secular: Contemporary Fiction and Spirituality." Branch, Lori. 2016. "Postsecular Studies." *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Religion*, ed. Mark Knight. Abingdon: Routledge. 91-101; Robert Orsi, "Everyday Miracles: the Study of Lived Religion" (in David Hall, ed., *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*. Princeton UP, 1997); Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*. 1845; Susan Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*; Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in The Da Vinci Code: A Historian Reveals What We Really Know about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Constantine*; Amy Hungerford, *Postmodern Belief: American Literature and Religion since 1960*; Will Herberg. *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*. 1955, 1960; Douglas, Christopher. 2016. *If God Meant to Interfere: American Literature and the Rise of the Christian Right*. Ithaca: Cornell UP; Douglas, Christopher. 2018. "David Foster Wallace's Evangelicals: The Other Postsecularism." *Christianity & Literature* 67(3).

Tentative Assignments: Orally-Presented 8-10 page Short Essay and Annotated Bibliography (20%); Teaching Presentation, With Handouts (15%); Term Paper Proposal, Including Annotated Bibliography (15%); 20-page Research Essay (40%); Participation, Assessed on the Frequency and Quality of Individual Students' Contributions to the Class Discussion and CourseSpaces (10%)

ENGLISH 585 A01 STUDIES IN CANADIAN LITERATURE: AREA COURSE
Indigenous and Diasporic Literatures in Canada
(1.5 units)
Dr. Nicole Shukin

Paradoxically, at the turn of the twenty-first century some of the most nationally and internationally touted Canadian authors neither identify in any easy sense with Canada, nor privilege national-cultural themes or subject matter in their writing. Inasmuch as it is a sense of belonging or feeling at home within the national space and cultural sign of "Canada" that is troubled by many contemporary authors, this course offers a necessarily ironic cross-section of Canada's most compelling contemporary literature, as produced by 1) Diasporic writers negotiating plural homelands, cultural identities, and histories of dislocation; and 2) Indigenous writers with a priori yet painfully deferred claims to homelands and sovereignty inside a national geography within which they have been internally displaced. Students in the seminar will examine how the infra- and trans-national positions from which indigenous and diasporic authors write unsettle a dominant national culture, even as cultural institutions within Canada (including universities) find new ways of subsuming an unruly array of native and multicultural literatures into the service of its unifying sign.

Tentative Texts:

Novels: Joseph Boyden, *Three-Day Road*; David Chariandy, *Soucouyant*; Wayson Choy, *All That Matters*; Tomson Highway, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*; Thomas King, *Truth & Bright Water*; Anne Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces*; M.J. Vassanji, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*

Poetry: Dionne Brand, *Inventory*; Fred Wah, *Diamond Grill*; Gregory Scofield, from *kipocihkAcn: Poems New and Selected*

Short Stories: Alooook Ipellie, from *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*; Rohinton Mistry, “Squatter”; Eden Robinson, “Terminal Avenue”

**English 585 Custom Coursepack* (containing critical readings by James Clifford, Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, Lily Cho, David Chariandy, Stuart Hall, Sam McKegney, and Smaro Kamboureli)

Tentative Assignments:

Seminar presentation & formal write-up 25%; Short proposal for final research paper & symposium talk 15%; Final research essay 45%; Weekly submission of questions in response to readings 15%

ENGLISH 561 A01 STUDIES IN 20TH-CENTURY BRITISH AND IRISH LITERATURE: SPECIAL TOPIC

Modern Irish Literature

(1.5 units)

Dr. Magdalena Kay

Ireland produced a huge amount of important, innovative work in the twentieth century, yet surveys of Irish (as opposed to British) writing are fairly rare. For this reason, I am proposing a course focused exclusively on Irish writing in multiple genres. It is imperative to consider Irish literature in terms of its unique historical and cultural position, and this course will seek to balance historical, “contextual” readings with formal readings, in which we foreground the stylistic innovations of particular literary texts. Our guiding question may be whether these approaches must be seen as discrepant or exclusive, as they are often popularly considered. The authors we study often have strong opinions as to how they should be read, and we will consider their personal stakes in such methodological questions.

When asked whether he was a British writer, Beckett replied, “au contraire.” How can we understand such contrariness? Or situate such cheeky yet wry humor? The course will survey the Irish twentieth century (and part of the twenty-first) in order to grapple with such questions.

In the twenty-first century, scholars have begun to query whether we can move beyond the “Irish” label, and perhaps beyond the concept of nationality itself. There are good reasons for this desire: contemporary Irish writers often feel hampered, both by an antiquated notion of Irishness that has medieval roots and by twentieth-century notions of it that focus on the struggle for independence and the Protestant-Catholic conflict. This course will push students to think provocatively about Irishness and take part in this important critical dialogue, as we work through a modern era that begins with the anti-modern, nationalist Yeats and continues today with the cosmopolitan Mahon. This will necessarily include questioning why women have been remarkably absent from this conversation until the contemporary period.

There will be an online coursepack of secondary sources available to students that is specifically tailored to our weekly readings. This is meant to ensure that students can expand their knowledge of each author by reading about issues highlighted by this author’s work: for instance, an essay on family life and gender supplements Bowen’s novel *The Death of the Heart*. This course intends to give students a broad overview of modern Irish literature that is focused on major works in various genres. It introduces students to major critical questions in Irish studies and shows how such questions change throughout time. Lastly, it encourages students to take active part in a scholarly dialogue about these issues by requiring oral presentations on secondary sources as well as on primary texts, and requiring a final research essay.

Tentative Texts:

W. B. Yeats, *Selected Poems*; James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; Patrick Kavanagh, *Collected Poems*; Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of the Heart*; Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*; Eavan Boland, *In a Time of Violence* and *The Lost Land*; Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground: Selected Poems, 1966-1996*, and selected poems from *Human Chain*; Derek Mahon, *New Collected Poems*; Brian Friel, *Translations*

Tentative Assignments:

First Presentation (on Irish history and culture): 25 %; Second Presentation (a critical assessment of a scholarly article): 25 %; Final essay: 40 %; Participation in discussion and essay workshop: 10 %