

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH GRADUATE COURSES**

**FALL 2025**

**ENGLISH 500**

**RESEARCH METHODS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**(1.5 units)**

**Dr. Janelle Jenstad**

**Tuesdays, 6:00- 8:50 p.m. PST**

**ONLINE, SYNCHRONOUS**

English 500 is the foundational course of the graduate program, orienting students within the broad field of the discipline of English and also forging a cohesive and collegial student cohort. The course has two functions: firstly, to introduce the **concepts** and **practice** that underpin advanced literary research skills and textual studies (the practice of textual criticism, and the history of the production and dissemination of print); secondly, 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, appropriate forms of citation and documentation, finding a position within established and emerging trends in English studies). The course will allow students to draw upon digitized primary sources from libraries around the world.

**Tentative Text List:**

No assigned texts to buy. I will upload resources, handouts, tips, and short extracts from scholarly sources into BrightSpace. Otherwise, students do reading in their own areas of interest for the purposes of completing the assignments.

**Assignments:**

Course is graded on a pass/fail basis. Students must achieve the equivalent of 75% on each assignment to pass the assignment. Assignments that do not meet the minimum standard will be returned with a request to revise and resubmit. Students must pass all assignments to pass the course.

**Assignment**

Humanities Value Reflection

List of Four Journals in Your Field

List of Four Databases and Reference Works

Enumerative Bibliography of Five Articles/Chapters

Annotations for your Enumerative Bibliography

State-of-the-art footnote

Conference proposal/abstract

Archival object biography

Presentation on archival object

**Type**

Submit to Instructor

Post to Discussion Forum

Post to Discussion Forum

Submit to Instructor

Submit to Instructor

Submit to Instructor

Submit to Instructor

Submit to Instructor

Submit slide(s) to Instructor

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**ENGLISH 532****TOPICS IN LITERARY HISTORY: William Blake and His Circle  
(1.5 units)****Dr. Eric Miller****Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.-2:20 p.m.****IN-PERSON**

The work and life of William Blake (1757-1827) remain exemplary and—to use a word with special pertinence to his practice—inspiring. That is to say, they have not ceased to be productive. He unites graphic with poetic talent, and thus prophesies (another word germane to his practice) our own pervasive milieu of mixed media. His artisanal method is of a piece with his poetry, yet the poetry can subsist absent its context (a revelatory fusion and fission). He has attracted great writers, scholars and critics (Rossetti, Yeats, Housman, Frye, McGann &c.&c.). Mere human interest makes him extraordinarily compelling (autodidaxis, the imputation of madness, partnership in art with his wife Catherine (née Boucher), government persecution, dreadnaught self-publishing—in a word: courage). Embracing Blake's circle (circumferentially, as suits circles) will mean encounters with astonishing figures such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Henry Fuseli, Joseph Johnson, John Flaxman, and Samuel Palmer. And, of course, long-term artistic reception constitutes a major dimension of criticism (Blake appeals to the Beats, to Ted Hughes, to Louise Glück, to Patty Smith... Blake's inbuilt hermeneutic hospitality is beguiling and a continually renewed revelation).

**Tentative Text List:**

The complete works of William Blake; relevant works by his contemporaries (e.g. Mary Wollstonecraft, William Hayley, John Flaxman) and by his avowed and evident influences (e.g. the Bible, John Milton, Michelangelo). Exemplary works by those who profess influence by Blake in more recent times (e.g. Louise Glück, Allen Ginsberg, Ted Hughes).

**Assignments (be specific and include percentage values):**

Three or four presentations: 40%; final paper: 40%; attendance and participation: 20%

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**ENGLISH 544****TOPICS IN ETHICS AND MEDIA: Shakespeare's Mad Men  
(1.5 Units)****Dr. Richard van Oort****Tuesdays, 11:00 a.m.-1:50 p.m.****IN-PERSON**

In this course we will discuss Shakespeare's variously bad, mad, and exiled *big men*. What is a big man? A big man is a usurper of the sacred centre. Before big men arrived on the scene, gods were the only beings powerful enough to occupy this position. Among hunters and gatherers, big men do not exist. In this type of society, political and economic activity is indistinguishable from ritual activity; and ritual is controlled not by big men but by supernatural beings whose rule cannot be contested by mere mortals. Consequently, political decisions get distributed across kinship groups rather than centralized in a vertical chain of command. But when foragers settle in villages and start to domesticate plants and animals, the ethical order changes. Sedentary societies (i.e., farmers, herders) depend upon centralized food storage, which enables the more aggressive members of the group to compete for possession of the surplus. These ambitious individuals are the first big men, the first usurpers of the political authority of the centre.

This course is for anyone interested in the idea that Shakespeare's plays can help us understand not just the kind of society in which we live but the kind of society in which we would like to live. In short, we will read Shakespeare to see who we are, where we came from, and where we might be going.

Our primary focus will be on Shakespeare, but we will also take a sidelong glance at a handful of anthropologists, political theorists, philosophers, economists, and literary critics (e.g., Harry Berger, Emile Durkheim, Francis Fukuyama, Eric Gans, René Girard, Ernest Gellner, Friedrich Nietzsche, Marshall Sahlins, and Yanis Varoufakis).

**Tentative texts:** *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, *Coriolanus*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Tempest*

**Assignments:** Short essay (30%), Research paper (60%), Participation (10%)

## ENGLISH 546

## TOPICS IN RELIGION IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA:

### Apocalypse Now and Then

(1.5 Units)

Dr. Christopher Douglas

Wednesdays, 4:30 p.m.-7:20 p.m.

HYBRID, SYNCHRONOUS

This seminar examines the genre of apocalypse across continents and through centuries, concentrating on the beginnings of apocalypse in ancient Judean cosmological speculation and ending with contemporary American apocalypses and post-apocalypses. We'll examine the early development of apocalypse in texts Biblical (Daniel and Revelation) and parabiblical (1 Enoch's *The Book of the Watchers* and the *Animal Apocalypse*) as a way of understanding the development of genre in deep time. We will study contemporary American Christian Right apocalyptic fictions that transform these traditions (such as the first novel in the like the evangelical Christian *Left Behind* series, Frank Peretti's *This Present Darkness*, and the premillennial dispensationalist evangelical film *A Thief in the Night*) and a secular post-apocalypse (Tom Perotta's *The Leftovers*), as well as the influence of apocalypse's sequel, gnosticism (in the gnostic *Apocryphon of John*), on contemporary fiction (Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* and *The Road*). We will track the genre's transformation of divine repertoires, characters, and plots as a way of understanding the enduring religious questions about the providence and justice of the god(s).

### Tentative Text List:

Daniel and Revelation

1 Enoch's *The Book of the Watchers* and *Animal Apocalypse*

*Apocryphon of John*

Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, *Left Behind* volume 1

Frank Peretti, *This Present Darkness*

*A Thief in the Night*

Tom Perotta, *The Leftovers*

Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian*

Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*

Mark Smith, *The Memoirs of God: History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel*

John Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.

### Assignments (provisional):

Orally-presented 8-10 page short essay and annotated bibliography (20%); teaching presentation, with handouts (15%); term paper proposal, including annotated bibliography (15%); 20-25 page research essay (40%); participation, assessed on the frequency and quality of individual students' contributions to the class discussion (10%).

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
GRADUATE COURSES**

**SPRING 2026**

**ENGLISH 533**

**TOPICS IN GENRE IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA: Metaphysical  
Poetry from John Donne to Don Domanski  
(1.5 Units)**

**Dr. Gary Kuchar**

**Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m.-8:50 p.m.**

**HYBRID, SYNCHRONOUS**

Metaphysical poetry in English remains a living (if still contested) poetic tradition practiced by some of Canada's finest 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century poets. This course is a study of the tradition and the debates about it from its origins in seventeenth-century England up to contemporary Canadian verse. Particular focus will be placed on the relation between poetic form and religious/spiritual thought, as well as the question of intertextuality as poets respond to one another over time. As such, we will ask such questions as: how do metaphysical poets "think with" poetry? How does poetry as a medium make certain kinds of thought and feeling possible that might otherwise remain wholly inarticulate? How have questions of mind, body, nature/place, revelation, and transcendence been addressed in this tradition? And how and why do such questions make for good poetry? Our approach in this course will thus be both contextual and formalist, focusing on both the ideas expressed in the poetry as well as how those ideas take shape at different times and places in the Anglo-American world from the early 17<sup>th</sup>-century to the early 21<sup>st</sup>. Poets to be studied may include Robert Southwell, John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Elizabeth Bishop, Denise Levertov, Margaret Avison, Don Domanski, and Tim Lilburn. Critical statements by these and other writers will also be considered, starting with Samuel Johnson's groundbreaking analysis in "The Life of Cowley."

**Tentative Text List:** Norton Anthology of 17<sup>th</sup>-century verse; T.S. Eliot Complete Poems; Selected Works of Hopkins, Dickinson, Stevens, Bishop, Levertov, Avison, Domanski, and Lilburn.

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**ENGLISH 534****TOPICS IN THEORY AND CRITICISM: Contemporary Theory  
(1.5 Units)****Dr. Stephen Ross****Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m.-7:50 p.m.****HYBRID, SYNCHRONOUS**

This course will survey some of the most cutting-edge elements of theory today, from posthumanism (biological and technological), through Indigenous theories, and affect theory. We will anchor our readings of recent theoretical interventions in the broader intellectual and cultural contexts from which they emerge and upon which they draw. Though we will not study Marxism, psychoanalysis, feminism, deconstruction, etc. directly, we will encounter them and learn about them as we navigate the contemporary theoretical scene. The objective is to give students a strong sense of the most urgent theoretical issues being dealt with today, and to ground those issues in the broader intellectual currents – not all of them Western – that subtend them. By the end of the term, students will have a solid grasp on some of today's most vibrant theoretical approaches, and a clear sense of how those approaches fit into longer histories of thought, production, media, and culture.

**Tentative Text List:**

A custom coursepack featuring readings from Anna Tsing, Slavoj Žižek, Wendy Chun, Timothy Mitchell, Jacques Derrida, Roberto Esposito, Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Andrew Thacker, Lauren Berlant, Lee Edelman, Mairi Ruti, Jeff Corntassel, Glenn Coulthard, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Leanne Howe, Jane Doerfler, Nancy Turner, Timothy Morton, and others.

**Assignments (be specific and include percentage values):**

Presentation – 20%

2 Blog Posts – 20%

Book or Podcast Review – 10%

Final Project or Paper – 30%

Learning Narrative – 20%

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**ENGLISH 543****TOPICS IN POLITICS IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA:****The Climate of Our Poems****(1.5 Units)****Dr. Nicholas Bradley****Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.****IN-PERSON**

We are all ecocritics now, or should be; climate change has seen to that. This course examines modes of reading in a time of unprecedented environmental calamity, asking how the study of literature, and the humanities more generally, can help to understand and perhaps intervene in our present ecological crisis. What are the possibilities for and responsibilities of literary creation and cultural commentary when a livable planet can no longer be assumed? Interdisciplinary by

definition, ecocritics ground their commentary on literary matters in the knowledge created by researchers in other fields. The relevance of science is self-evident, but certain branches of the social sciences—geography, economics, anthropology—also inform the study of literature and its place in the world. In turn, the course asks students to investigate how humanistic inquiry makes significant contributions on its own terms, even if the distance between what C. P. Snow termed in 1959 the two cultures is arguably as wide as ever (not least on our campus). Students will read a selection of works—critical, theoretical, historical, meteorological—as the course surveys a range of contemporary topics: the Anthropocene, extinction, apocalypse, utopia, solastalgia, resource extraction, Deep Time, climate, speculative fiction, crisis aesthetics, and so on. Above all, students will trace the cross-disciplinary conceptual shifts of the last decades from “nature” to “ecology” and from “weather” to “climate.”

### **Tentative Text List**

**All works to be made available online via Library:**

- D. Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History”
- D. Farrier, *Anthropocene Poetics: Deep Time, Sacrifice Zones, and Extinction*
- G. Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 3rd ed.
- U. Heise, *Imagining Extinction: The Cultural Meanings of Endangered Species*
- U. Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*
- A. Johns-Putra, Introduction to *Climate and Literature*
- C. Mass, *The Weather of the Pacific Northwest*, 2021 edition
- M. Puchner, *Literature for a Changing Planet*
- A. Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*
- M. H. Song, *Climate Lyricism*
- S. Watt-Cloutier, *The Right to Be Cold: One Woman’s Story of Protecting Her Culture, the Arctic and the Whole Planet*
- Literary selections TBD by class

### **Assignments (be specific and include percentage values):**

- Two seminar presentations on critical works (2 x 10%)
- Public-facing project on climate and literature (30%)
- Proposal for research paper with annotated bibliography (10%)
- Research paper, approx. 20 pp. (40%)

**ENGLISH 547****TOPICS IN SUBJECTHOOD IN LITERATURE AND MEDIA:****The Family, Sex, and Marriage in Renaissance Literature****(1.5 Units)****Dr. Erin Ellerbeck****Tuesdays, 11:00 a.m.-1:50 p.m.****IN-PERSON**

The course will endeavour to determine how literary representations of family life challenge or confirm notions of kinship. We will explore the sometimes surprising familial formations depicted in some of the most notable literary works of the English Renaissance by authors such as Shakespeare, Middleton, and Milton. Literary texts address familial experiences in ways that expose historical, social, cultural, and political concerns; they also represent possible familial structures that early modern people both knew and imagined to exist. Students will acquire a rich understanding of marriage and familial practices during the period in order to provide an historical context for the literature we study. In its extended senses the family also encompasses distinctly literary, political, and scientific matters: conceptions of the family were tied to understandings of authorship, the monarchy, and human anatomy. In our analysis of the literature of the Renaissance we will consider issues such as sexuality, incest, domestic violence, affective bonds, gender roles, race, economics, and social class. We will also examine practices such as service, fostering, and wet-nursing, and figures such as the cuckold, the bastard, and the twin. By attending to the family in its many social and linguistic manifestations, the seminar will arrive at a richer understanding of the roles of the theatrical and literary arts in the imagination and formation of social order. Students will have the opportunity to read works from three literary genres: poetry, prose, and drama. In our investigation of the works we will employ a range of critical methods from new historicism to historical formalism.

The assignments for the course are designed to provide graduate students with the opportunity to develop expertise in a variety of pre-professional contexts. Seminar members will participate in class discussion, lead part of a seminar, write abstracts for their final papers, and present short versions of these final papers at the course colloquium.

Students with a background in early modern literature will find the course of particular interest, but it will also appeal to students who are interested in gender, sexuality, and family studies more broadly.

**Tentative Text List:****Primary Texts:**

- excerpts from *The Book of Common Prayer*
- Anonymous, *Arden of Feversham*
- Bacon, "Of Parents and Children" and "Of Marriage and Single Life"

- Donne, “Epithalamion Made at Lincoln’s Inn” and “An Epithalamion, or Marriage Song on the Lady Elizabeth and Count Palatine Being Married on St. Valentine’s Day”
- Erasmus, excerpts from *The Civilitie of Childhood*
- Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*
- Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*
- Jonson, “On My First Son” and “To Penshurst”
- Lanyer, “The Description of Cooke-ham”
- Leigh, excerpts from *The Mother’s Blessing*
- Marvell, “Upon Appleton House”
- Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*
- Milton, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*
- Philips, “On the Death of My First and Dearest Child, Hector Philips”
- Raleigh, “Sir Walter Raleigh to His Son”
- Shakespeare, Sonnets 1, 3, and 15
- . *Titus Andronicus*
- . *The Winter’s Tale*
- Spenser, “Epithalamion”
- T.E., excerpts from *The Law’s Resolution of Women’s Rights; Or, the Law’s Provision for Women*
- Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*
- Whitney, “Will and Testament”

#### Secondary Texts:

- Akhimi, *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference: Race and Conduct in the Early Modern World* (2018)
- Balizet, “Dismemberment and Domesticity in *Arden of Faversham* and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*,” in *Staging the Blazon* (2016)
- Brooks, *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England* (2017)
- Dolan, “Shakespeare and Marriage: An Open Question,” *Literature Compass* 8.9 (2011)
- Dowd, “Delinquent Pedigrees: Revision, Lineage, and Spatial Rhetoric in *The Duchess of Malfi*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 39.3 (2009)
- Dowd, *The Dynamics of Inheritance on the Shakespearean Stage* (2015)
- Dubrow, “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?: Reinterpreting Formalism and the Country House Poem,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 61.1 (2000)
- Frey and Lieblein, “‘My breasts sear’d’: The Self –Starved Female Body and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*,” *Early Theatre* 7.1 (2004)
- Lambert, “Spenser’s *Epithalamion* and the Protestant Expression of Joy,” *SEL* 54.1 (2014)
- Luttfiring, “Dissection, Pregnancy, and the Limits of Knowledge in Early Modern Midwifery Treatises and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*,” in *Staging the Blazon* (2016)
- Paster, “Leaky Vessels: The Incontinent Women of City Comedy,” *Renaissance Drama* 18 (1987)
- Pearson, “‘That bloody mind I think they learned of me’: Aaron as Tutor in *Titus Andronicus*,” *Shakespeare* 6.1 (2010)
- Schutzman, “Alice Arden’s Freedom and the Suspended Moment of *Arden of Faversham*,” *SEL* 36.2 (1996)



-Scott, *The Child in Shakespeare* (2018)

**Assignments:**

-seminar presentation (10%) and paper (8-10 pages, 20%)

-colloquium abstract (10%) and annotated bibliography (10%)

-final paper (15-20 pages, 50%)