Overview of Graduate Courses 2020-2021

The following seminars will be offered in Fall 2020, Winter 2021, and Spring/Summer 2021. The exact schedule will be determined later. For more information, contact the Graduate Assistant at artsgrad@uottawa.ca

Andrew Taylor “Romance, Medieval to Contemporary” (Medieval)
Irene Makaryk “Shakespeare and Cultural Exchange” (Shakespeare)
Sara Landreth, “Science Fiction ←Then and Now→” (Eighteenth Century)
Ina Dennis “Romantic Identity in Market Society” (Romantic)
Lauren Gillingham “The Melodramatic Moment, from Holcroft to Haynes” (Victorian)
Mary Arseneau “Victorian Women Poets: Gender, Poetics, and a Female Literary Tradition” (Victorian)
Jennifer Blair “Canadian Literatures through and beyond the Black Atlantic: Texts and Influences” (Canadian)
James Brooke-Smith “Culture in the 1990s” (Twentieth Century and Contemporary)
Anne Raine “Affective Ecocriticism, Contemplative Pedagogy, and the Climate Crisis” (Twentieth Century and Contemporary)
Thomas Allen “Critical Methodologies in Literary Studies” (Theory)

ENG 6302 Research Methods and Professionalization, Part 1

Fall 2020 (1.5 credits)

Professor Graduate Director, Andrew Taylor

Introduction: This course is a series of workshops designed to help students develop the skills they need to succeed in graduate studies. The amount of work required is minimal, as the sessions are designed not to add to students’ workload but to provide guidance and practical help with the scholarly tasks you need to be doing anyway. Some workshops will be led by the Graduate Director and others by guest speakers from within and outside the English Department. Topics will include research methods and library resources, preparing scholarship applications, teaching strategies for new TAs, and strategies for writing graduate-level essays and thesis proposals.

ENG 6302 is required for all MA and PhD students.
Method: Biweekly workshops (there may be a couple of extra sessions in September), with a minimal amount of preparatory reading for some sessions and some short follow-up assignments.

Grading: S/NS

ENG 6303 Research Methods and Professionalization, Part 2

Winter 2021 (1.5 credits)

Professor: Graduate Director, Andrew Taylor

Introduction: This course is a series of workshops designed to help students develop the professional skills required for an academic career and/or for the transition from graduate studies to careers outside academia. The amount of work required is minimal, as the sessions are designed not to add to students’ workload by to provide guidance and practical help with the professional tasks you need to be doing anyway. Some workshops will be led by the Graduate Director and others by guest speakers from within and outside the English Department. Topics will include presenting papers at conferences, publishing in academic journals and other venues, course design and other advanced teaching skills, preparing for the academic job market, and preparing for non-academic careers.

ENG 6303 is required for all MA and PhD students.

Method: Biweekly workshops, with a minimal amount of preparatory reading and some short follow-up assignments.

Grading: S/NS

Romance, Medieval to Contemporary (3 Credits)

Professor: Andrew Taylor

Introduction: “[N]o matter how great a change may take place in society, romance will turn up again, as hungry as ever, looking for new hopes and desires to feed on.” Northrop Frye

From medieval poems of love and adventure to contemporary gaming and fan fiction, the genre loosely called “romance” has entertained, educated, and embarrassed, providing a site for wish fulfilment, personal development, and sexual exploration. It is often regarded as trashy but includes major works of canonical literature.
In an effort to explore the force and appeal of the genre, we will focus on four works: the late twelfth-century northern French romance *Lancelot or the Knight of the Cart*, of Chrétien de Troyes; the anonymous late fourteenth-century Middle English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; Sir Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*; and the role-playing shooter game *Borderlands*, in its various iterations. The critics who guide us will include champions of the literary genre, notably Eric Auerbach, Northrop Frye, and James Simpson; moral critics, notably Toril Moi; and champions of fan fiction, notably Henry Jenkins, and of gaming, notably Sherry Turkle and Colin Milburn.

**Grading**

Seminar presentation and report, and class participation 40%; major paper 60%

**Texts**


*Borderlands*. Epic Games.

**Shakespeare and Cultural Exchange**

**Professor**: Irene Makaryk

**Introduction**: This study of worldwide Shakespeare reception will be focused on theoretical and cultural-historical issues, and is based on the premise that adaptation is the norm, not the exception, in literature (Linda Hutcheon). We will consider a wide range of adaptations and translations of Shakespeare from around the globe, viewing each of them not as unidirectional “products” of the translation process (i.e., more or less “faithful” versions of Shakespeare) but, rather, as “braided histories” (Natalie Z. Davis) involved in complex cultural and political reciprocities. Translation and adaptation theories will thus be our major tools for an examination of Shakespeare in his various guises. In turn, Shakespeare will be the prism through which we will examine a number of concepts central to our discipline, such as the classic, the author, canon, ideology, literature as system, postcolonialism, nationalism, interculturalism, and literature as system.
Because Shakespeare is the best-travelled of all literary figures, his works offer an excellent case study of the complexity of the dynamics of cultural exchange, the broader issue that will underpin all of our discussions.

Texts:
Course reader of theoretical texts.

Science Fiction←Then and Now→

Professor: Sara Landreth

Introduction: This course explores works of early science fiction alongside modern sci-fi and fantasy texts. Our readings are organized around four central themes: Fantastic Vehicles, Apocalyptic Plagues, Parallel Dimensions, and “Mad” Science. Each unit begins by tracing one of these motifs back to the 17th and 18th centuries. Inspired by discoveries in physics, medicine, and botany, Enlightenment authors wrote speculative fiction that imagined extraterrestrials, talking animals, artificial wombs, plagues, and reanimated corpses. We will pursue these ideas about aliens, space travel, autonomous vehicles, pandemics, parallel dimensions, and inventor-creators forward into 20th- and 21st-century science fiction and fantasy, with an aim to analyze how these thematics change over time.

Texts:

Fantastic Vehicles
Francis Godwin, *Man in the Moone* (1633)
Anonymous, “Travels of Monsieur Le Post Chaise” (1748)
Voltaire, *Micromegas* (1752)
Apocalyptic Plagues
Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722)
Alice Sheldon, “The Screwfly Solution” (1977)
Emily St John Mandel, *Station Eleven* (2014)

Parallel Dimensions
Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis* (1626)
Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World* (1667)
Matthew Murphy *A Blazing World* (2011)

Mad Science
Anonymous, “The Man Plant” (1752)
Erasmus Darwin, *Loves of the Plants* (1791)
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

Romantic Identity in Market Society

**Professor:** Ian Dennis

**Introduction:** This course will study the new means of producing personal identity and social value pioneered in the Romantic period. In particular, we will consider the claims to cultural or social centrality made by representations of the heroically transgressive or “marginal” individual in a burgeoning “consumer” or market society. We will pay special attention to three stages in an evolving process: Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s positioning of the victim as subject, the formulation of the theory of the poet by the first generation of
English romantics led by William Wordsworth, and the development of the “Byronic hero” by its most prominent practitioner and penetrating critic, Lord Byron himself. The bulk of our primary reading will be in these figures, but will be supplemented by other important texts, including other examples of identities or personae offered for consumption and imitation, such as Henry Mackenzie’s sentimental man of feeling, and “the female Byron,” Letitia Landon. We will read two major continental writers, Stendhal and Pushkin, for their own observations on the paradoxes of modern identity, and sample relevant critical, historical and theoretical writings from our own time, including René Girard and Eric Gans on imitative desire, Harold Bloom on the anxiety of influence, and recent historians on the rise of commercial society.

Grading: Term essay, 50%; seminar work, 50%.

Texts:


Lord Byron, *The Major Works* (Oxford)

Letitia Elizabeth Landon, *Selected Writings* (Broadview)


Frequently anthologized British Romantic texts

Course package

The Melodramatic Moment, from Holcroft to Haynes

Professor: Lauren Gillingham

Introduction: Given its critical fortunes almost from its inception in the early nineteenth century, melodrama appears to be a literary genre and mode that is either marginal to or parasitic on canonical developments in Western literary history. Indeed, critic Marcie Frank asked recently whether the qualifier “melodramatic” has “ever yet been a term of praise?” With playscripts that subordinate dialogue to gesture and sound and eschew investigation of motive and interiority in preference for exterior signs of character and feeling, and novels that reach histrionic highs (or lows) in their representation of familial and social relations, melodrama can be frustrating to work with when our critical instincts still hew towards linguistic complexity and subjective depth. Despite its apparent oversimplicity, though, melodrama has been the object of growing critical interest in recent decades, generating new insights
into its role in modernity, its participation in transformations of political and perceptual consciousness, and its relationship to media and genre of all sorts. This course will take its lead from that research, following melodrama’s developments in an Anglo-American context from its earliest incarnations in Romantic theatre and fiction, through mid-nineteenth-century drama and the novel, and ending with the women’s weepies of mid-twentieth-century film and their reconception in our own historical moment. We will investigate melodrama’s distinctive formulations of spectacle and performance, affect and non-linguistic communication, politics and cultural representation, in order to posit a theory of its engagement with modernity and its persistent role in the emergence of new media.

Texts:

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman*

Thomas Holcroft, *A Tale of Mystery*

Thomas Morton, *The Slave*

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*

Ellen Wood, *East Lynne*

Ellen Wood and Palmer, *East Lynne, A Domestic Drama*

Douglas Sirk, *All That Heaven Allows*

Douglas Sirk, *Imitation of Life*

Todd Haynes, *Far From Heaven*

Plus a selection of theoretical and critical readings

**Victorian Women Poets: Gender, Poetics, and a Female Literary Tradition**

**Professor:** Mary Arseneau

**Introduction:** This seminar course will consider gender and poetics within the specific context of the nineteenth-century British female poet’s tradition. We will consider how women poets self-consciously identified themselves as working in a female tradition, how that identification informs their poetics, and the critical implications of approaching this female canon as sequestered from a mainstream, predominantly male, canon.

Beginning with Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon (L.E.L.) as originators of a discernible female poetic tradition in the nineteenth century, we will trace the tradition of the “poetess” through Elizabeth Barrett Browning...
and Christina Rossetti, paying particular attention to these poets’ deliberate self-representations as female artists. Finally, through a study of late Victorian poets Augusta Webster and Michael Field (Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper), we will consider how the Victorian woman poet’s tradition extends to the later part of the century. We will trace the poets’ emulations of Sappho, Corinne, and the “improvisatrice”; their experiments with genres including the epic, dramatic monologue, and sonnet; and their engagement with larger social issues. Throughout the course, we will examine these poets’ compromises and confrontations with dominant gender ideology as they attempt to negotiate a transgression into the public arena while asserting and performing their “femininity.”

Through brief seminar presentations we will also consider the poetry and critical reputations of other figures whose poetry is less well known, with particular focus on identifying promising areas for future scholarship. Other poets to be explored might include Dora Greenwell, Adelaide Procter, George Eliot, Matilde Blind, Bessie Rayner Parkes (Madame Belloc), Constance Naden, A. Mary F. Robinson (Madame James Darmesteter, Madame Mary Duclaux), Alice Meynell, Amy Levy, Mary E. Coleridge, and Graham R. Tomson (Rosamund Marriott Watson).

Grading: 30% major seminar presentation and handout, 15% “recuperating women poets” seminar and handout, 10% participation, 45% final essay

Texts:


Canadian Literatures through and beyond the Black Atlantic: Texts and Influences

Professor: Jennifer Blair

Introduction: This course will consider Canadian texts written by women and men who were part of the African diaspora in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some of the authors we will study moved to Canada from the United States as Black Loyalists who had served in the American Revolutionary War. Others were “fugitives” (some enslaved and some free) who had travelled on the Underground Railroad. While Canada played a prominent role in the shaping of debates, theories, and political structures around questions of race and nationhood at the time, literary criticism rarely considers the Canadian elements of this writing and its concerns. Seeking to fill this critical gap, our discussions will focus upon the representations and roles of Canada (or, what would become Canada) in this moment. We will also situate the Canadian texts alongside their transnational comparators, recognizing that the concerns addressed in them were directly caught up with debates and events taking place in England, the United States, Cuba, Mexico, and Sierra Leone. Some of the questions that class discussions will consider are: what constituted modern Western liberalism and how did it classify and affect different groups of people in the nineteenth century? What is the status of nationalism in the hemispheric and transatlantic contexts in which these texts are located? What role did print culture play in the construction and circulation of modern ideals, and how did the authors in question participate in and challenge these ideals? How has the now 25+ year-old “heuristic” of the “Black Atlantic,” as theorized by Paul Gilroy, shifted in recent years?

Grading: Article Analysis 15%, Seminar 30%, Participation 15%, Final Paper 40%

Texts:
Texts available from Benjamin Books:

Mary Prince, Susanna Moodie (ed.), The History of Mary Prince (Penguin Classics)
Martin Delaney, Blake, or, the Huts of America (Beacon)
Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (Random House)
Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin (Oxford World Classics)
Fredrick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, An American Slave (Random House, in the same volume as Jacobs’s text)
Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano (Broadview)

**Texts available on course the website and/or the web:**

John Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black Boston King*  
Josiah Henson, *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant o of Canada, as Narrated by Himself*  
Mary Ann Shadd, *A Plea for Emigration*  

**Scholarly works: (accessible via the library and/or course website)**

Tiya Miles, “‘His Kingdom for a Kiss’: Indians and Intimacy.” *Haunted By Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American Slavery*. Edited by Ann Laura Stoler. Duke University Press, 2006, 162-188.  
Culture in the 1990s

Professor: James Brooke-Smith

Introduction: Writing history by the decade is a notoriously dicey proposition. The historical forces that shape our lives run deeper and longer than any 10-year perspective can grasp. And yet the 1990s come ready-packaged as a historical unit – not exactly a 10-year slice, but near enough. They begin in the autumn of 1989 with the fall of Berlin Wall and the rapid, almost entirely bloodless collapse of the Soviet Union, and they end on September 11th, 2001 with the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.

In this course, we’ll study a wide range of books, films, music, and television programs that respond to this micro-epoch in world history and reflect upon its central concerns: the “end of history” and post-Cold War politics, globalization and transnational migration, digital culture, fin de siècle decadence. In addition to surveying the key artistic and cultural movements of the day – the “new earnestness” in post-post-modern literary fiction; Oprah’s book club and commercial trauma narratives; representations of working-class identities in popular culture; the rise of the internet and utopian cyber-culture; political hip hop and the art of sampling; obscenity in contemporary art; rave music and the politics of post-industrial space; the millennium bug crisis and post-apocalyptic cinema – we will explore a variety of methodological approaches to studying the recent past. The 1990s are history, but only just. Where does the contemporary end and the historical begin? How should we set about studying the literature and culture of an era that still glows in the memory with a beguiling mixture of proximity and distance, familiarity and strangeness?

Texts:

David Foster Wallace, *Consider the Lobster and Other Essays*
Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*
Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting*
Douglas Coupland, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*
J.G. Ballard, *Millennium People*
Chris Krauss, *I Love Dick*
Helen Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*
Michel Houellebecq, *Atomised*
Brian Eno, *A Year With Swollen Appendices*
ENGLISH 6304: Critical Methodologies in Literary Studies

Professor: Tom Allen

Introduction: In Professing Literature, Gerald Graff offers the following claim about literary theory: “As I use the term, there is a sense in which all teachers of literature are ‘theorists’ and have a stake in theoretical disputes. For that matter, there is a sense in which a literature department (and curriculum) is itself a theory, though it has been largely an incoherent theory, and this incoherence strengthens the impression that the department has no theory” (pp 2-3). This course builds upon Graff’s contention that theory is relevant to everyone who studies literature. In surveying a wide range of theory from past and present practitioners, we will attempt to better understand our own practices of literary interpretation and teaching, as well as the institutional contexts for those practices.

This course assumes that new MA and PhD students will have had little or perhaps sporadic exposure to the active study of theory on the undergraduate level. By making use of the anthology edited by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, we will attempt to gain an overview of different theoretical positions and how they relate to one another. The readings in the anthology will be supplemented by a few additional works that are available online at no cost. The students and the instructor will bring different forms of knowledge and expertise to the course readings. As a seminar, we will share knowledge and work through these often difficult, always rewarding texts.

While no prior knowledge of theory is assumed, all students are expected to come to each class prepared to discuss the readings. Some additional background reading of your own choice may assist you in your preparation.
Try to develop thoughtful questions and discussion points that may be of interest to others.

For most weeks, we will read a literary work along with the theory in order to have a text to discuss in relation to the theoretical ideas.

**Attendance is required.** Students missing more than two class sessions cannot receive credit for the course.
Grading: Class participation 20%, presentation 30%, short paper 20%, due on Friday following presentation, term paper or final exam 30%.

Texts:
Available at Benjamin Books, 122 Osgoode Street.


Some additional readings will be available on Brightspace or online through the library.

Affective Ecocriticism, Contemplative Pedagogy, and the Climate Crisis

Professor: Anne Raine

Introduction: In 1989, Bill McKibben launched the climate action movement with the publication of his environmentalist classic *The End of Nature*. Since then, scientific research has provided ever more evidence of the devastating scale of human impact on the earth’s climate and ecology, with the IPCC’s 2018 report warning that we have only about a decade to dramatically reduce carbon emissions to avoid truly apocalyptic levels of destruction to life on earth. But how to understand and live with the implications of this evidence remains an open question. Scientists, activists, journalists, writers, and artists struggle to find new modes of storytelling that can raise awareness, combat denial, and turn the “slow violence” of catastrophes like global heating, toxic contamination, and species extinction into cultural forms dramatic enough to motivate people to action. Environmental humanities scholars, novelists, and ecopoets have suggested that the literary forms we’ve inherited are hopelessly anthropocentric, and that the global ecological crisis is a catastrophe so unique that it demands a major rethinking of the way we use language to make sense of the world and the place of humans within it. Meanwhile, activists, educators, and health professionals are exploring how contemplative practices such as mindfulness meditation can help address the problems of climate change denial, “eco-anxiety,” and political polarization that get in the way of constructive collective action. And ecocritical scholars are exploring the intersections of affect theory and contemplative pedagogy as a way of connecting environmental and social justice and fostering collaboration across ideological, scalar, and species boundaries.

In this course, we will explore the intersection of ecocriticism and environmental justice studies, affect theory, and contemplative pedagogy. Taking Kyle Bladow and Jennifer Ladino’s edited
collection *Affective Ecocriticism* (2018) and recent scholarship on contemplative pedagogies in higher education as our starting point, we will explore what happens when we combine ecocritical theory and cultural studies, affect theory, and mindfulness-based pedagogy as complementary strategies for responding to the climate emergency and the global struggle for multispecies environmental justice. We will examine how contemporary novelists, poets, artists, cartoonists, journalists, environmental activists, and ecocritical scholars are responding to climate change, and we will use both literary analysis and contemplative exercises, including journal-writing and mindfulness meditation, to reflect on what form our own responses might take.

Questions we'll explore include:

- How can affect theory and contemplative pedagogy inform ecocritical analysis of the emotional and affective dimensions of current debates about climate change and multispecies environmental justice? How do these approaches complement or perhaps challenge existing forms of ecocritical scholarship that focus more on political and ideological critique or engagement with the natural sciences?
- How are the processes and effects of climate change represented, explained, imagined, and experienced in literature, the arts, popular culture, and everyday life? How do different kinds of written and visual texts register, reflect on, contribute to, or help us be present with the anxieties, uncertainties, and social or material effects of climate change and environmental crisis?
- In addition to ideas, thoughts, and questions, what emotional and bodily responses emerge as we engage with representations of and debates about climate change? What happens when we deliberately make space for attending to those responses over time? What can we do with these affective states?
- How do literary and visual culture complement the sciences in helping us think about ecological problems and imagine more livable futures for humans and nonhumans? How do contemplative practices complement intellectual analysis in helping to facilitate open-ended learning, ethical engagement, and practical response?
- As students, scholars, teachers, citizens, community members, and embodied beings, what is our role in fostering constructive conversations about our changing planet and the place of humans within it?

**Grading:**

Seminar presentation, 20%; seminar paper, 50%; creative, activist, or pedagogical project, 25%; preparation and participation, 5%

**Texts:**

We will read a range of critical, theoretical, pedagogical, literary, and cultural texts in a variety of genres, including some of the following. Participants will need to have done some of the readings before the first class meeting. For a confirmed reading list, contact Professor Raine.

Bladow and Ladino, eds., *Affective Ecocriticism: Emotion, Embodiment, Environment*

Siperstein et al., eds., *Teaching Climate Change in the Environmental Humanities*
Purser et al., eds., *Handbook of Mindfulness: Culture, Context, and Social Engagement*

Batacharya and Wong, eds., *Sharing Breath: Embodied Learning and Decolonization*

Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*

Matt Hern and Am Johal with Joe Sacco, *Global Warming and the Sweetness of Life*

Bill McKibben, *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*

Roy Scranton, *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene*

Stephanie Kaza, *Mindfully Green*

Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction*

Philippe Squarzoni, *Climate Changed* [graphic novel]

Marina Zurkow, *The Petroleum Manga* [visual art project]

Evelyn Reilly, *Styrofoam* [poems]

Craig Santos Perez, *from unincorporated territory* [poems]

Juliana Spahr, *That Winter the Wolf Came* [poems and experimental prose]

Barbara Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior* [novel]

Nathaniel Rich, *The Odds Against Tomorrow* [novel]

Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower* [novel]

Jeff VanderMeer, *Annihilation* (novel)