

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
SPRING 2012

ASEM 2711, Section 1: All in the Family

Erik Anderson

T, R 10-11:50am

“Happy families are alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way”—so begins Leo Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*, and so begins our course. In this seminar, we will investigate what forms a family can take and how these forms have been represented in works of poetry, memoir, and fiction. What is the shape of a family, and where does its (un)happiness begin and end? What real or imagined boundaries exist in writing about one’s family, and how does one overcome them? While we will spend a good deal of our time discussing and interpreting how the assigned texts (which will include works by DU faculty members) answer these questions, we will be equally if not more interested in applying the lessons learned to our own lives and families.

ENGL 1000, Section 1: Introduction to Creative Writing

Sam Knights

T, R 8–9:50 am

This is a writing and reading course. We will engage texts that emanate from roots, dreams, and death. Interested students should note we will breach the notion of linear narratives and privilege the urgency of the text over genre (i.e. fictions: poetry, prose, & amalgams of both). Our aim is to engage a variety of writing strategies by way of contemplative readings and imaginations. Moreover, we will explore and rely on writing constraints to see how the subconscious still wrestles its way through intentionality.

ENGL 1000, Section 2: Introduction to Creative Writing

Seth Landman

M, W, 2-3:50pm

We will focus on the role of reading in creative writing, reading from a wide range of poetry, fiction, essays, etc. In light of the reading we will do, we will experiment with exercises and writing prompts, some of your own choosing. Mainly, in this class, we will think about where our motivation to write comes from and how we can go about communicating the kinds of things that seem impossible to say. Be prepared to share your work with the class and to read heavily throughout the entire quarter. You will be responsible for various assignments, as well as a short presentation and a creative final project.

ENGL 1000, Section 3: Introduction to Creative Writing – Hybrid Forms: Writing from the Archive

Meghan Dowling

T, R 12-1:50 pm

It could be said that contemporary writers are increasingly less concerned with strict boundaries of genre or form; it could also be said that there have always been plenty of writers who never were. In this class we will explore texts that might transgress these boundaries. (If we even believe that it is, in fact, a transgression at all.) We will think of our own writing in terms of why and when a blurring might serve the work, or not. We will explore the concept of the archive, of what fictions it might be used to construct. (What of the text that incorporates, assimilates, or appropriates other texts—even, potentially, our own “other” texts?) We will write.

ENGL 1000, Section 4: Introduction to Creative Writing – Explorations in Narrative Architectures

Danielle Vogel

T, R 10–11:50 a.m.

How do fiction and poetry inhabit architectural space? And how can our reading and writing practices be informed, challenged, and proliferated through the application of architectural philosophies? In this class, we will apply the logic of human, bird, and insect building techniques to how we compose narratives. If a semi-colon were a street, in what part of a city would it appear? What does a poem written through dream-architecture sound like? How can the burrowing owl and the solitary wasp inform our writing rituals? In this class we will investigate different forms of architecture and apply them to syntactical structures. We will read literature alongside blueprints for houses and nests. We will compose our own narratives through these explorations of place and architecture. There will be weekly presentations on the literature we read, as well as class discussions and workshops of one another’s creative work. There will also be hands-on work as we experiment with book design and binding. The quarter will culminate in a final book arts presentation of your own book-length artistic endeavor.

ENGL 1000, Section 5: Introduction to Creative Writing – Mechanism and Imagination

Adam Dunham

T, R 4:00-5:50pm

Invocation, divination, rules, games—we’ve heard that emotion, inspiration, and imagination are the impulses of art, but in this workshop we will also recognize that rule-based exercises and forms are productive foundations of all writing—including *fiction*. We will survey the paradigms of inspiration and formal constraint (and many variations on the themes) in literary work and literary works. We will try to feel the tensions between them as well as the ways they reinforce, augment, and compliment each other. In this course we will examine several primary and supplementary texts and additional material. Presence and participation will be stressed.

ENGL 1000, Section 6: Introduction to Creative Writing

Jesse Morse

M, W 12-1:50 pm

In this introductory creative writing class, we'll learn some basic skills of the trade, and encourage each other to develop individual voices within our writing styles. All genres/styles of writing are welcome. We'll examine each others' work, while learning the basic etiquette for workshopping. We'll read texts and discuss them. We'll spend class time writing. At the end of the quarter, each student will hand in a 10-15 page portfolio of revised work.

ENGL 1009, Section 1: The Art of Nonfiction

Jason Arthur Ney

T, R 10-11:50am

In this course, we'll aim to understand the genre of creative nonfiction—its traditions, boundaries, and possibilities—as well as develop a competency of composing within the genre. We'll achieve this goal through both reading and writing creative nonfiction. By examining the historical development of creative nonfiction and reading many contemporary essayists, you will hopefully develop a deep, full understanding of creative nonfiction as genre, as well as a well-rounded set of beliefs related to what you find both appealing and disagreeable about what the genre of creative nonfiction brings to the larger body of literature as a whole. We'll discuss and explore the role that composing plays in the formation of creative nonfiction in an effort to understand how to write within the genre.

ENGL 1007 Section 1: Art of Poetry

Julia Cohen

M,W 12-1:50 pm

This course will focus on 20th century and contemporary poetry in America, beginning with the Modernists, moving to the New York School and Language Poetry, and then segueing into emerging writers of the last decade. This is an introduction to how poetry has shaped culture and how culture has shaped poetry over the last 100 years. What are poets responding to? How have their responses shifted and transformed to meet both poetic and cultural developments? On a basic level, we will consider: what IS poetry and WHY is it important to us? Students will develop their poetic vocabulary and learn how to closely analyze assigned texts. Class participation is vital and there will be weekly reading and/or writing assignments.

ENGL 1008, Section 1: The Art of Drama – From Story to Action

Jeffery Moser

T, R 12:00-1:50pm

All the world's a stage. / And all the men and women merely players; / They have their exits and their entrances, / And one man in his time plays many parts ... —Jacques (2.7.139-42, AS YOU LIKE IT)

Aristotle called drama “imitated human action”. However, the precise meaning of “imitated” is in doubt and what drama is, is neither so simple nor as clear as it seems. Religious ceremonies and indigenous rituals led to the first, classical drama by Greeks and Romans; some of the best drama then and afterwards has wedded the serious and the comic. Specifically, in this course, we will explore the question of drama’s significant nature and provide answers to that significance according to the concept of the genre in the literary period when it was produced and transmitted.

Further, we will be informed by characters and dialogue as we discern what vigorous action informs. We will study how “the stage” becomes a place where humanity’s likenesses unfold, where the individual range of human potential wrestles between the vindictive and the noble, the nasty and the merciful. Drama involves an educative story and action that arouse emotion. Thereby, whether delightful or disturbing, drama serves to make the audience—us, “all the men and women merely players”—to think! By reading texts, viewing films, writing about drama, and attending a play we will make a commitment to ideas that help clarify our thinking.

ENGL 1010, Section 1: Topics in English: Ecological Poetics

Christopher Kondrich

T, R 12:00-1:50pm

Poetry has sought to celebrate and valorize the natural world since its inception. It has done so in a variety of incarnations depending on the period and place. Each generation has engaged with the natural world differently given their culture’s general concerns. We will explore the many incarnations of nature poetry as it has related to and diverged from the poetry of its contemporary time. We will explore the various hallmarks of traditional nature poetry in order to devise a poetics that responds to the complexities of our modern age. We will be reading contemporary poetry and poetic theory to help us do so.

ENGL 1010, Section 2: Topics in English: Representation and Adaptation

Robert Gilmor

M, W 2-3:50pm

One widely held assumption in modern society is that “the book is better than the movie.” Indeed, this is a fairly easy argument to support because, in many ways, the movie often has very little in common with the book, regardless of their shared title. This curious space between forms is about more than minor plot changes, and it forms the basis for investigation of representations and adaptations in this course.

Over the course of the quarter, will examine each term in our course title in turn and attempt to negotiate ideas of their relation to and dependence upon each other. Starting with Aristotle and his Poetics, we will explore the concept of representation (mimesis) as a driving force in Western

art and literature. We will assemble a loose framework, or grammar, of representation, including iconic, symbolic, and emblematic representations (a lot of people define these terms in radically different ways!) and, of course, the ultimate symbolic abstraction, the word. We will then use this grammar to interrogate the various conceptions of adaptation in contemporary culture. Some general questions include: What relation does an adaptation bear to the original? What are the implications of “modern retellings” of older sources? What changes occur to a text as it goes through multiple adaptations? What cultural influences can be traced through various “versions” of a text, and how, in turn, do these adaptations influence new or different audiences? Finally, we’ll apply a bit of a postmodern spin, and consider “adaptation” in its most extreme form: the metaleptic incursion. What happens when the author suddenly appears in their own work, or when characters from different novels begin interacting with each other?

We will examine a number of different forms, including print texts, stage dramas, television shows, films, comic books, and video games. Ultimately, we will explore how we, as readers, viewers, audience members, and players, encounter and negotiate the myriad of representational modes and systems we encounter every day. Some potential texts include Frank Miller’s 300, Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (and its modern retellings), and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, paired with Billy Morrissette’s film *Scotland, PA*.

ENGL 1110, Section 1: Literary Inquiry – *The Schools of Writing: Origins*

Selah Saterstrom

T, R 8:00-9:50am

In this course we will investigate three particular and primary concerns of writing: our relationship to death, our relationship to dreams, and our relationship to our roots. Using philosopher Helene Cixous’ *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* as a structural guide, we will read contemporary works of theory, poetry, and fiction as a way to explore larger questions concerning language, power, identity, and community.

ENGL 1110, Section 3: Literary Inquiry – *Detecting Literary Genres*

Brian Bates

T, R 2:00-3:50pm

This course will investigate how fiction and poetry enact, through their various forms and content, the trials of human experience. Beginning with several stories by Edgar Allan Poe, we will examine the “rules” of the typical short story, the rise of detective fiction, and the vogue for Gothic tales before delving into Tim O’Brien’s novelistic collection of war stories, *The Things They Carried*, which probes the boundaries between fiction and reality, truth and lies. Then, we will explore the form and perspective behind Marjane Satrapi’s graphic novel about growing up during the Iranian Revolution. Finally, we will read John Milton’s epic *Paradise Lost* about

man's fall from grace and inquire into the value of Emily Dickinson's lyric poetry in our consumer culture, which widely discourages lingering, uncertainty, and extended deliberation.

ENGL 1110, Section 4: Literary Inquiry: Lost in Space

Erik Anderson

T, R 4-5:50 pm

The French writer Georges Perec once wrote that “in principle, the streets belong to no one.” In practice, however, the shifting truth of the spaces we occupy is a little more complicated. The canons of modernist and postmodernist writing contain a large literature wrestling with changing formations of streets and public space, and in this class we will explore some of this literature, focusing on how contemporary writers, artists, and thinkers are responding to the vast scale on which our cities are reshaping themselves in the information age. We will, of course, formulate our own responses to these changes as well. Readings will include works by Perec, Brenda Coultas, Judith Schalansky, Frank O'Hara, and others.

ENGL 2012, Section 1: Creative Writing—Fiction

Joanna Ruocco

T, R 2:00-3:50pm

All fictions build worlds. The fantastic genres make this explicit, but "realistic" fiction is no less a construction. In this fiction writing workshop, we will read books that foreground their world-building projects, and we will think about how we use language in our own texts to construct versions of reality. Though there will be in-class writing exercises and occasional assignments, this workshop presupposes that students have an on-going writing practice. Students will bring their stories to workshop and receive supportive feedback from their peers.

ENGL 2040, Section 1: Introduction to Publishing

Elizabeth Geiser

M, W 2-3:50 pm

TBA

ENGL 2202, Section 1: Renaissance Poetry and Prose

Scott Howard

Online

What happens when Shakespeare's six quartos of *Richard II* and digital media collide? How and why does the digitization of archival materials from the 16th and 17th centuries transform the significance of literary works and their related cultural documents? This electronic course provides a dynamic exploration of texts and contexts that define key issues and events from earlier times (such as the trial and public execution of King Charles I in 1649) and that also provoke critical reflection upon the diversified media (print, visual, electronic) which shape the

fields of knowledge. This class integrates digital archival research with interdisciplinary investigations of two important Renaissance literary works—Shakespeare’s *Richard II*; and the *Eikon Basilike*—that portray major challenges against the monarch’s divine right of rule. As part of that inquiry, the sovereignty of the archive will itself be questioned by our collaborative work with digital technologies that facilitate new levels of access to and interaction with canonical and non-canonical literary and cultural documents.

ENGL 2300, Section 2: British Literature III

Brian Bates

T, R 10:00-11:50am

This survey will explore the Romantic, Victorian, and Modernist periods. From Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1928), we will study the political, economic, and aesthetic concerns voiced in the poetry, essays, and fiction of writers torn between local and cosmopolitan interests.

ENGL 2709, Section 1: Transatlantic Romanticism

Brian Bates

M, W 12:00-1:50pm

Though often taught separately, British and American Romanticism were intricately connected literary movements that responded to neoclassicism, the American and French revolutions, imperialist practices, slavery, sensibility, the growth of a middle class reading public, and an explosion of print materials. We will study the poetry and prose genres that defined this paradoxically age of prophecy, reform, individualism, nationalism, nature worship, industrial and scientific innovation, bardic vocation, and literary professionalism.

ENGL 2752, Section 1: American Literature III

Billy Stratton

M, W, 10-11:50 am

This course will examine the development of major literary trends emanating from canonical, as well as marginalized writers in American literature from the end of World War I to the present. Through the chosen texts we will consider how changing conceptions of American identity have helped to shape conceptions of nationhood and our relationships with one another. We will examine the development of major periods and literary movements used to describe American literary production since 1918, beginning with the shift from Realist fiction to Modernism, Postmodernism, and beyond, while also addressing developments in genre fiction and regionalism. Throughout the course these broad categories and forms will be scrutinized and questioned as we consider not only the ways in which canonical texts function to define and redefine notions of the self and nation, but also the significance of texts by historically marginalized voices, such as those of minority, women, and other writers whose work has sometimes been excluded from literary discussion.

ENGL/GWST 2830, Section 1: Representations of Women: Mothers, Maidens and Monsters

Jessica Munns

M, W 12:00-1:50pm

The aim of this course is to examine some of the categories by which women have been represented by patriarchal societies, looking at particular constructions and at their subversions.

We will look both at classical texts, legends and folklore and at films.

Texts will include:

Sophocles, Antigone

Euripides, Medea

Cinderella

Basic Instinct

Assessment by journal and an essay

ENGL 3013, Section 1: Advanced Undergraduate Workshop in Creative Writing – Fiction
Laird Hunt

M, W 2:00-3:50pm

This is an advanced fiction workshop for students who have completed at least one (preferably two) intermediate fiction workshops and are otherwise prepared for what should be dynamic and rigorous weekly proceedings. While careful examination/discussion of your work will be at the center of our deliberations, we will also be exploring a variety of literary and theoretical writings. Writers we will look at to fuel our conversation and inspire our own writing efforts will include Denis Johnson, Kate Bernheimer, Karen Tei Yamashita and Nicholson Baker. Workshop participants will be asked to make oral presentations on their current writing-related interests and obsessions.

ENGL 3015, Section 1: Advanced Creative Writing—Nonfiction

Erik Anderson

T, R 2-3:50 pm

Nonfiction is a strange and nebulous term: it's a broadly inclusive category that says what it is by saying what it isn't. But if nonfiction is simply anything that is not fiction, where does its artistic dimension begin to take shape? How do we have fun with the facts? Or are the facts really any fun at all? What is to be gained in nonfiction, and what is lost when we cede "the truth" to journalists and accountants? As we address these questions and others, we will produce our own nonfiction texts that report, interrogate, and distort the facts. We will be most interested in becoming—to paraphrase a line from filmmaker Werner Herzog—enemies of the merely factual. Readings may include works by Joan Didion, Bruce Chatwin, W.G. Sebald, and others.

ENGL 3040, Section 1: Introduction to Publishing

Elizabeth Geiser

M, W 2-3:50 pm

TBA

ENGL 3121, Section 1: Chaucer: Canterbury Tales

Ann Dobyms

T, R 12-1:50 pm

A study of the tales and the historical and philosophical context within which Chaucer wrote. In addition to reading the tales themselves, we will be reading a number of critical studies of Chaucer's work and some medieval documents that provide background available to Chaucer and his first audience.

ENGL 3733, Section 1 Topics in English: The Novel – *Cartographies of Self: Home and Away*

Selah Saterstrom

T, R 10-11:50 pm

Through the lens of the contemporary novel and literary theory, we will investigate representations of identity as it relates to home and homelessness in order to explore larger questions concerning language and power. This course has an intense reading and writing concentration.

ENGL 3733, Section 2 Topics in English: Native American Literature

Billy Stratton

T, R 2-3:50 pm

This course offers advanced study of Native American literary production and critical theory. We will examine our works in dialogue with recent critical discourses on Native American literary nationalism and indigeneity, as well as the broader theoretical positions in postmodern, postcolonial, and critical race theory. This course will critically examine the ways in which the latest generation of Native American poets, novelists, and storytellers have sought to extend and redefine the conversation began by writers associated with the Native American literary renaissance, such as N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, and James Welch.

ENGL 3813, Section 1: History and Structure of the English Language

Alexandra Olsen

M, W 8:00-9:50am

"As all other sublunary things are subject to corruption and decay, . . . so the learnedest and more eloquent languages are not free from this common fatality, but are liable to those alterations and revolutions, to those fits of inconstancy, and other destructive contingencies which are unavoidably incident to all earthly things."

(James Howell - 1630)

This class will study phonemes, morphemes, words, and syntactical patterns in order to analyze the structure of modern English. In addition, it will explore the pre-history of English and the changes in the sounds, forms, and vocabulary of English since its beginnings in approximately 449 AD.

ENGL 3815, Section 1: Studies in Rhetoric: History of Style

Linda Bensel-Meyers

M, W 10:00-11:50am

This course will trace the development of the one canon that remained central to the study of rhetoric throughout its turbulent history—style. We will examine the eternal questions behind the study of style as aesthetic, form, and ethical persuasion, noting the shifting debate between writers and critics as their differing agendas affected the definition of style and its pedagogical applications. Ultimately, we will attempt to recover a pluralist formulation of disparate rhetorical strategies that will best allow the flourishing of stylistic beauty and sublimity as a means of symbolic cooperation in a world of inventive global communication.

ENGL 4001, Section 1: Seminar in Creative Writing – Poetry

Bin Ramke

M 4:00-7:50pm

I am calling this course a seminar in poetry in part to avoid the verb-form “workshopping.” I do not want the poems we examine during this term to be things to which we apply methods of completion, but rather to be linguistic objects that we contemplate within somewhat-specified contexts. I ask that each of you present that context when it is time for us to consider your poems. This context might very well be other poems (by other poets), or other writings, or bits of film, or music, or visual arts, or whatever context you might recall or imagine that your work arose out of, or is best experienced within. (When we read seriously we engage in some sort of re-enactment of the living circumstances of the material’s first arising in/out of the world—I am asking you to enable us to think of your own work in a way similar to how we seriously read William Blake or Margaret Cavendish, for instances.)

I have selected four books for us to read together during the term: Thalia Field’s *Bird Lovers, Backyard* (New Directions) because it looks at the world and language in the act of looking; *The Image of the City* by Kevin Lynch, a pioneering work in how to see which examines the city as a dynamic structure (i.e. like poetry), which happens also to contextualize work arising within the city; Yona Wallach’s *Let the Words*, a selected poems (thus a comment on development of poetry over time) and in addition is a translation of work which was among the first attempts to create a literary language out of a recently revived language (Hebrew), and which re-examines

the female body AS a context; finally, *The Conscience of the Eye: the Design and Social Life of Cities* by Richard Sennett (Norton), because it is about seeing and understanding contexts, especially when the texts are physical structures.

ENGL 4011, Section 1: Creative Writing—Fiction

Brian Kiteley

R 4:00-7:50pm

This is what Padgett Powell wrote the most recent time he taught a graduate fiction workshop:

Your job is to write with force and surprise and to tender your efforts regularly and cleanly. My job is to induce criticism that will cure whatever ills are at hand without making the writer ill.

It is difficult to say what is wrong with a piece of fiction in a way that will be at once corrective and palatable to its author. I believe, though, that it is possible, in speaking ostensibly about this or that piece of writing by this or that writer, to speak prescriptively and salubriously toward the bettering of later writing, both that done by an author and by witnesses to his or her ordeal. A general sense of what constitutes good writing is supposed to obtain in the course of our piecemeal daily assaults upon the specific faults and merits of a particular piece of writing.

Objective of course clearly stated at outset: that you leave it writing better than when you entered it. That you put to paper things not said before that surprise us.

I'll try to do something like what Powell says he does.

Course page: www.du.edu/~bkiteley/engl4011.html

ENGL 4120, Section 1: Beowulf

Alexandra Olsen

F, 10:00-11:50am

Beowulf will be largely devoted to reading and translating the text. Each class will cover a certain number of lines, of which a student will have a specific passage assigned. In addition, there will be a paper (minimum 7 pages).

ENGL 4424, Section 1: Special Topics: 19th C. Literature -- Romanticism and Science

Benjamin Kim

M, W 2:00-3:50pm

When the scientist Humphrey Davy was conducting experiments with laughing gas, his poet friend, S. T. Coleridge, encouraged his experiments and considered himself to be on a similar search for 'truth.' The Romantic period begins during a time when literature and science were not seen as completely different enterprises, during a time when a strong distinction was not made between the natural sciences (chemistry, physics, etc.) and the human sciences (psychology, economics, etc.). Romantic literature arose in concert with these disciplines and

then came to define itself against them. We will look at a mix of Romantic poetry and prose alongside the work of thinkers such as Erasmus Darwin, David Hartley, Adam Smith, and Thomas Malthus, and examine how characteristics that we consider 'literary' arose from a milieu that fed literature and science alike.

ENGL 4600, Section 1: The Holocaust: Literature & History

Adam Rovner

W 4:00-7:50pm

This seminar-style course presents a multidisciplinary and transnational approach to literature of the Holocaust. Students will consider memoir, fiction, and poetry drawn from a variety of national literatures and linguistic traditions. Works written by victims, survivors and 'witnesses through the imagination' will all be considered. These readings will be supplemented by historical and philosophical texts, as well as relevant works from the social sciences.

ENGL 4650, Section 1: The Traveling Sign

Maik Nwosu

T, 4:00-7:50pm

In this course, we will explore the relation of signs to cultural-ideological realities and imaginaries as well as the modification or reinvention of signs through intercultural contact and (re)imagination. We will specifically explore the idea of the traveling sign, which references the fact that signs tend to travel or vary both in their home societies and beyond along the lines of difference often rooted in historical (and market) relations. As much as possible, we will relate our explorations to the study of selected works by Christopher Okigbo, Derek Walcott, Federico García Lorca, William Faulkner, and Isabel Allende.

ENGL 4832, Section 1: Teaching and Writing Literature

Clark Davis

R, 12-1:50 pm

This third portion of the teaching sequence will provide an opportunity for you to examine your own theoretical assumptions about the literature you teach and how you teach it. At the same time we will explore possibilities for helping students explore theoretical questions in an intuitive and non-technical way.