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**HARTWICK
COLLEGE**

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HARTWICK COLLEGE

*Department of
English
Course Offerings
FALL 2019*

Notes

Key to abbreviations:

“A” = Approaches course

“cr.” = credits

“FYS” = First Year Seminar

ENGL. 470-A (4 cr.)

Decoding Difficult Texts

Navarette, S. Clark 251

TTH 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

“I do not write for such Dull Elves/
As have not a great deal of Ingenuity in themselves.”

Jane Austen, “To Cassandra Austen,” January 29, 1813

As the title of this course indicates, we will be reading—“decoding”—famously difficult texts, particularly novels (although not the most notoriously difficult of all, James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, itself just a smidgen shy of *Ulysses* on the scale of narrative difficulty). Put otherwise, participants in this course will undertake what I am choosing to think of as *forensic reading*, deploying the methods, strategies, artistry, tricks, sleights, and science by which we arrive at meaning in opaquely wrought, sometimes flamboyantly abstruse texts. Authors such as Vladimir Nabokov (*Pale Fire*), Flann O’Brien (*The Third Policeman*), Toni Morrison (*Beloved*), John Collier (*Defy the Foul Fiend*), Ford Madox Ford (*The Good Soldier*), and G. K. Chesterton (*The Man Who Was Thursday*) contrived novels that—when they appeared—each in its own way demanded “radically new practices of reading” that foreground what the critic Tristram Wolff has termed an “ecology of knowing”: in which “cognition, emotion, and a close attention to language as a system of a synaesthetic experience stand out as the objects” of an investigation into “what takes place at that crossing point between words on a page and the mind that elucidates them” (Ender and Lynch, “Still Reading” [2019]). We will read indisputably difficult novels—and short stories and other coded texts, including trompe l’oeil paintings and the film *Synecdoche, New York* (d. Kaufman, 2008)—, teasing out meaning and observing in the process the methods on which we appear to rely in order to decipher cryptic texts.

ENGL. 150 (3 cr.) (FYS)

Imperial Nightmares

Cody, D. Clark 251

MWF 1:25 - 2:20 p.m.

This course explores the ways in which various nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literary works (short novels and romances, utopian and dystopian fictions, fantasies, satires, allegories, poems, tales of adventure, science fiction, and horror, scientific and theological texts) shed light on a vast and still ongoing culture-war waged over issues such as imperialism, racism, sexism, and xenophobia. Authors include Thomas De Quincey, Robert Browning, Herman Melville, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Rudyard Kipling, William Morris, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Arthur Machen, Bram Stoker, M. P. Shiel, H. G. Wells, and John Buchan.

ENGL. 190 (3 cr.)

Introduction to Literature and Criticism

Seguin, R. Clark 251

MWF 9:05 - 10:00 a.m.

This course is designed to teach students ways to explore, interpret, and appreciate texts by reading closely, writing critical essays, and applying critical approaches deliberately. Required texts will include poetry, fiction, and drama, and class discussions will familiarize students with critical terms relevant to each genre. Throughout, we will seek to develop properly literary modes of attention toward those aesthetic objects whose medium is language: that is, we will try to familiarize ourselves with the essential procedures of the discipline.

ENGL. 411-D (4 cr.)

Advanced Fiction Workshop

Yang, T. Clark 252

TTH 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

In this advanced workshop, students will continue to hone and practice the art of fiction writing. Building upon work done in Introduction to Creative Writing and Intermediate Fiction Workshop—and those courses' focus on craft and form—students in Advanced Fiction Workshop will continue honing their stories in a rigorous, intensive writing workshop in which they will read the work of and receive feedback from their peers. Students will also read widely in modern and contemporary fiction, and continue practicing to read as writers, examining the choices made by authors and learning to apply similar techniques in their own work. This is the most advanced fiction course offered at Hartwick College, so the instructor will approach its participants—in terms of both expectations and the feedback provided—as students who may become professional writers.

ENGL. 382-B (3 cr.)

Fear of a Black Planet

Seguin, R. Clark 329

TTh 10:10 - 11:40 a.m.

Love and theft: this is the phrase the scholar Eric Lott uses to describe the paradoxical dynamic that has played out across what W.E.B. DuBois called the color line. It captures what is at once the intense attraction of white America toward the rich productions of African American culture, along with the practices of exploitation and dispossession that so often accompany such attraction. At root here is the very fear of blackness itself induced by the structures of oppression that establish and maintain the color line to begin with: fears of black rebellion for example, and of racial mixing. In this course we will examine a range of both black and white writers who address these often difficult yet deeply important and compelling historical and political realities: Frederick Douglass, Charles Chesnutt, William Faulkner, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Flannery O'Connor, Toni Morrison, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Hari Kunzru, among others.

ENGL. 213-4 (3 cr.)*

Introduction to Creative Writing

Fest, B. Clark 248

MWF 11:15 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.

Introduction to Creative Writing is a primer for the exploration of some of the basic elements of creative writing. The course is designed for both interested general education students and as the first in a series of courses for students majoring in creative writing. We will be covering both poetry and short fiction, with a focus on learning the forms and tools necessary for successful writing. Throughout this course, students will be asked to engage various aspects of writing, including studying craft, reading the work of published writers, and composing work of their own. It is essential for a writer to develop ways of thinking about and discussing critically the work of others, so students should be prepared to do a substantial amount of reading and to respond to this reading in short weekly reading responses. Course readings will also prepare students to analyze and assess other students' writing and to evaluate their own compositions. The primary focus of this class will be on learning craft, the "nuts and bolts" of writing, the skills, techniques, choices, and strategies that will allow students to improve their own writing. Students will be paying careful attention to the effective use of image, metaphor, line-break, sound, shape, and voice in poetry, and dialogue, plot, character, setting, conflict, and scene in fiction. This focus on form will give students a better understanding of the various writers we will be reading and help them effectively use these elements in their own writing. Above all, writing is an art and, like any art, it requires a knowledge of its tools and conventions combined with a will to create, explore, experiment, and push boundaries. I fully expect that we will also have some fun.

*Please note that additional sections of this course will be offered at the "34" (Simonds), "A" (Lichtenstein), and "B" (Yang) hours.

ENGL. 221-7 (3 cr.)

Classical Mythology

Darien, L. Clark 251

MWF 2:30 - 3:25 p.m.

Students in this class will learn about classical mythology through the study of the original “classics”: Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Vergil’s *Aeneid*; and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (all in translation, of course). Knowledge of these masterpieces is absolutely essential for understanding Western literature, history, culture. In addition to reading these great classical works, each student will explore a topic of their own choosing (on any aspect of classical mythology and/or civilization) and present their research to the class, as well as completing a short paper on their subject matter. In the past, students have chosen a wide range of issues, from an examination of how the ancients might have treated battlefield wounds through Shakespeare’s use of Ovid to the employment of classical characters and storylines in modern video games.

ENGL. 350-D (3 cr.) (A)

Seventeenth-Century English Prose and the American Renaissance

Cody, D. Clark 251

TTH 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

“What Song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling Questions are not beyond all conjecture. . . .”

Alchemy, the philosopher’s stone, the *elixir vitae*, angels and devils, intelligent robots, murder, sexuality, curses and premonitions, witchcraft, madness, ghosts, poisonous damsels, homunculi, mummies, pyramids, and imaginary trips to the Moon figure prominently in this course, an exploration of the relationship between seventeenth-century English literary works (and translations of earlier works by European authors) and works by American authors during the nineteenth-century “American Literary Renaissance.” Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, and Emily Dickinson (among others) were not merely familiar with but heavily influenced by various quaint and curious seventeenth-century English precursors, and the exploration of these transatlantic literary relationships sheds light on both the earlier and the later works. In addition to the above-mentioned Americans, we will be reading excerpts from works by Sir Francis Bacon, Pierre Bayle, Sir Thomas Browne, Robert Burton, Joseph Glanvill, Lucian of Samosata, John Milton, Petronius Arbiter, François Rabelais, William Shakespeare, Jeremy Taylor, and John Webster. There will be a midterm and a final examination, and each student will write papers involving relevant scholarly research.

ENGL. 350-C (3 cr.)

Persecuting the Scapegoat:
Pagans, Heretics, and Jews

Darien, L. Clark 251

TTh 12:20 - 1:40 p.m.

This course explores the roots of modern anti-Semitism by examining a broad range of literature spanning from the Bible itself through the plays of Shakespeare and Marlowe and beyond. Based on this background, students will then apply their knowledge of common anti-Semitic narrative tropes to explore more modern manifestations of anti-Semitism in literature up to the present day. Readings will include early Saints' Lives such as the Anglo-Saxon poem *Elene* and the Middle English "Saint Erkenwald"; Chaucer's "Prioress Tale"; English Mystery Plays including *The Croxton Play of the Sacrament*; Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*; and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.

NOTE: this course can be used in partial fulfillment of the pre-1800 literature requirement for both the English and Creative Writing Majors.

ENGL. 250 (3 cr.)

H.G. Wells and His World

Cody, D. Clark 251

TTh 10:10 - 11:40 a.m.

More than seventy years after his death, the ideas of the ingenious Herbert George Wells—scientist, historian, social critic, anti-imperialist, satirist, fantasist, futurist, advocate for free love, and one of the creators of the genre of modern science fiction—continue to exert a vast though often covert or surreptitious influence upon nearly all aspects of our modern culture. In this course we will explore a number of Wells' highly entertaining "scientific romances" (including *The Time Machine* [1895], *The Island of Doctor Moreau* [1896], *The Invisible Man* [1897], *The War of the Worlds* [1897], and *The First Men in the Moon* [1901]) and remarkable short stories, examine the influence upon his own work of those by various precursors (including Plato, Lucian of Samosata, Chaucer, Robert Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, Jonathan Swift, Nathaniel Hawthorne, William Morris, and Thomas Henry Huxley), consider his relationships with important contemporaries (including Rudyard Kipling, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad), examine the extent of his own influence upon subsequent authors (including H. P. Lovecraft, Jorge Luis Borges, C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Vladimir Nabokov), and view some of the many intriguing films (including *Le Voyage dans la Lune* [1902], *Island of Lost Souls* [1932], *The Invisible Man* [1933], *Things to Come* [1936], *The War of the Worlds* [1953]), *The Time Machine* [1960], and *First Men in the Moon* [1964]) that have been inspired by his writings. There will be a midterm and a final examination, and each student will write papers involving relevant scholarly research.

ENGL. 312-67 (4 cr.)

Intermediate Poetry Workshop

Fest, B. Clark 248

MW 1:25 - 3:25 p.m.

In Intermediate Poetry Workshop, students will read the work of published poets, compose poems of their own, and study critical writing about poetry. Building upon work done in Introduction to Creative Writing, the primary focus of this class will be on honing students' craft in a workshop setting by engaging with the "nuts and bolts" of writing, the techniques, choices, and strategies that will allow students to continue exploring their poetic voice. We will cover a wide range of contemporary poetry in order to learn about and explore the formal elements necessary for successful poetic composition. Along with paying careful attention to the effective use of image, metaphor, line-breaks, sound, shape, and voice in poems, we will also be particularly interested in working within both established and invented forms. This focus on form will allow workshop participants to explore the power and necessity of limitation in their own work. We will also be discussing a wide range of poets in this course. It is essential for a writer to develop ways of thinking and talking critically about the work of others and to be aware of the literary, cultural, social, and political milieu in which they reside, so students should be prepared to read a substantial amount of poetry concerned with contemporary issues. Writers covered in the past have included such renowned poets as Ross Gay, Louise Glück, Ben Lerner, Jill McDonough, Maggie Nelson, Richard Siken, current US poet laureate Tracy K. Smith, Matthew Zapruder, and others. Encountering the work of these poets will prepare students to think about broad issues within twenty-first century poetics, analyze and assess other students' writing, and evaluate their own compositions. Readings will also invite us to think about the role and function of poetry at the present time.

ENGL. 329-4 (3 cr.)

British Literature Survey: Beginning Through Milton

Darien, L. Clark 251

MWF 11:15 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.

In this course we will read and analyze some of the greatest works of English literature, those that were written in the earliest periods of English literary history beginning with, well, the beginning, and ending with the death of John Milton in the late seventeenth century. We will start by reading a few works in Old English, paying particular attention to *Beowulf*, the masterpiece of that (or any) era. The Middle English period will be represented by *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and by selections from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. As we move from the medieval to the early modern, we will explore the growth and development of the sonnet and other lyric forms during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We will also read substantial parts of the two great epics of early English literature: Spenser's *Fairie Queene* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In this class students will also explore the historical and linguistic contexts of these works of literature as well as their formal qualities and their relation to one another. Finally, we will concentrate on learning to understand poetic genres, conventions, and forms as almost all of the works we will read are verse. Besides the prerequisite noted below, students should be aware that this course is required for all English majors -- both those who are concentrating in literature and those concentrating in creative writing -- and that it is offered only once a year, in the Fall semester.

NOTE: Completion of any section of ENGL 190, Introduction to Literature and Criticism, with a grade of C or better, is a prerequisite for enrollment in this course.