

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SPRING 2008 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENGL 504: THEORIES OF RACE, CLASS AND GENDER: Colonialist / Orientalist Erotics

Joseph Boone, Wednesday, 5:00-7:20 p.m. Number 32773D

This seminar will explore the sexual projections, fantasies, desires, and realities that have marked the persistent eroticization of the Near and Middle East as a terrain of forbidden pleasure and sensual abundance in a number of western textual and visual representations, as well as non-western literary and textual perspectives. We will engage issues and theories of orientalism, colonialism, and postcoloniality; imbrications of issues of race and ethnicity and nationality with those of sexuality and gender in the various subject-object positions occupied by observer, traveler, voyeur, writer, citizen, inhabitant, and reader of “foreign” cultures; the psycho-geopolitics of fantasy, projection, displacement, and disavowal at work in these texts; and the crises of creative authority to which contract with non-western economies of sexuality sometimes give rise. Because it is the current focus of my research, we will deal extensively, though not completely, on issues of homoeroticism as a volatile point of contact in negotiations of “east” and “west,” thus introducing students to current developments in queer theory and the latest studies in sexuality. Written work will include one archival project (researching a pre-1800 travel narrative) and a final seminar paper. Comparative literature students welcomed.

Likely primary texts: Euripides’ *Bacchae*, selections from *A Thousand Nights and a Night*, Gazali’s *The Book That Repels Sorrows and Relieves Anxieties*, the anonymous *The Lustful Turk*, Loti’s *Aziyade*, Pamuk’s *My Name is Red*, Flaubert’s Egypt journal, Durrell’s *Justine*, T. E. Lawrence’s *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Eberhardts’s *Passionate Nomad* and *Oblivion Seekers*, Hull’s *The Sheik*, Gide’s *L’immoraliste* and *Amyntas: North African Journals*, Mahfouz’s *Midaq Alley*, Aswani’s *Yacoubian Building*, Mrabet’s *Love with a Few Hairs*.

Likely secondary readings in the history of sexuality: Alloula’s *The Colonial Postcard*, Andrews and Kalpachi’s *The Age of Beloveds*, Najmabadi’s *Women with Moustaches and Men without Beards*, Ze’evi’s *Producing Desire*, Kouayheb’s *Before Homosexuality*, Massad’s *Desiring Arabs*, Whitaker’s *Unspeakable Love*, and Aldrich’s *Colonialism and Homosexuality*.

Likely film texts: Pasolini’s “Il Fiori e une mille notte,” Valentino’s Sheik films, Lean’s “Lawrence of Arabia,” Ozpetek’s “Steam: A Turkish Bath,” Kutlug’s “Lola und Bilidikid,” Chahine’s “Alexandria Trilogy,” Morel’s “Three Dancing Slaves,” Egoyan’s “Ararat,” and Frears’ “Dirty Pretty Things.”

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ENGL 510: MEDIEVAL ENGLISH LITERATURES AND CULTURES: The Emergence of Print

Joseph Dane, Thursday, 2:00-4:30 p.m. Number 32778D

The course takes its origin in the late medieval invention of printing and the implications this has for modern students of literature. Readings and topics are not period specific and will focus on the use of primary sources (material books) in all areas of the history of the book and literature.

We will meet at Special Collections at Doheny, the nearby Clark Library (with some of the best collections in early English literature in America); we will also schedule at least one trip to the Huntington Library. I can provide transportation to anyone who needs it.

There are no prerequisites. Students can take the course either as an introduction to bibliography and the use of primary sources generally, or to develop projects in their own areas of research, from medieval to contemporary.

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**ENGL 591: 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURES AND CULTURES:
Postwestern Representations**
William Handley, Monday, 2:00-4:20 p.m. Course Number 32788D

Haunted by colonial and imperial pasts, twentieth-century western American fiction, historiography, and film exhibit a broad range of aesthetic and political responses to the question of whether the western past can be represented and of what is at stake in the formal means by which writers, historians, and other cultural makers render history's legibility or illegibility. If all histories are narrative constructions, as Hayden White argues, are any less or more "true" than others? If a narrative's historical 'content' *is* its form, what are the different historiographical implications of modernist and postmodernist representations, or even of popular fiction? Emerging from a literary history starkly different from that of the European avant-garde, western modernist writers such as Willa Cather and Nathanael West approached the problem of representation and reality in western American contexts in ways that make it difficult to categorize the politics of their aesthetics (as compared to, say, those of Woolf and Joyce). And yet it was the American West that later seemed readily to supply European postmodernist theorists such as Jean Baudrillard and Umberto Eco with grist for their critical mills (under such categories as the "simulacrum" and the "hyperreal"). Topics that we will explore include "postindian simulations"; ecocritical politics and the narrative construction of nature; and Los Angeles, postmodernist theory, and *noir* as invisible history. Films by John Sayles and Jim Jarmusch; fiction by Cather, Chandler, McCarthy, Didion, Yamamoto, Alexie, and Everett, among others; historiography, criticism, and theory by William Cronon, Carlo Ginzburg, Patricia Limerick, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Gerald Vizenor, Norman Klein, and others.

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**ENGL 620: LITERATURE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES: Writer & Composer
David St. John, Monday, 2:00- 4:20 p.m. Course Number 32796D**

This course will be team taught by David St. John and composer Frank Techeli of the School of Music. It is a structured collaboration between composers and poets/writers. Activities include fundamentals of poetry, comparative analysis of poem/song settings, and creative projects. We hope that this course can foster long-term collaborative relationships between composers and writers. The course is designed for graduate students in Music Composition and English/Creative Writing (Poetry). However, other graduate students may enroll with the permission of the instructor. Be warned: this is all about collaboration in the arts. If you think of yourself as a lone wolf artist, this course may not be for you.

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ENGL 620: LITERATURE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES: The Scholarly Interface: history, theory, & practice
Alice Gambrell, Friday, 2:00- 4:20 p.m. Course Number 32816D

A small number of print-based formulas for scholarly publication – the single-author book, the refereed article, the scholarly edition, the review – are firmly established in contemporary academic practice, providing scholars with vehicles through which expertise is affirmed and credentials are acquired. During the last two decades, however, an array of new formal and technological possibilities has arisen alongside the popular emergence of interactive media, and scholars are currently in the process of assessing the impact of these forms – which are still in their infancy – upon the knowledge professions. In this course, we will look at expressive technologies through which scholarly knowledge has been and has yet to be contained and disseminated.

How does the complicated, raucous history of learned publication inform contemporary experiments in the art and craft of the scholarly interface? To what extent can we (or *should* we) draw clear, clean distinctions between “scholarly” and “creative” modes of expression? What mechanisms determine the inclusion or exclusion of particular forms of knowledge from the category of the “scholarly”? To what extent do the forms that scholarship assumes, and the processes through which those forms are consolidated, either enable or disable intellectual innovation? These are some of the questions we will be asking and beginning to answer in “The Scholarly Interface.”

This course will be offered with the support of the Institute for Multimedia Literacy, a research unit of USC’s School of Cinematic Arts. Term projects will consist of works of scholarship (roughly the equivalent of a 15-20 page essay) presented in alternative formats. No prior experience in multimedia authorship is expected, and there are no technical prerequisites for the course. Feel free to e-mail me (gambrell@usc.edu) or to stop by office hours (T/Th, 2-4) if you have any questions.

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**ENGL 650: MULTICULTURAL LITERARY STUDIES: "ENGLISH IS BROKEN
HERE": The Politics of Language and Location in Chicano/a Literature**
Teresa McKenna, Tuesday, 4:30-6:50 p.m. Course Number 32799D

In this course we will read and study a number of nineteenth and twentieth century Chicano/a literary texts in historical frameworks that complicate the notion of periodization and the effects of political events on the development of this literature. Through these texts we will interrogate the complex and shifting issues of identity, nation, gender and sexuality. These works are cross genre, theoretical and emerge from different regions in the Southwest. Through analysis of language and voice, location and migration, we may perhaps come to understand the development of this literature over time and the transgressive nature of this cultural production.

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ENGL 695: GRADUATE FICTION FORM AND THEORY
Aimee Bender, Tuesday, 2:00-4:20 p.m. Course Number 32802D

This course is not a workshop. It will be part workshop, part seminar, part discussion, part presentations, part talk about the business of fiction, part guest lecturers, and part an investigation into structure and form as it shows up in the world at large. Students should be prepared to balance readings, explorations of different art forms and the sending out of work with the generating of new work. Openness is appreciated. It is unlikely that we will arrive at any answers but hopefully we'll think up some good questions. Readings will include several short novels by William Maxwell, Haruki Murakami, possibly Truman Capote, Angela Carter, and maybe some others. Class size will be limited to 12; those outside the Lit/CW phd program should email abender@usc.edu if interested.

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ENGL 696: GRADUATE POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP
Carol Muske-Dukes, Monday, 4:30-6:50 p.m. Course Number 32803D

We will be addressing the manuscript-in-progress -- what is the "nucleus" of a book?, how do we "see" a book and address what we see, how do we order poems in the manuscript and create a sense of wholeness? As well, we will be reading work (contemporary and not-contemporary) which is relevant to our shifting perspective in creating "context" in this dynamic process.

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ENGL 698: GRADUATE POETRY FORM AND THEORY

Susan McCabe, Thursday, 2:00-4:20 p.m. Course Number 32805D

“All art is experimental.” –Wallace Stevens, “Opus Posthumous”

This seminar will investigate in depth two American modernists—Wallace Stevens and Marianne Moore. They knew and admired each other’s work. Yet their work, methods, aesthetics look remarkably distinct when considered in close detail. We will approach the poets from several different standpoints, including “forms,” archives, and poetic priorities. In the process, we will read a significant portion of their published work—poetry as well as prose, some of the archival materials and letters to gain a sense of their writing methods, and the major literary criticism that has emerged around these two poets. What made their work so experimental and groundbreaking? How, if read less than they should be (especially Moore), has their work been so influential? We are lucky to have the Huntington, one of the largest repositories for the work of Stevens, so close by; we are also fortunate to have a wonderful reprinting of Moore’s first volume *Observations* from UC Press, which shows individual poem’s in their individual history, catching them, as it were, in the process of revision.

Each week there will be one page assignments based on a poem, or version of one. Seminar participants will be asked to present upon one literary critical text, also writing up a review to be given to each member. At the same time, you will be asked to keep a record of your evolving aesthetic ideas. How do they work against or agree with the kinds of artistic notions that emerge from these writers? What inspires your own creative practices, or might serve as a launching point for critical “judgment,” one very much at work for instance in the countless reviews Moore wrote for *The Dial*, during her editorship at that eminent journal. What other writers do they come into contact with? What journals do they publish in? What do these journals say about the critical perceptions of the day about what constituted modern, even experimental, poetry? How do they fit within the landscape of other modern poets? These are some of the questions we will probe as we take on two significant poets. We will not, of course, disregard the cultural or biographical context within which their writing unfolded, but we will have the rare chance of looking closely, in multiple ways, at poems.

While the class is geared towards creative writers, all graduate students with an interest in poetics, close reading and the archive will be welcome to enroll.

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OTHER DEPARTMENT COURSES

Gender Studies (SWMS)

- <http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/gsp/>

Gender Studies (SWMS) 588: Graduate Seminar in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Studies: FEELING THEORY: RACE, GENDER, SEXUALITY AND CULTURES OF SENTIMENT

Karen Tongson, Wednesday, 2:00-4:50 p.m. Course Number 34984R

This graduate seminar will explore new and recurring idioms of affect in contemporary queer and gender studies, and critical race studies. In what guises has “feeling” reappeared as a theoretical and political imperative? Or has it simply refused to go away? In what ways have we been asked to feel through and with queer studies? Historical (Heather Love and Molly McGarry)? Terrorized (Jasbir Puar)? Ugly (Sianne Ngai)? Brown (Jose Esteban Munoz)? Cosmopolitan (Chisholm)? Provincial? How does “feeling” as a trope describe theoretical and political methods that are at once inexact and yet exactly what we’re yearning for? How is critical labor felt as both a formal practice and as one formative of collective imaginaries? What rigor, spectacle and sensation can we find in discussions of temporality and space? We will strive this semester to read complete books as well as a range of “first books” to give a sense of how projects have emerged as structures of feeling and, in certain instances, as fandom. The course will include one optional field trip to Las Vegas in March after we read Norman Klein’s *The Vatican to Vegas: The History of Special Effects* and Dianne Chisholm’s *Queer Constellation: Subcultural Space in the Wake of the City*. Other readings include, but are not limited to:

Sarah Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*

Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*

Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*

Molly McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past*

Jose Esteban Munoz, *Feeling Brown*

Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities*

Heather Love, *Feeling Backwards*

Kara Keeling, *The Witch’s Flight*

Jennifer Doyle, *Sex Objects*

Daphne Brooks, *On Jeff Buckley’s GRACE*, and selections fr. *Bodies in Dissent*

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching, Feeling*

Elizabeth Freeman, ed. Special Issue of *GLQ* on “Queer Temporalities”