



Department of English – Graduate Division

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Spring 2024 Graduate Course Descriptions

Structure of English, English 314

Wanner, Anja

TR 11:00 AM - 12:15 AM, VAN VLECK HALL B215

[English Language and Linguistics] (Mixed Grad/Undergrad)

This course introduces students to the study of English grammar from a linguistic perspective. Studying syntax enables us to step back and take a look at the intricate structure of something one normally takes for granted: the structure and interpretation of words and sentences. You will learn that grammar is not something external that is written down in a book to be memorized by speakers; rather, it is something that is part of every speaker's implicit knowledge about language. We will try to make some of that knowledge – also known as “linguistic competence” – visible. To that end, you will learn to apply linguistic terminology (such as “direct object”, “auxiliary”, “passive voice”, “preposition”) and methods to describe the structure of English words and sentences, both verbally and visually (in so-called “tree diagrams”). You will learn to identify linguistic constructions (such as relative clauses or adverbial clauses) and to analyze how they are employed in different text types or genres. We will also discuss grammar-related aspects of language change and prescriptive rules about grammar (such as “Don't end a sentence on a preposition!”). We will work with a textbook. Assessments include analytic homework assignments (with more complex questions for graduate students), an in-class presentation, and a final in-class exam.

Language, Race and Identity, English 319

Purnell, Tom

MWF, 12:05 PM – 12:55, VAN HISE HALL 215

[English Language and Linguistics] (Mixed Grad/Undergrad) English 319 explores the relationship between language and racial identity in the US. The course draws on research from multiple fields to highlight the connections between language, culture, and genetics. Essential questions include: how is language related to race through biology and culture? How do language rules limit the expression of racial identity? How do speakers of ethnically-affiliated dialects signal their locality?

Linguistic Theory and Child Language, English 320

Cho, Jacee

TR, 1:00 PM -2:15 PM, VAN HISE 159

Prerequisite: Sophomore standing

*Students who have taken English 420 Universal Grammar and Child Language Acquisition prior to Spring 2020 may not enroll in this course.

This course provides an introduction to the linguistic study of child language within the generative theory. According to this theory, humans are born with genetically determined linguistic knowledge called Universal Grammar, which guides children in learning language. Students will learn basic concepts of the generative theory and learn to apply them to the study of child language. Topics include universal linguistic principles that govern children's acquisition of syntax and semantics and cross-linguistic influence in children acquiring more than one language from birth or early childhood.

*There is no required textbook. All reading materials will be available electronically on the course website.

Global Spread of English, English 414

Online (during January only)

Purnell, Tom

[English Language and Linguistics] In English 414, we delve into the worldwide influence of the English language through the lenses of linguistics, social dynamics, and politics. Through critical analysis, we seek to address probing questions such as the means and motives behind the proliferation of English, the matter of language ownership, and the repercussions for indigenous languages. Moreover, we explore the significance of English in the dissemination of American culture and the Internet.

Old English, English 520

Foys, Martin

TR, 9:30 AM-10:45 AM, VAN VLECK HALL B215

[Literary Studies] (Mixed grad/undergrad) This course is designed to provide students with an accessible introduction to Old English: the language, literature, and culture of England before the Norman Conquest of 1066, and provide an invaluable grounding in grammatical and linguistic structures of English that will help you understand how (and why) English works the way it does today.

Because the English language has changed so much since 1100, learning Old English is similar to learning a foreign language. In the first half of the class, we will cover basic pronunciation,

grammar, and vocabulary, while doing short translation exercises and having quizzes to mark individual student progress. In the second half of the semester, we will put the skills you've learned to work, learning to translate, read and discuss actual Old English literature, including poetry. Assignments will include regular translation exercises, quizzes, exams and a final major translation project. No previous experience with Old English or foreign languages is required. This course is open to undergraduate and graduate students.

Perspectives on Literacy, English 702

Lagman, Eileen

W, 10:00 AM-12:30 PM, HELEN C. WHITE 7105

[Composition and Rhetoric] This course will explore literacy studies as an area of research in the field of Composition and Rhetoric. We'll ask: How has Composition and Rhetoric as a field defined literacy through specific conversations and lines of inquiry? How is literacy studies research distinct from composition research and rhetorical studies? What questions animate literacy research? And how are methods and frameworks from literacy studies productive for research in writing, rhetoric, education, communication, and related fields?

To address these questions, we'll read core texts in literacy studies to trace its development as a distinct area of research. We'll also explore the interdisciplinary nature of literacy studies by engaging with texts from anthropology, education, information studies, and literary studies. We'll consider the boundaries of literacy research, as well as trace its limitations and possibilities. Finally, we'll think about the future of literacy studies by examining contemporary research on materialism, embodiment, and affect.

Special Topics in Composition Theory, English 706

Bernard-Donals, Michael

M, 10:00 AM-12:30 PM, WHITE 7105

[Composition and Rhetoric] Rhetoric has been in the orbit of violence since its first formulations. As an instrument of reason, it has been deployed to serve as a countervailing force against the appetitive and more brute means of engagement in order to create assent; but as an instrument of reason, it has also served to override affect and feeling, eliminate dissent, and promulgate policies that do violence to those considered to be unreasonable. So whereas the Greco-Roman tradition, on which many modern democracies are founded, saw rhetoric as a means of self-governance, Primo Levi famously saw it, in the European Enlightenment, as a means of justifying atrocity. In this seminar, we'll pay close attention to the historical and theoretical relation between rhetoric and violence, and the conventional boundaries that have been set up to forge that relation. The seminar's central question: If rhetoric is understood as a force – as dynamis, potential, or capacity, made manifest in our discursive engagements with others – how can the openness to those others that it entails, characterized as vulnerability, be put into practice in a way that mitigates violence and injustice

while also recognizing that force isn't always under our control? Seminar work will include, in addition to reading and discussion, short written responses, leading portions of the seminar, and a final project.

Advanced English Phonology, English 709

Raimy, Eric

MWF, 1:20 PM-2:10 PM, HELEN C. WHITE 7111

[English Language and Linguistics] This course develops segmental, prosodic, and morphophonemic analyses of English and other languages. As part of these analyses, the role distinctive features and other specialized representations in accounting for phonological generalizations is highlighted. Focusing on English provides a vehicle for creating specific detailed analyses for reasonably well-understood phenomena. Developing comparative analyses of languages other than English or analyses of phonological patterns that do not occur in English is encouraged in the research based term project.

Introduction to Data Science and statistics for linguistics, English 713

Raimy, Eric

MWF 11:00 AM-11:50 AM, HELEN C. WHITE 7115

This course provides an introduction to descriptive statistics, visualization, and hypothesis testing for linguistic data through the use of RStudio. Students will learn about the collection, organization, manipulation, classification, and visualization of different types of data. Both continuous and discrete data types will be covered and identifying appropriate statistical approaches to both will be developed. All data will come from different subareas of linguistics such as phonetics, phonology, sociolinguistics, and syntax. Students will learn fundamental statistical methods and topics in order to support future acquisition of more sophisticated statistical methods.

Open to students (both undergraduate and graduate) with prior linguistics coursework with instructor approval.

Advance Second Language Acquisition, English 715

Cho, Jacee

TR 11:00 AM-12:15 AM, HELEN C. WHITE 7111

Prerequisite: Eng 318 Second Language Acquisition or equivalent

This course continues the introduction to Second Language Acquisition (Eng 318) by focusing on crosslinguistic influence or language transfer in second (L2) or third (L3) language acquisition from (psycho)linguistic perspectives.

There is no required textbook. All reading materials will be available on the course website.

Independent Reading, English 799

Faculty by Permission

By arrangement

Independent study with faculty member by permission. Requires submission of 799 approval form when course taken in lieu of required class. Contact Graduate Division for more information.

African Diaspora Mobility, English 816

Amine, Laila

W, 10:00 AM-12:30 PM, HELEN C. WHITE 7109

Through representative writings, this course explores major conceptualizations of mobility in the black diaspora in the 20th and 21st centuries. Some authors and protagonists describe themselves as exiles, expatriates, travelers, cosmopolitans, immigrants (legal or illegalized), strangers, as well as members of the African diaspora. By examining these labels and dominant tropes, we will investigate the co-construction of blackness and dislocation. While we often think of the political and economic pull of migration, literature also uniquely registers affective dimensions. Along with the primary readings, secondary materials by Kwame Appiah, Nicole Waligora Davis, Nadia Ellis, Paul Gilroy, Saidiya Hartman, Marianne Hirsch, and Edward Said will provide some conceptual foundations for reading narratives of Diasporic mobility.

Topics in Theory—Racial Capitalism, English 822

Diran, Ingrid

T, 9:00 AM-11:30 AM, HELEN C. WHITE 7105

It has become something of a truism in recent years to say that “all capitalism is racial capitalism” even as the meaning of this phrase remains ambiguous and raises a number of questions: Does it imply that capitalism invented racism, requires it, or simply exploits racial (and other social) divisions? Does it suggest that racial mobilizations are more decisive than class struggle for revolutionary change?

These questions primarily seek to understand whether or not race is intrinsic to capitalism’s “core dynamics.” However, given the material intertwining of racial formations and capitalist development, they also consider how historical contingency affects logical structures. In this course, we will approach debates about racial capitalism through a parallax reading of two major texts: the first volume of Karl Marx’s *Capital* (1867) and Cedric Robinson’s *Black Marxism*:

The Making of the Black Radical Tradition (1983). Together we will unpack the readerly practices by which Marx unearths capital's "core dynamics" from the annals of bourgeois political economy, before assessing how Robinson's counterhistory of racial capitalism revises the terms of Marx's critique, revealing discrete itineraries of social transformation that Western Marxism has suppressed.

In the process, we will investigate an intellectual and historical genealogy of racial capitalism, examining where and how it emerges as an analytic, how it links to other methods, and with what implications for literary study today.

Topics in Theory—African Anthropocene, English 825

Sides, Kirk

R, 9:00 AM-11:30 AM, HELEN C. WHITE 7105

From anti-colonial writers of the early-20th century to Afrofuturist and speculative fiction, we will focus on how land, the environment, and local ecosystems are imagined in writings, films, and arts from the African continent. How has colonialism impacted the ways land is portrayed by African authors? What is the place of the non-human within notions of ecological justice? How are climate change and environmental futures imagined? We will also be asking questions of certain disciplinary formations. For instance, in what ways can African literatures interrogate many of the assumptions and timelines of the Environmental Humanities broadly, as well as approaches to the postcolonial ecologies specifically.

Topics in Theory—"NO!" FUNCTIONS OF NEGATIVITY IN THEORY, ART, AND POLITICS, English 825,

Neyrat, Frederic

T, 11:45 AM-2:15 PM, HELEN C. WHITE 7105

As a first step, we will consider two ways of thinking about negativity. On the one hand, as the effect of a certain type of negation: negativity is then understood as refusal, the fact of saying "no." This is, for instance, the "no!" of self-defense (Elsa Dorlin), the autonomous "no!" (Mario Tronti), or the revolutionary "Great Refusal" (Herbert Marcuse). On the other hand, negativity can be ontologically defined: as nothingness (Martin Heidegger) or the quantum void (Karen Barad). How can we think of negativity, as act, and nothingness, as essence, together? To answer these questions, we will study texts from continental philosophy, queer and feminist theory, black studies, the mystical tradition, and radical political thought. Through the study of literary, cinematographic, and musical works, we will see how negativity and negation are expressed in the form of darkness or pure light, silence or vociferation, decay and disintegration. These artistic forms face up to negativity, seeking to integrate it, to use it, to metabolize it, to symbolize it—with the risk, which we'll have to analyze during this seminar, of dissolving negativity in positivity, of cancelling negativity in the pure and simple affirmation of the artistic form. To what extent is it possible, and necessary, to symbolize negativity? To be at

peace with negativity and the powers of negation? In a world where war reigns, knowing what to do with death drives is a matter of life and death.

Topics in Theory—Queer Ecologies, English 825

Ensor, Sarah

TR, 2:30 PM-3:45 PM, VAN HISE HALL 475

This course traces the contours of a field – queer ecocriticism – and a related ethical practice – queer environmentalism – that at least one prominent queer theorist has deemed impossible, a paradox, a contradiction in terms. And so one way to approach the question of “queer ecologies” is to ask what it means to do the impossible. Another, more modest, way to approach the topic is to ask what happens when things unexpectedly or non-normatively touch – when queer theory touches environmental criticism, when the human meets the animal, when the living caress the dead, when the past resurfaces in the present, when the human body comes into contact with (or becomes constituted by) a toxic environment, etc.

Through close readings of queerly environmental (or ecologically queer) texts, both on their own terms and in conjunction with ongoing theoretical conversations, we will both discuss why queer theory and ecocriticism historically have had trouble meeting, and explore what possibilities emerge when they do. In the course of our conversations, we will consider how queer theory’s openness to a range of affects, pleasures, temporalities, and relational forms can help environmentalism refine its own definitions and practices of planetary investment. Along the way, we’ll ask questions about the complex relationship between pleasure and restraint, promiscuity and commitment, vulnerability and persistence, liveness and extinction, intimacy and impersonality, strangeness and kinship, immunity and contagion, complicity and resistance, present desires and future needs. How might queer theory’s capacity to think beyond norms – beyond the couple form, beyond the nuclear family, beyond reproductive futurity, beyond privatized uses of space – help us to develop an environmentalism (and an ecocriticism) that can similarly extend beyond the bounds by which it is currently defined – and, we might argue, by which it is currently constrained? How might attending to ecological forms of relation (including questions of social ecology) help us to understand ongoing debates in queer theory anew? And how might the frictional meeting of the two fields cast a new light on terms and topics – embodiment, power, intimacy, temporality, kinship, and care, to name just a few – that have long interested them both?

Primary texts may include Joshua Whitehead’s *Making Love With the Land*; Samuel Delany’s *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*; Jan Zita Grover’s *North Enough: AIDS and Other Clear-Cuts*; Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*; Todd Haynes’s *[Safe]*; Oliver Baez Bendorf’s *The Spectral Wilderness*; Callum Angus’s *A Natural History of Transition*; Alexis Pauline Gumbs’s *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*; Sabrina Imbler’s *How Far the Light Reaches: A Life in Ten Sea Creatures*; and Lydia Millet’s *How the Dead Dream*. No pre-existing familiarity with either ecocriticism or queer theory is presumed.

Topics in Migration and Diaspora—Property and Possession, English 829

Ozier, Amadi

R, 11:45 AM-2:15 PM, HELEN C. WHITE 7105

Black writing on home, sex, and ownership from the 19th and 20th century. Homemaking at various sites, including: the ocean, the plantation, the river, the tenement building, the market, the jook, the garden, the homeless shelter, the cabaret, the jail, and the squat.

We will primarily read fiction and drama from decolonial environmentalist and feminist thinkers such as Harriet Jacobs, Zora Neale Hurston, Ann Petry, Pauline Hopkins, Nella Larsen, Gwendolyn Brooks, Toni Morrison, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Gayl Jones.

We will also explore critical perspectives on spatial theory, housing justice, and racial capitalism from Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Rinaldo Walcott, bell hooks, Huey P. Newton, W. E. B. Du Bois, Cheryl L. Harris, Robin D. G. Kelley, Katherine McKittrick, Christina Sharpe, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, and Booker T. Washington.

Dissertation Research, English 990

Dissertation Chair by Permission

Meeting by Arrangement

Available to post-prelim examination PhD students by permission. Students who have reached dissertator status should enroll in 3 credits. This is a variable credit course, however, and may be used in combination with other enrollment credits to satisfy minimum enrollment requirements prior to reaching official dissertator status.

Reading for Prelims, English 999

Graduate Faculty in English by Permission

Meeting by Arrangement

Variable credit course. Utilized when major course work has been completed and student is preparing for prelims.
