

GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SPRING 2025

ENG 576 – LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

PROF. DAMIEN KEANE
Wednesday, 12:30 – 3:10
Registration Numbers: (A) 23326 (B) 23327

ENG 599 – INTRODUCTION TO WRITING & RHETORIC

PROF. PAUL FEIGENBAUM
Tuesday, 9:30-12:10
Registration Number: 19528

ENG 653 – CRITICAL THEORY

PROF. STSEVEN MILLER
Thursday, 3:30-6:10
Registration Numbers: (A) 21407 (B) 21408

ENG 715 – POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE & THEORY

PROF. WALTER HAKALA
Monday, 12:30-3:10
Registration Numbers: (A) 23399 (B) 23400

ENG 680 – QUEER/TRANS NON-MODERN

PROF. CHRISTINE VARNADO
Thursday, 12:30-3:10
Registration Number: 23809

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SPRING 2025

ENGLISH 576 – MODERNISM – PHONOGRAPHY - RECORDING

PROF. DAMIEN KEANE

Wednesdays, 12:30 – 3:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 23326 (B) 23327

If this course were to be pressed as a 45, its two sides would be “writing in sound” b/w “making records.”

The seminar will approach literary modernism, broadly defined, in relation to phonography, specifically defined. Its emphasis will fall less on the literary “writing of sound” than on the wide variety of “writing in sound” that came into practical being in the years after 1875 primarily through forms of recording. In this way, the phonographic accent of the course will serve as the means to examine modes of transmission, reception, and storage, of circulation and communication in their widest ambit. This focus will involve us with many forms of print, from conventional literary genres to broadcasting transcripts and liner notes and other quote-unquote ephemera generated in the interactions of eye and ear; and most weeks will include a listening component, sometimes bearing directly on assigned readings, at others working as a second line, and at still others altogether replacing the readings. Designed in this way, it is hoped the seminar will also provide entry-points to the archival and media “turns” that have transformed the field of modernist studies in the last two decades.

Primary works will be drawn from among those of: Samuel Beckett, Kamau Brathwaite, T.S. Eliot, Ralph Ellison, Hamish Henderson, James Weldon Johnson, Linton Kwesi Johnson, James Joyce, Louis MacNeice, Roger Mais, Okot p’Bitek, Jean Rhys, Sam Selvon, Bram Stoker, Dylan Thomas, Amos Tutuola, Virginia Woolf, and W.B. Yeats. In addition, we will work with various audio formats, from literary recordings to radio plays to audio montages and tape experiments to field recordings and commercial releases.

Critical readings will include works by: Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Tony Bennett, Josephine Dolan, Joanna Drucker, Brent Hayes Edwards, Evan Eisenberg, Simon Frith, Bernard Gendron, Paul Gilroy, Lisa Gitelman, Erving Goffman, John Guillory, Friedrich Kittler, Kate Lacey, Marshall McLuhan, John Durham Peters, Edward Said, Jonathan Sterne, Diana Taylor, Raymond Williams, and Val Wilmer.

Course requirements for all registered students will include active participation in seminar discussion and periodic written responses to the week’s readings; and, for intensively registered students only, either a final research essay (twenty pages) or a conference-length paper plus a bibliographic essay. The expectations for the final project are realistic; as such, there will be no incompletes granted for the seminar.

ENG 599 – INTRODUCTION TO WRITING & RHETORIC

PROF. PAUL FEIGENBAUM

Tuesday, 9:30 - 12:10

Registration Number: 19528

ENG 599 is a seminar that orients you to the field of rhetoric and composition before you teach for UB's Academic and Professional Writing Program. During this course, you will gain familiarity with selected research and theory that informs contemporary approaches to teaching writing. We will spend some time considering practical questions of teaching such as designing and scaffolding assignments, motivating students, and grading, but we will also explore pedagogical questions such as the role of writing in the college curriculum (especially in the age of generative artificial intelligence), how to consider authority in the writing classroom, and the role of community in pedagogy. You will also be able to apply the theories we discuss to your own experiences as a writer and learner and to consider the role of teaching in your career trajectory.

Please note that unlike other courses in our graduate curriculum, ENG 599 is neither taken extensively or intensively. As such, though it does not count as one of the required “intensive” seminars in English, this does not mean that the course only has an “extensive” workload either—you must keep up with the reading and writing to pass the class. Because the course is primarily intended to prepare and certify graduate students as independent instructors in the writing program, all students are required to do the same amount of work. TAs must pass the course in order to remain in good standing as instructors.

Passing the course means completing all the assigned work, participating in class discussion, and helping the class be a community of mutually supportive teachers of composition.

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ENG 653 – FREUD & LACAN

PROF. STEVEN MILLER

Thursday, 3:30 – 6:10

1032 Clemens Hall

Registration Numbers: (A) 21407 (B) 21408

This course will provide students with an introduction to psychoanalytic theory primarily through the writings of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, although we will also discuss the work of analysts and philosophers who developed their insights. We will discuss several of Freud's foundational works—*The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, and *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*—along with essays by some of his earliest colleagues that seek to clarify and expand upon these works. But the focus of our discussions will be the case histories in which Freud his clinical experiences with obsessional neurosis (the Rat Man, the Wolf Man) and the theoretical texts in which the elaborates on the knowledge he gained from these experiences. In Freud's work, what is especially interesting and important about the analysis of obsessional neurosis—codified in present-day psychotherapy as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)—is that the symptoms that characterize it offer a unique perspective upon the genesis and structure of the social bond. It was the study of the emotional ambivalence at the heart of obsessional neurosis that led Freud to consider the social dimension of all psychic structures, the agency of the death drive in human life, not to mention the discontents that plague civilization. "The neuroses are social structures," Freud writes in *Totem and Taboo*, "they endeavor to achieve by private means what is effected in society by collective effort." Accordingly, some of the most important experiments in the nonclinical "application of psychoanalysis," by Freud and others, emerge from the clinic of obsessional neurosis. To understand the scope and the limits of this approach to this essential aspect of psychoanalytic theory, we will discuss the major works in which Freud expands the scope of the knowledge he gains from clinical experience—*Totem and Taboo*, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, *Civilization and Its Discontents* and *Moses and Monotheism*—along with a range of related essays. We will also consider how the "fraternal" understanding of the social bond that arises from such works informs and hampers Freud's theory of gender and sexual difference. Finally, to shift from the application of psychoanalysis to social psychology to the study of literature, we will explore Jacques Lacan's approach to obsessional neurosis, mainly in his reading of *Hamlet* in his seminar *Desire and Its Interpretation* (1958-1959). Other readings might include texts by Theodor Reik, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Hans Kelsen, Serge Leclaire, Mustafa Safouan, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, Étienne Balibar, Juliet Flower MacCannell, and Gayle Rubin.

**ENG 715 – POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE & THEORY****PROF. WALTER HAKALA**

Monday, 12:30 – 3:10

Registration Numbers: (A) 23399 (B) 23400

This seminar introduces graduate students to literary studies and allied fields as anthropology, art history, history, sociology, and gender studies, to past and present debates central to the study of colonialism. Our focus will be on the English East India Company and British Raj in South Asia and the French in North Africa, though much of what we discuss will have global implications. This seminar will thus serve as a pedagogy proseminar for those intending to teach world literatures and other global topics. I do not expect seminar participants to have prior training or expertise in area studies.

We will begin with foundational texts by Benedict Anderson, Partha Chatterjee, Ranajit Gaha, Edward Said, Gauri Viswanathan, and others who helped shape debates around postcolonial and area studies scholarship, especially in the 1980s and after. We will pair these theoretical readings with primary sources drawn from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, including famous works by Rudyard Kipling and Albert Camus and lesser-known texts by Kashiprasad Ghosh, Mohammed Mrabet, and others. We will also consider as case studies recent first monographs to understand emerging trends in the field and the process of transforming one's dissertation into a book. Participants in the seminar will gain familiarity with a variety of theories and approaches to colonialism (including those advanced by Orientalists, Anglicists, nationalists, Marxists, and the Subaltern Studies Collective) and apply them to a wide range of literary and cultural materials.

All seminar participants will be responsible for leading a class discussion and preparing brief annotations on assigned readings throughout the semester. Those enrolled intensively will also prepare a 5,000-word final paper.

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ENG 680 – QUEER/TRANS NON-MODERN

PROF. CHRISTINE VARADO

Thursday, 12:30 – 3:10

Registration Number: 23809

DESCRIPTION NOT YET AVAILABLE.
