



# English Department Graduate Newsletter

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## **REGISTRATION FOR SPRING 2000**

The Schedule of Classes for spring 2000 will give you detailed information on how to register for next semester's courses. Please plan to register as early as possible; the budget will again be tight and underenrolled seminars may be canceled early in the registration process. If you have questions about your schedule for the spring, please get in touch with me.

## **CONDITIONALLY CLASSIFIED GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Conditionally classified students must complete their required undergraduate course work before enrolling in graduate seminars. A list of upper-division literature courses approved for conditionally classified students is available in the rack outside the English department. Be sure to take only courses from this list. When you are eligible for classified status, the change is not automatic; you need to see me to file the necessary form.

## **APPROVED COURSES FOR THE ENGLISH M.A.**

**Except for undergraduate courses you may have to take if you are a conditionally classified student and aside from certain upper-division courses required in the writing emphases, it is assumed that your graduate work will be in 200-numbered English classes. Courses taken outside the department will not count except in unusual circumstances. Get prior approval from me before you take such courses. Similarly, upper-division English course work will not count unless you have convincing reasons to take undergraduate courses. Again, check with me in advance.**

## **NEW GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MASTER'S THESES**

**Thesis writers and their advisors should know that the Graduate Studies Office (WLN 125) has revised (as of May 1999) the "General Instructions for Master's Theses," the document that sets the rules for thesis style, format, binding, etc. Copies are available at the GSO and will soon appear on the GSO website (see below).**

## **ENGLISH GRADUATE SEMINARS FOR SPRING 2000**

**201 Materials and Methods M 1600-1845 Stork**

**204 Modern Approaches to Lit. W 1900-2145 Keeseey**

**217 English Renaissance T 1900-2145 Grant**

**225 Shakespeare W 1600-1845 Okerlund**

**227 Comedy R 1600-1845 Birenbaum**

**233 Victorian Literature R 1900-2145 Sigler**

**240 Creative Writing SAT 900-1200 LeGuin**

**255 20th-Century American T 1600-1845 Douglass**

**257 History of Rhetoric M 1900-2145 Rice**

**(Seminars offered in Fall 2000 will probably include 200, 201, 211, 215, 216, 226, 232, 254, 256 and 259.)**

## Course Descriptions

### 201 Materials and Methods of Literary Research (Prof. Stork):

We'll begin the semester with Mary Oliver's *A Poetry Handbook*, as a review of the basic elements of poetry, and then proceed to a quick survey of the overall evolution of poetic styles from medieval to former times. The central focus of the seminar thereafter will be on the theories of "New Criticism" and the application of those theories to lyric poetry, with particular attention to the sonnet as a genre. We'll study critical works by Cleanth Brooks and I. A. Richards and the sonnets of Shakespeare, Donne, Wordsworth, E. B. Browning, John Berryman, and Vikram Seth, in addition to selected critical works and poems by other writers as well. The aim of the course will be to give the students an exhaustive knowledge of the sonnet as such, but more generally to challenge his or her analytical skills, at the same time developing the student's sense of historical perspective and critical acumen in dealing with poetry as an art form.

### 204 Modern Approaches to Literature (Prof. Keeseey):

This course will explore some of the main contemporary approaches to literature, including versions of genetic, reader-response, formal, mimetic, intertextual, feminist, Marxist, poststructural, and cultural criticism. We will read essays by prominent modern critics explaining and defending each type of criticism as well as essays applying some version of each approach to a few target texts. By this plan we will try to strike a useful balance between the "practical" and the theoretical aspects of criticism, and the format will also allow us to compare the different approaches by seeing what they can show us about the same literary texts. Required texts: Keeseey, *Contexts for Criticism* (3rd ed, 1998); Richter, *Falling into Theory* (2nd ed, 2000). Richter's new edition will be available in mid-December. (Those who think ahead may save money by ordering from web discounters like amazon.com.)

### 217 English Renaissance (Prof. Grant):

A study of lyric poetry and drama, of Platonism and passion, a study of the courtier and the poet and their attitudes towards women, language, and reality. We begin with *The Courtier* by Castiglione and end with reality-with love, incest, and death in John Ford's 'Tis a Pity She's a Whore. Students who have had little background in Renaissance literature should read or review "The Sixteenth Century" as well as the works of Donne, Jonson, and Webster in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, volume one. Any edition will do. Students will give a few seminar reports, take one midterm, and write a critical paper.

### 225 Shakespeare (Prof. Okerlund):

An in-depth analysis of selected plays by Shakespeare representing the major genre: comedies, histories, tragedies, and romances. Class discussions will focus on a formalist analysis of the plays, supplemented by other critical approaches, including

**Deconstructionism, New Historicism, Feminism, Marxism, and Psychoanalytic criticism.** Discussion will also examine dramatic conventions in Shakespeare's contemporary theatre, as well as in modern productions. Reading: five plays, plus secondary criticism. One or two oral reports (depending on class size) reviewing scholarly discussions of the plays. Writing: one essay developed from an oral report; drama review of a local theatre production; one seminar paper reflecting independent interpretation of the text informed by research and extensive reading of other critics. Expect to speak some words of the bard.

### **227 Comedy (Prof. Birenbaum):**

We will read a variety of works from Aristophanes to Stoppard, mostly plays, and a reasonable amount of unfunny theory about what is funny. Not-plays will be Rabelais, Books I&II, and Thomas Mann's Felix Krull, starting and ending the course respectively. Playwrights will include Plautus, Terence, Jonson, Congreve, Wycherley, and Shaw. Some special emphasis on the Restoration. Two seminar presentations and two essays. Questions to agonize over: What is funny? What do we want to laugh for? When is comedy not so funny? How are different forms of comedy different? How does comedy change as the world changes? Is there a philosophy of comedy? Do we care, if we're having a good time? Droll topics: comedy and satire, comedy and romance, comedy and the absurd, comedy and tragedy, comedy of manners, bedroom farce. If you wish to start reading in advance, do the Rabelais (Penguin ed.) and you may give the first report. Please pick up a copy of the out-of-print anthology *Masters of Ancient Comedy*, ed. Lionel Casson (try [bookfinder.com](http://bookfinder.com)). This is a serious course: no irony will be permitted.

### **233 Victorian Literature (Prof. Sigler):**

A study of the literature of Victorian Britain in the context of the great cultural and social issues of the time, such as the extension of empire, the conflict of science and religion, the economics of industrial society, and the progress of political reform, which included "The Woman Question" as well as issues of race and class. We will read *Vanity Fair*, *Jane Eyre*, *Lady Audley's Secret*, *Hard Times*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Middlemarch*, and *Jude the Obscure*, as well as poetry, short fiction, and criticism by Gaskell, Dickens, Tennyson, Arnold, Carlyle, R. and E. B. Browning, Mill, Ingelow, C. Rossetti, Burnett, Hopkins, Hardy, Pater, Wilde, Kipling, Schreiner and other "New Woman" writers, and the Pre-Raphaelites. Readings from contemporary critical theory will supplement our Victorian readings.

### **240 Creative Writing (Visiting Prof. Ursula K. LeGuin):**

A workshop in story-writing. Participants will write and revise at least two stories, write exercises, and read and critique the other participants' work. Discussion and exercises will arise principally out of the work submitted, so no subject-matter is pre-established; but the instructor welcomes imaginative and non-realistic fiction, experiments, and genre and cross-genre writing. (As usual, students in the M.A. creative writing program

will have enrollment priority. Others may be admitted at the instructor's option.)

### **254 Seminar in Twentieth-Century American Literature (Prof. Douglass):**

"What Was Modernism?" "Literary Modernism" has cast a very long shadow over the Twentieth Century. It has its origins in the 1890s and has generated critical reassessments into at least the 1990s. Some of its major exponents were directly involved in the creation of what John Crowe Ransom dubbed "The New Criticism," which continues to have the most significant impact on the teaching of literature of any critical school of the century. We will read some of the major authors of American Modernism and attempt to assess their impact upon subsequent generations, choosing representative texts from after World War Two. Authors to be considered include T.S. Eliot, William Faulkner, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, Robert Frost, Ralph Ellison, Joyce Carol Oates, Vladimir Nabokov, Maxine Hong Kingston, James Merrill, and Thomas Pynchon.

### **257 History and Theories of Rhetoric (Prof. Rice):**

This course will introduce the student to the theory and practice of composition teaching, beginning with a survey of traditional rhetoric (and its concern with persuasion, audience, arrangement, levels of style, etc.), and moving to the most recent work in the field (and an emphasis on process over product, theories of cognition, writing as discovery, and so on). In becoming familiar with the general lore of writing instruction, students will learn about pre-writing, discourse theory, sentence and paragraph instruction, revision techniques, evaluation of student writing, designing courses, selecting texts, and other miscellaneous activities associated with teaching writing. Students will be responsible for a collection of abstracts of composition articles, a review of a composition text, a course outline, and an exam testing knowledge of rhetorical terminology and familiarity with the elements of composition instruction. Texts: Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (Oxford); Tate & Corbett, *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook* (Oxford).

## **GRADUATE STUDIES OFFICE WEBSITE**

The SJSU Graduate Studies Office website publishes important deadlines, rules, and information that may be useful to graduate students. Dial up [www.sjsu.edu](http://www.sjsu.edu) and follow the links.

## **PH.D. APPLICATIONS**

The department would very much like to know which students are applying to Ph.D. programs and what success you are having. Please drop a note or give me a call to let me know where you are applying and how things are working out.

## THEATRE ARTS 220

This course is mistakenly cross-listed with the English graduate seminars. It no longer carries English graduate credit.

## GRADUATE BULLETIN BOARD

Important dates and other useful information will be posted on the English Graduate Bulletin Board in the first-floor hall of the Faculty Office Building. New information will be posted as we receive it. So make a point to check the bulletin board frequently.

## ENGLISH GRADUATE GROUP

Interested students should contact Eve Culver (924-4518). Meeting dates and times will be posted and circulated in the seminars.

## GRADUATE ASSISTANT POSITIONS FOR SPRING 2000

The department will have a few new Graduate Assistant positions for spring 2000. Duties will include working as an assistant to a professor or tutoring in the writing lab. If you are interested, write me a brief letter of application sketching your background and listing your graduate school courses and grades. Also include the names of three professors who will be supplying letters of recommendation and be sure to add your current phone number and address. Get this letter to me by Dec. 1, and have your referees send their letters directly to me by the same date.

## IMPORTANT DATES

**November 19:** Last day for December graduates to file their applications for graduation at the Graduate Studies

Office, WLN 125

**February 1, 2000:** Last day for August or December 2000 graduates to submit approved programs to Graduate Studies. You must see me to fill out the appropriate form. To be safe, do it before the end of this fall semester.

**February 25, 2000:** Last day for May 2000 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office

**March 8, 2000:** Departmental foreign language exams, FO 104, 3:30-5 p.m.

**April 8, 2000:** M.A. Comprehensive Exam, Part 1, 9-12, FO 104

**April 12, 2000:** Last day for May 2000 graduates to submit thesis to Graduate Studies Office

**April 15, 2000:** M.A. Comprehensive Exam, Part 2, 9-12, FO 104

