ENGL 160D - Critical Cultural Concepts

Section 001 Instructor: SELISKER
The Automaton

What's the difference between a human and a machine? Would people have thought the same thing fifty years ago? Three hundred years ago? Automata—the mechanical ancestors to robots, featured in the movie Hugo—were often mentioned when people in the Renaissance and 18th-century asked what particular features make us human. In the 21st century, we’re rethinking what makes us human alongside developments in robotics, nanotechnology, and artificial intelligence. Whenever we ask about what separates us from machines, the answer tells a lot about ourselves, our values, and our relationships to technology and each other.

In this course, our readings will range from Plato and Cervantes to cybernetics and contemporary science fiction; across that range, our readings will raise philosophical questions by looking at automaton, puppet, and robot figures. We’ll see how works of literature, philosophy, history, and science test and change the limits of the human, explore the meanings of freedom, and ask what we can and can't know about our bodies, our minds, and each other. Readings will include work by William Shakespeare, René Descartes, Mary Shelley, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Isaac Asimov, Philip K. Dick, and others; screenings will include Metropolis, The Manchurian Candidate, The Stepford Wives, Blade Runner and episodes of Battlestar Galactica. Assignments will include short essays, in-class team assignments, midterm and final exams, and a final creative team project (a film, web project, poster, or story).

Section 002 Instructor: KLOTZ
Genocide in Literature and Film

As a word, “genocide” has a short history. It was born in the wake of Auschwitz, following the German defeat at the end of the Second World War, although mass killings, sometimes intended to exterminate a whole group of people, extend at least as far back as the beginning of known human history. In this class, we will follow the origins of the word, “genocide,” to denote the murderous Nazi campaign against the Jews, and work from there to examine its application to a number of other campaigns of mass extermination – both preceding WWII and following it. We will end with a discussion of its role in contemporary politics, as a means of legitimizing interventions into various political situations on behalf of an international community.

The course has been designed to examine three basic positions in relation to genocide: First, we will look at the perspective of the victims. For many, the act of “bearing witness” to that which has passed, to make sure that others understand the horror of what happened, constitutes the purpose of life after the atrocity has passed. For others, the trauma is so great that they find themselves incapable of remembering, or of finding a means of representation that is adequate to the horror experienced. This focus often involves philosophical questions (where do we find meaning in a world that allows
genocide?) and psychological questions (how does such severe trauma restructure the psyche of the individual, or the collective?) Second, we will examine the perspective of the perpetrators. This focus involves political questions: What kind of justice can be demanded in the wake of genocide? Is it enough that they recognize their wrongdoing and repent, or should perpetrators be forced to pay for their crimes? When does a state have a right to intervene to protect the citizens of a different state? And third, we will examine the role of the witnesses, both those who saw what happened (and often feel implicated) and those of us who listen to the testimonies of those who were there. What modes of aesthetic representation are appropriate (if there are any) to atrocity? What do these stories demand of us, the viewers?

ENGL 201 - Introduction to the Writing of Creative Nonfiction
Core (CRTV) / Gen. Ed. Tier II Arts
Section 001, 002, 003 Instructors: TBA
This course is intended to give students a practical understanding of beginning techniques of nonfiction writing, taught through exercises, the writing of original nonfiction, and readings in contemporary nonfiction. The course complements existing courses in poetry and fiction. All three courses are intended to improve undergraduate education by providing contact hours with Creative Writing faculty members early in the undergraduate's course of study. Creative Writing majors and minors will be given priority. Enrollment will open to all students after priority registration.

ENGL 209 - Introduction to the Writing of Poetry
Core (CRTV) / Gen. Ed. Tier II Arts
Section 001, 002, 003 Instructors: TBA
Beginning techniques of poetry writing, taught through exercises, the writing of original poetry, and readings in contemporary poetry. Creative Writing majors and minors will be given priority. Enrollment will open to all students after priority registration.

ENGL 210 - Introduction to the Writing of Fiction
Core (CRTV) / Gen. Ed. Tier II Arts
Section 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006 Instructors: TBA
Beginning techniques of fiction writing, taught through exercises, the writing of original fiction, and readings in contemporary fiction. Creative Writing majors and minors will be given priority. Enrollment will open to all students after priority registration.
ENGL 220A - Literature of the Bible
Section 001 Instructor: ULREICH
(Cross-listed with Religious Studies)
*The Tanakh (a.k.a. The Old Testament)*

This course is designed to introduce students to the various kinds of literature to be found in the Hebrew Bible and to a variety of approaches to the material, so as to encourage the critical reading of biblical literature, with attention to the different methods of reading required by different literary kinds—myths and legends, historical narrative, prophecy, lyric poetry, wisdom literature, etc. Texts are generally read in their historical context, and in the order in which they were composed—Torah (or Pentateuch), Historical Books (Joshua through Kings), Prophets, and Writings (Psalms, Wisdom Literature, sundry narratives). Some attention is also given to the so-called Apocrypha, or deutero-canonical texts (parts of Esther and Daniel as well as Judith). Students are encouraged to ask questions about the meaning of different texts in light of the circumstances in which they were composed, the forms in which they were written, and the discoverable purposes of the authors.

The class will be conducted primarily by discussion, punctuated by occasional lectures. Written requirements will include frequent quizzes, three short-answer hour exams, three short essays, and an essay final exam.

ENGL 220B – Literature of the New Testament
Section 001 Instructor: MATUK
(Cross-listed with Religious Studies)

This course is a welcoming and supportive learning community that honors a plurality of religious perspectives while engaging in a secular study of ancient texts. We will not accept proselytizing from believers (of any faith) nor will we accept intolerance from non-believers. We will frame our readings through an understanding of the historical and cultural circumstances in which our texts were written while also linking those texts to other eras, including our own. We will practice various strategies of literary analysis. The themes and concepts we will explore include but are not limited to persuasion, faith, radical thought, radical community building, narrative modes (tragedy and melodrama), and romanticism.

ENGL 231 – Shakespeare’s Major Plays
Section 001 Instructor: BROWN

This course will cover each of the genres in which Shakespeare worked over the course of his career—comedy, history, tragedy, and romance—as represented in six of his major plays, with heaviest emphasis on the tragedies. The patterns we’ll be tracing across the bard’s oeuvre include: ideas of community, inclusion, exclusion and transgression; the intersection of love, politics, and power; gender and race in tragedy and comedy; dramatic forms and structure; alienation, “tragic knowledge,” and writing beyond tragedy. Most of our time will be spent working closely and in detail with Shakespeare’s language; we will also pay attention to the cultural contexts—social, political, and religious—of the renaissance that are most germane to the plays. Because these plays were conceived not as written artifacts but as the
skeletons of live performances, we will attend to some of the interpretive aspects of dramatic performance.

This course is imagined as a survey with the non-English major in mind, although students who are considering a major in English are of course welcome and encouraged. This course aims to:

- Grapple with the language of the plays and illuminate how they explore the topics listed in the course description, through close reading, class discussion, and written work.
- Provide students with tools for analyzing literary texts generally.
- Provide an introduction to the scholarly conversation about Shakespeare and his plays, and allow students to formulate written arguments that participate in these conversations.

ENGL 248A – Introduction to Fairy Tales

Section 001 Instructor: BERNHEIMER

Just about every year a big news article makes the rounds about how fairy tales are bad for children, how Harry Potter’s ruined literature for all time, etc. The American author John Updike once famously called fairy tales the "television and pornography of their day," after all. (He was a fan.) So who’s afraid of a big bad fairy tale? Not this class! We will explore how fantasy worlds—both utopian and dystopic—provide readers with portals for, as Maria Tatar describes it, “exploring counterfactuals and worst-case scenarios.” We follow fairy tales from their beginnings in communal storytelling spaces into the literary culture of childhood and to new media. Authors include the Brothers Grimm, Lewis Carroll, J.M. Barrie, Philip Pullman, and J.K. Rowling.

ENGL 260 - Major British Writers

Section 001 Instructor: KLOTZ

This class offers an introduction to the best-known authors of the English language. It is meant to give you a broad overview of English literature, beginning with some of the earliest writings (Beowulf) and moving up through contemporary literature. For this reason, we will be moving very quickly. By the time the semester is completed, you will have a solid grasp of the literary movements that have shaped the English canon, and familiarity with the most canonical names of English authors. My hope is that this course will help you decide which aspects of English literature most interest you, in order to guide which courses you will want to take in the rest of your studies

Learning Objectives:

To familiarize ourselves with the biggest names in the British canon, and to develop a basic understanding of the literary and cultural developments that took place in the British Isles over time, as represented in the great works of literature; to develop basic skills in reading and understanding literature; and to learn how to argue for your interpretations of literature orally and in writing in an increasingly clear, convincing, and well-organized

Warning: This is a reading-intensive course
ENGL 265 - Major American Writers
Section 001 Instructor: EVERS
Gen. Ed. Tier II Humanities
Intensive study of selected works by major American writers
We will read five works closely, focusing on their cultural and literary contexts: Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio; Ernest Hemingway, In Our Time; Jean Toomer, Cane; Willa Cather, Death Comes for the Archbishop; and William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses. Additional critical readings will be assigned. Lecture, small group discussion, quizzes, a class presentation, five response papers (each five typed double-spaced pages), and a longer final paper.

ENGL 265 - Major American Writers
Section 002 Instructor: MELILLO
Gen. Ed. Tier II Humanities
In this class, we will explore the many ways in which major Anglophone American writers and composers imagine and reimagine the relationships between music and literature. We will examine many works, ranging from the beginnings of American literary and musical culture to the present day. We will listen to the ways in which music and literature not only influence each other formally and thematically but also how, at times, these two arts blend to a point where we cannot distinguish between them. We will work not only with major texts and compositions in American culture—for instance the Bay Psalm Book, Thoreau’s Walden, Whitman’s Leaves of Grass, Dickinson’s poems, Dubois’s The Souls of Black Folk, T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land, Ives’ Concord Sonata, Copland’s Appalachian Spring, Antheil’s Ballet Mécanique, Cage’s 4’33”, and many more—but also examine American popular culture in the form of American ballads, blackface minstrelsy, African-American slave songs and spirituals, ragtime, the blues, jazz, rock ‘n’ roll, punk rock, and hip-hop. This class will require us, as Charles Ives famously stated, “to stretch our ears” and listen to relationships and affinities often passed over. As such, it will be a reading- and listening- intensive course, with a variety of in-class exercises, weekly response papers, presentations, and three longer analytic papers.

ENGL 267 – Dramatic Literature
Section 001 Instructor: TBA
Gen. Ed. Tier II Humanities
Great works of the western drama with emphasis on style, theme and cultural context. Non-western works will occasionally be included for contrast.

ENGL 280 - Introduction to Literature
Section 001 Instructor: SHERRY
Core (ENGL/CRTV) / Gen. Ed. Tier II Humanities
Emerson
This course will focus on a close reading of selected essays. Students will write a series of six short (3-5 pages) essays interpreting aspects of the assigned essays. There will also be a take-home final exam, which will consist of two short essays. The aim of this course is to teach students to write interpretive essays based on the content of the works assigned, essays that are well thought out, and correctly, clearly and carefully written.
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